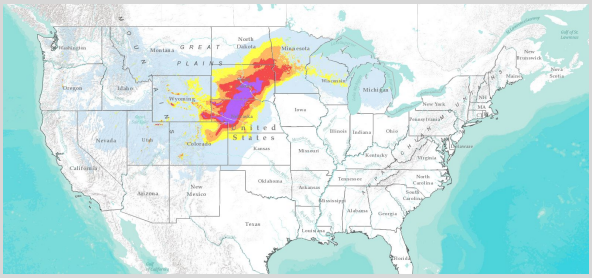

Winter Storm Severity Index – Alaska West Coast

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Focus Group Agenda

Introduction to the Project and Introduction of all Participants

Pre-session survey

Scenario

Post-session survey

Winter Storm Scenario
T-5

SPECIAL WEATHER STATEMENT

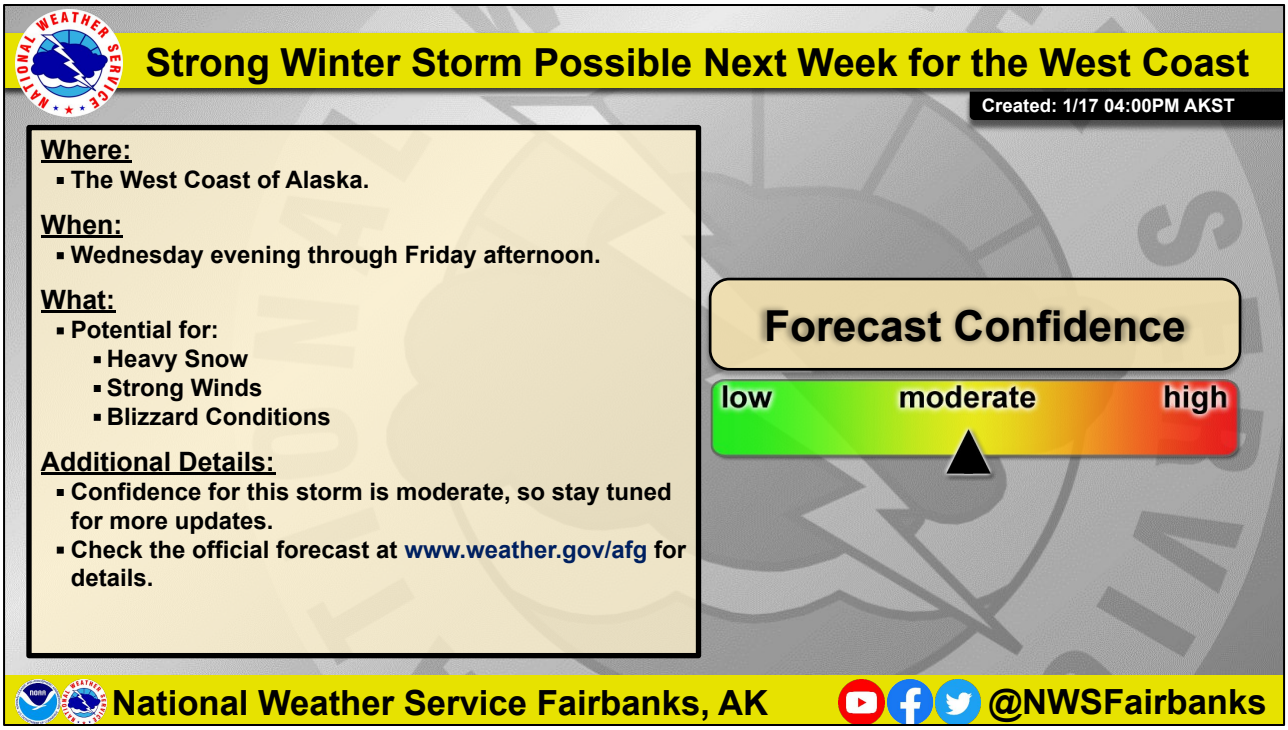
National Weather Service FAIRBANKS AK 400 PM AKST Fri Jan 17
AKZ211-201815- Southern Seward Peninsula Coast-Including Nome, White Mountain, and Golovin
400 PM AKST Fri Jan 17

...A Strong Winter Storm Possibly Impacting the North Slope Next Week...

A strong storm may bring blizzard conditions, heavy snow, and high winds across the West Coast. Power outages and travel delays are possible. This system could initially bring strong east winds, which combined with falling snow could result in very low visibility along the Chukchi and Bering Sea Coasts. This would also bring heavy snow and strong winds to western the Brooks Range. In the Wednesday through Friday timeframe the system is expected to move into inland, bringing strong westerly winds.

The National Weather Service in Fairbanks will continue to monitor this storm as it develops over the next several days. Please visit weather.gov/fairbanks for the latest update.

Do you use Special Weather Statements like this? How are you feeling about your risk based on this information?



Some more information. Do you use forecast confidence information in your decision-making? How?

Winter Storm Scenario
T-2

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
National Weather Service Fairbanks AK
400 PM AKST Mon Jan 20

AKZ211-201815-Southern Seward Peninsula Coast-Including Nome, White Mountain, and Golovin

...WINTER STORM WATCH IN EFFECT FROM WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON THROUGH FRIDAY MORNING...

* WHAT... Heavy snow and blowing snow possible. Plan on very low visibility and difficult travel conditions. Blizzard conditions possible. Total snow accumulations of up to 8 inches are possible.

* WHERE....Southern Seward Peninsula Coast.

* WHEN...From Wednesday morning through Friday morning.

* ADDITIONAL DETAILS... Winds gusting as high as 60 mph will cause areas of blowing and drifting snow reducing visibility to one quarter mile or less at times. Power outages are possible due to the strong winds.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...
A Winter Storm Watch means there is potential for significant snow, sleet or ice accumulations that may impact travel. Continue to monitor the latest forecasts.

An urgent message - a winter storm watch is issued. Do you use watches - do they trigger any specific actions? What else would you be looking for right now?

Do you receive briefings? Do you use them?

Winter Storm Watches Issued for the West Coast

Created: 1/20 04:00PM AKST

Where:

- North Slope, including the Chukchi + Beaufort Sea coasts

When:

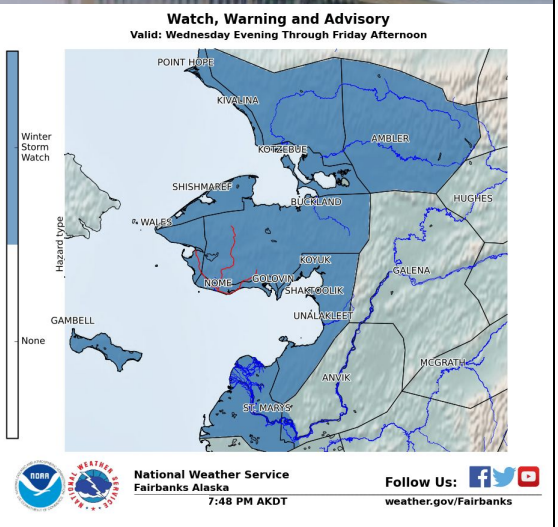
- Watches begin Wednesday evening and last through Friday afternoon.

What:

- Heavy snow and strong winds expected. Blizzard conditions possible in coastal areas.
  - Snowfall amounts of 8-12” in coastal areas, 12-18” in Brooks Range.
  - Winds gusting to 60 mph in coastal areas

Additional Details:

- Travel may be very difficult to impossible due to low visibility
- Power outages may be possible



National Weather Service Fairbanks, AK @NWSFairbanks

watch/warning/advisory information and details - how helpful is this information?

Do you contact your local NWS office? How? When?

Winter Storm Scenario
T-1

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
National Weather Service Fairbanks AK
500 AM AKST Tue Jan 21
AKZ211-201815-Southern Seward Peninsula Coast-Including Nome, White Mountain, and Golovin

...BLIZZARD WARNING IN EFFECT FROM 6 AM WEDNESDAY TO 4 AM AKST FRIDAY...

* WHAT...Blizzard conditions expected. Travel will be very difficult to impossible. Total snow accumulations of 8 to 12 inches are expected.

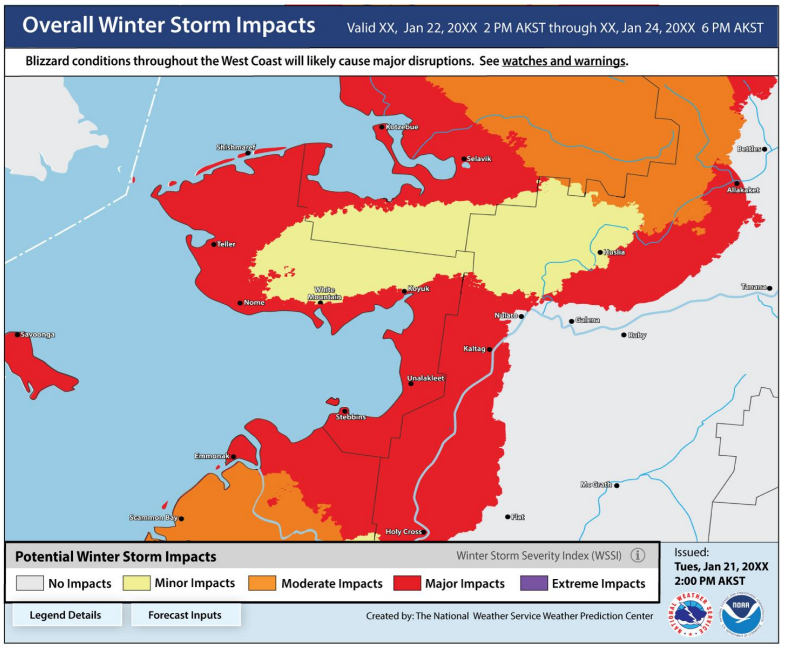
* WHERE...Southern Seward Peninsula Coast.

* WHEN...6 AM Wednesday to 4 AM Friday.

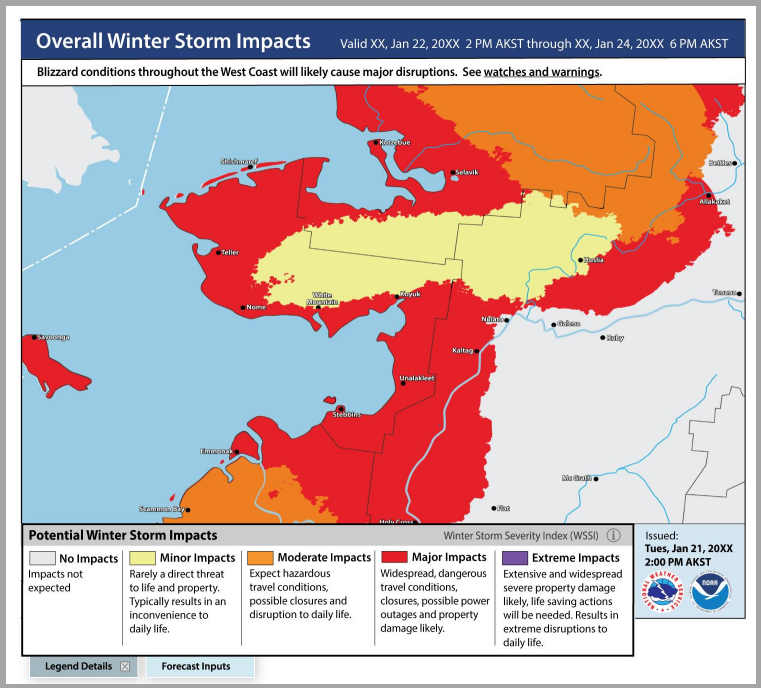
* ADDITIONAL DETAILS...Winds gusting as high as 60 mph will cause frequent whiteout conditions. Winds will start from the southeast on Wednesday, switching to from the northwest by Thursday morning. Significant drifting of the snow is likely. Power outages are possible due to strong winds.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...
A Blizzard Warning means severe winter weather conditions are expected or occurring. Falling and blowing snow with strong winds and poor visibilities are likely. This will lead to whiteout conditions, making travel extremely difficult.

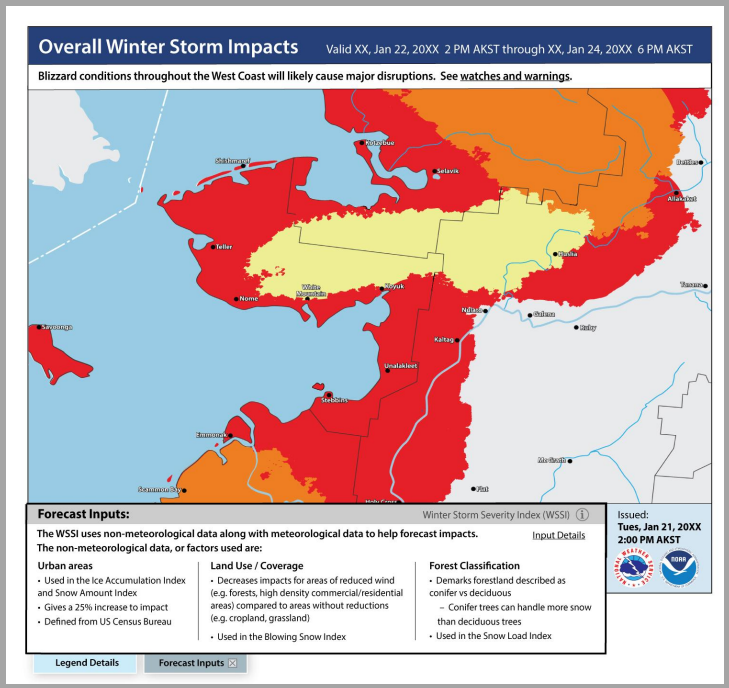
Blizzard warning: how does this change your decision-making? What actions are you taking? What other information are you looking for?



What is this product telling you? How do you interpret the impact levels? What else do you want to know based on this graphic?



This version shows a more complete legend description. How do these impact definitions meet your decision-making needs? Is this product possibly useful to you? How? What else would it need to be useful? Would you share this product with others, and if so, with whom?



Let's study this legend a little more closely. This legend tells you some of the background factors that are used to determine the impact levels (that is, what is considered extreme or major or moderate and why). Is this information helpful to you? What else would you be looking for when using this product? Which impacts are you most concerned about when looking at this product?

Mention forecaster's note and ask if that is helpful. What types of information would you like to see in this element?

Information on Winter Storm for the West Coast
January 21st Winter Storm Briefing for the West Coast
National Weather Service Fairbanks, Alaska
National Weather Service Fairbanks, AK
@NWSFairbanks

Warnings Issued for Strong Storm Impacting the West Coast

Created: 1/21 04:00PM AKST

Where:

- West Cost of Alaska

When:

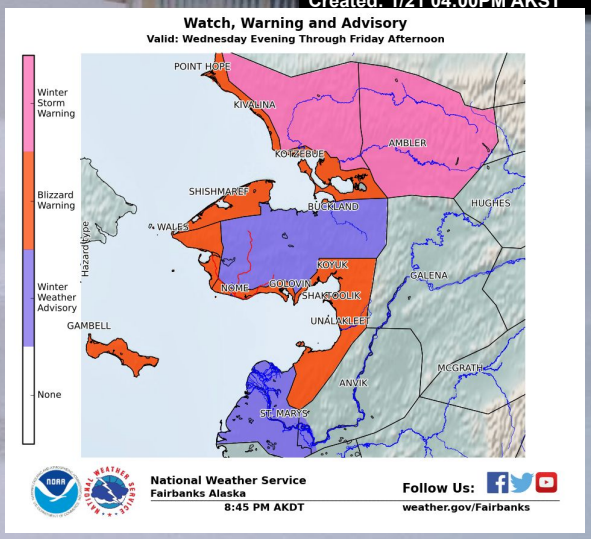
- Wednesday Afternoon Through Friday Morning

What:

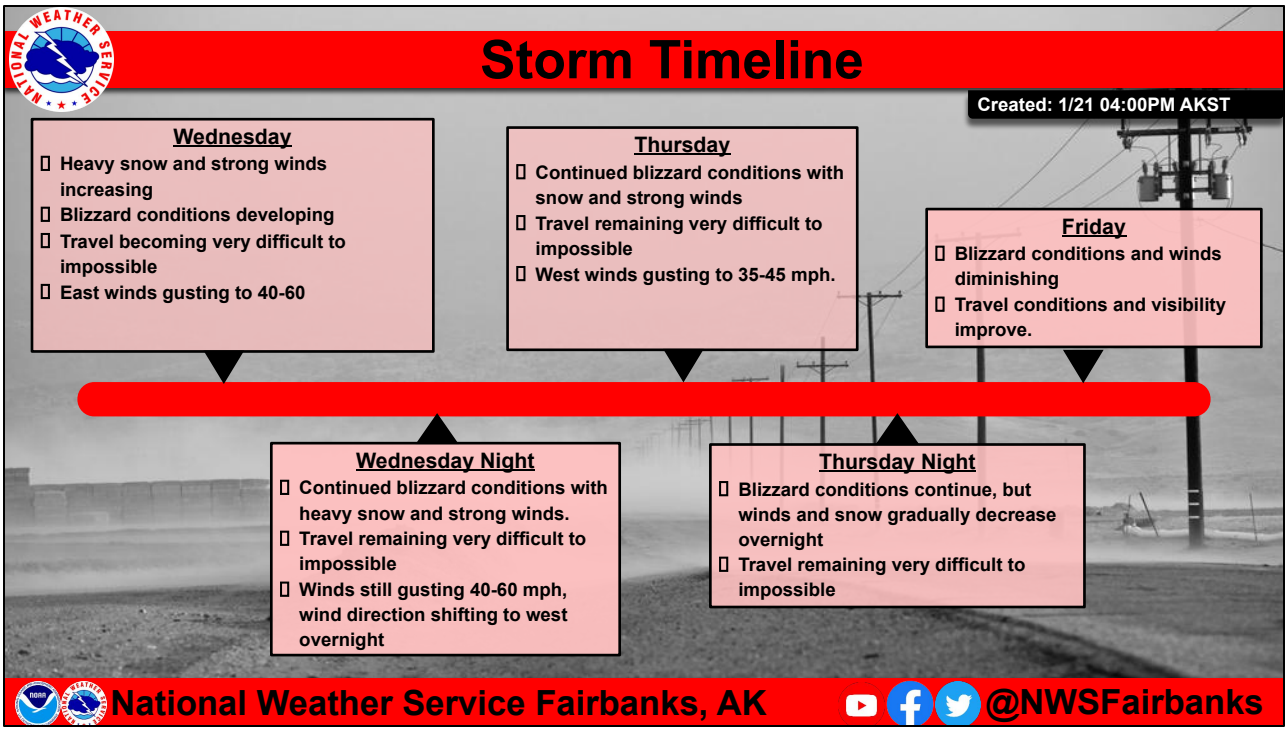
- Heavy snow and strong winds across the area.
- Blizzard conditions expected along the coast.

Additional Details:

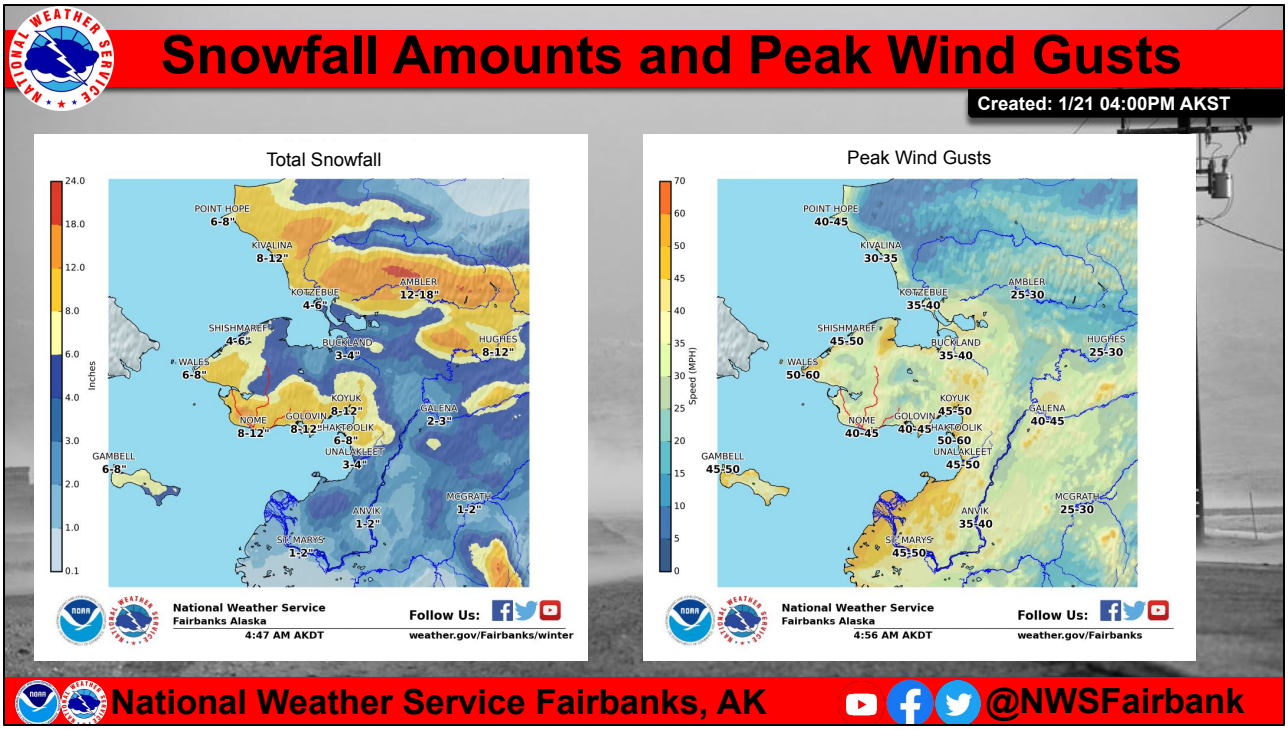
- Check the official forecast at www.weather.gov/afg for details on snowfall amounts, wind speeds, and coastal flooding potential, as well as regular updates to the forecast.



National Weather Service Fairbanks, AK @NWSFairbanks



How important is timing information like this? What else are you looking for related to timing? WOuld you share this briefing information with others? When? How?



Snowfall amounts - how critical is this information to your decision-making? Peak wind gusts - how important is this information? What else would you be looking for in terms of impact information?

Contact Information

If you have any questions or want more details on this storm please contact the National Weather Service one of the following ways:

Email us at fairbanks.weather@noaa.gov

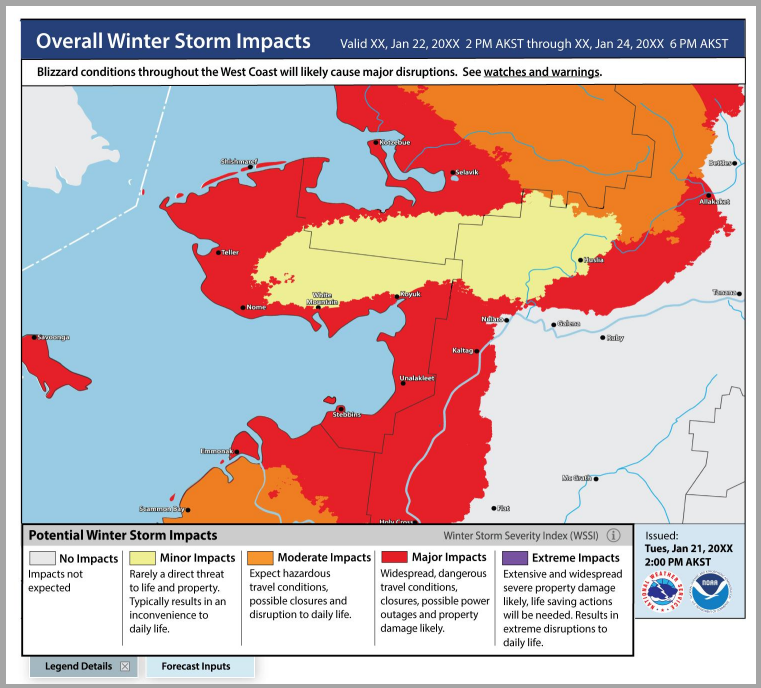
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/NWSFairbanks/

Twitter at @NWSFairbanks

More details at https://www.weather.gov/Fairbanks

WSSI Website

Have you visited this site before?
Explain the features/give tour of the site. Note that this is for CONUS only but that there will be one for Alaska in the future.
What features of the website are most useful to you?
Is there anything that is missing? What additional functionality would be helpful?
Is there anything that is confusing?
How would you use the information/products on this site? When would you use it (i.e. how many days before storm)?
Ask about rolling window - is this useful? Would you use this and if so, how?
Do you prefer static images to the interactive website?



Anything else you would add? Look at forecasters' note and legend again.
Leading components/impacts that need to be included in a useful product.