SEVERE WEATHER?

By Mark D. Schneider

As we begin another growing season and thunderstorms return to the North Dakota prairie, it's once again time to refresh our awareness of severe weather. The National Weather Service (NWS) has designated April 26-30 as Severe Weather Awareness Week in North Dakota. According to John Paul Martin, Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) for the Bismarck Weather Forecast Office (WFO), "the NWS will not be able to hold in-person severe weather training (SKYWARN) sessions this spring. Both NWS offices in Fargo-Grand Forks and Bismarck are holding virtual sessions instead. The schedule is available on the NWS Fargo-Grand Forks' website at: weather.gov/fgf and on NWS Bismarck's at: weather.gov/fgf and on NWS Bismarck's at: weather.gov/fgf and on NWS

With the long-term drought that our state is struggling through, it would be easy to dismiss chances for severe thunderstorms without having the sufficient moisture in place like in wetter years. When asked about that assumption, John Paul Martin urges caution, stating "don't let the ongoing drought, that is likely to continue into summer, fool you when it comes to severe summer weather. It's true that moisture is one of the key ingredients to thunderstorm development, and so in a drought that might mean fewer storms overall or storms with a smaller footprint. Don't be caught off guard as even in drought years thunderstorms have produced tornadoes, large hail, damaging winds, and yes, even flash floods. In fact, on dry ground the risk for flash flooding can be even greater." Greg Gust, WCM for the Fargo-Grand Forks WFO added, "in the convective season that accompanied the flash drought of 2018, there were still 28 distinct tornadoes in the state."



If you're unsure whether or not the weather conditions you're observing are worth reporting, it's always better to ere on the side of caution and report them. Severe hail is defined as having a diameter of one-inch or greater and severe winds having speeds of 58 miles per hour or greater; however, the NWS is interested in any significant rain, hail, or winds that you may experience. Why? Your reports provide their forecasters with warning verification and storm trends that could help protect people and property along the storm's future path.

To make reporting severe weather easy, the Bismarck and Fargo-Grand Forks WFOs provide multiple resources. The public can report severe weather by phone, online through NWS websites, Facebook, or Twitter. If you live in the Bismarck WFO county warning area pictured in the graphic above, the public phone number is (701) 223-4582. Likewise, for the Fargo-Grand Forks WFO county warning area, call (701) 772-0720.

Atmospheric Resource Board I North Dakota State Water Commission I 900 East Boulevard, Bismarck, ND 58505 (701) 328-2788 I http://swc.nd.gov

ND Weather Modification Association I PO Box 2599 I Bismarck, ND 58502 I (701) 223-4232

North Dakota Water ■ April 2021