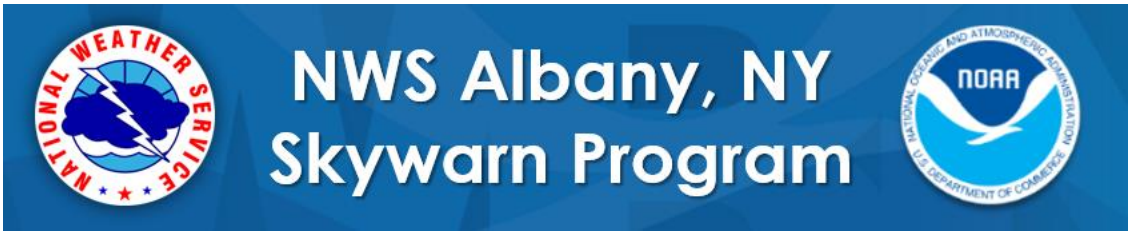
Skywarn™



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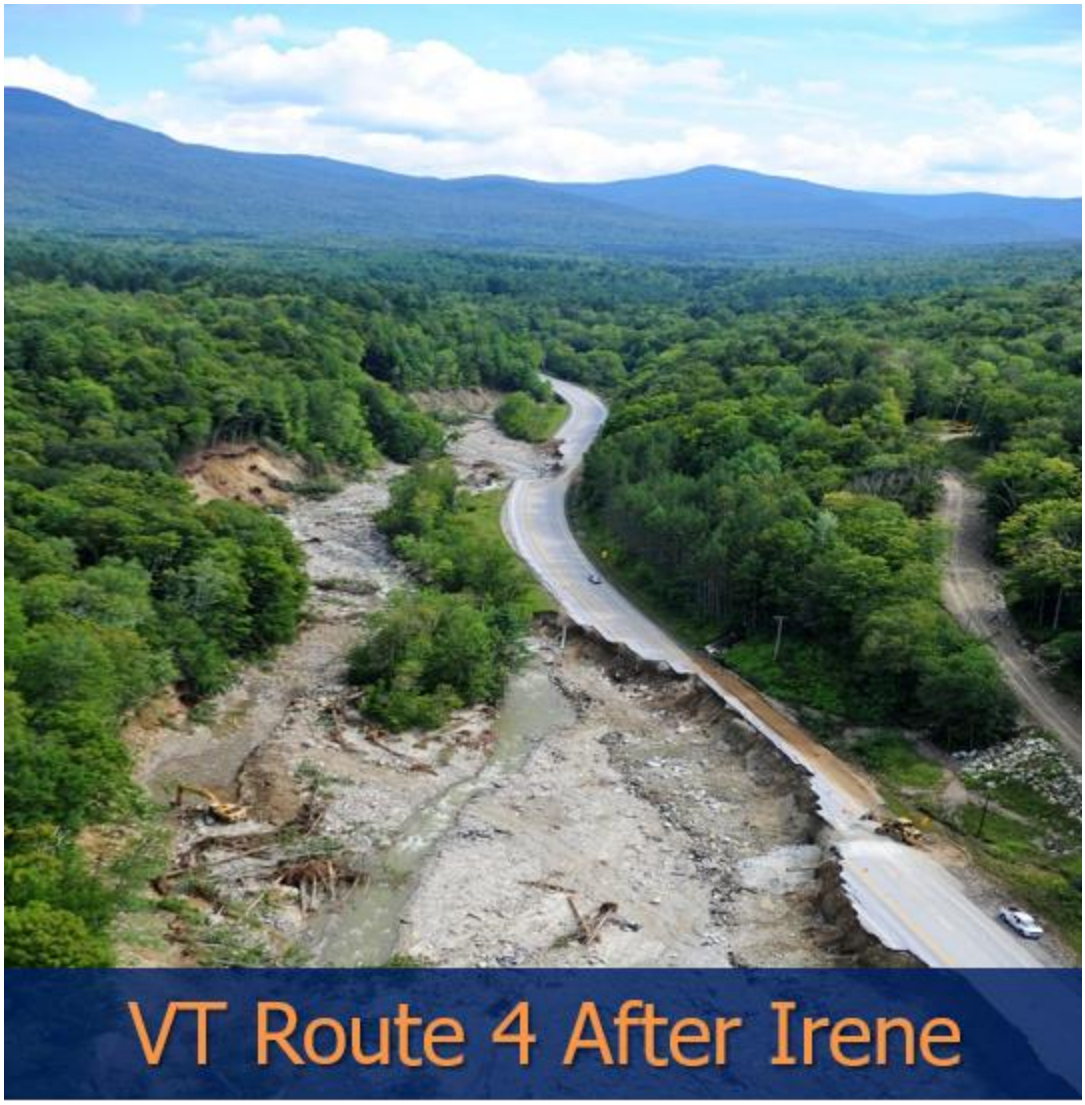
What is SKYWARN™?

The effects of hazardous weather are felt every year by many Americans. To obtain critical weather information, NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), established SKYWARN™ with partner organizations. SKYWARN™ is a volunteer program with nearly 290,000 trained severe weather spotters. These volunteers help keep their local communities safe by providing timely and accurate reports of severe weather to the NWS.

In the average year, 10,000 severe thunderstorms, 5,000 floods and more than 1,000 tornadoes occur across the United States. Eastern New York and western New England are no exception with major weather events such as Tropical Storm Irene, the Mechanicville Tornado of 1998, the February 2019 high wind event, and numerous blizzards including the latest of March 2017. These events threatened lives and property and because of this we rely heavily on our SKYWARN™ volunteers who call the NWS in Albany, NY to report certain weather conditions. Since the program started in the 1970s, the information provided by SKYWARN™ spotters, coupled with Doppler-radar technology, improved satellite and other data, has enabled NWS to issue more timely and accurate warnings for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods.

SKYWARN ™ storm spotters are part of the ranks of citizens who form the Nation's first line of defense against hazardous weather. There can be no finer reward than to know that their efforts have given communities the precious gift of time--seconds and minutes that can help save lives. While the main role of a storm spotter is to be their community's first line of defense against dangerous storms, they also provide important information to NWS warning forecasters who make critical warning decisions. Storm spotters play a critical role because they can see things that radar and other technological tools cannot,



and this ground truth is critical in helping the NWS perform our primary mission, to save lives and property.

Forecasters from the National Weather Service (NWS) in Albany, NY conduct storm spotter training sessions each year to help prepare spotters for the upcoming severe and winter weather seasons. These sessions are free and open to anyone who is interested in learning about hazardous weather and the role of a spotter. There are some eligibility requirements to be a spotter: You must be able to observe the weather, be 16 years or older and need access to a phone to call in reports, access to the internet to submit reports via email or social media, or be able to report information through the Amateur Radio Network.

Our live training sessions are approximately 1 to 1.5 hours in length, and once you complete the training, you will be an official SKYWARN™ spotter and given a spotter certificate. This goal of the training is to train spotters to assist local officials and the NWS with early detection of hazardous weather, and provide ground truth during severe and winter weather events. The learning objectives of our live and online webinar training sessions are:

- Understand the how

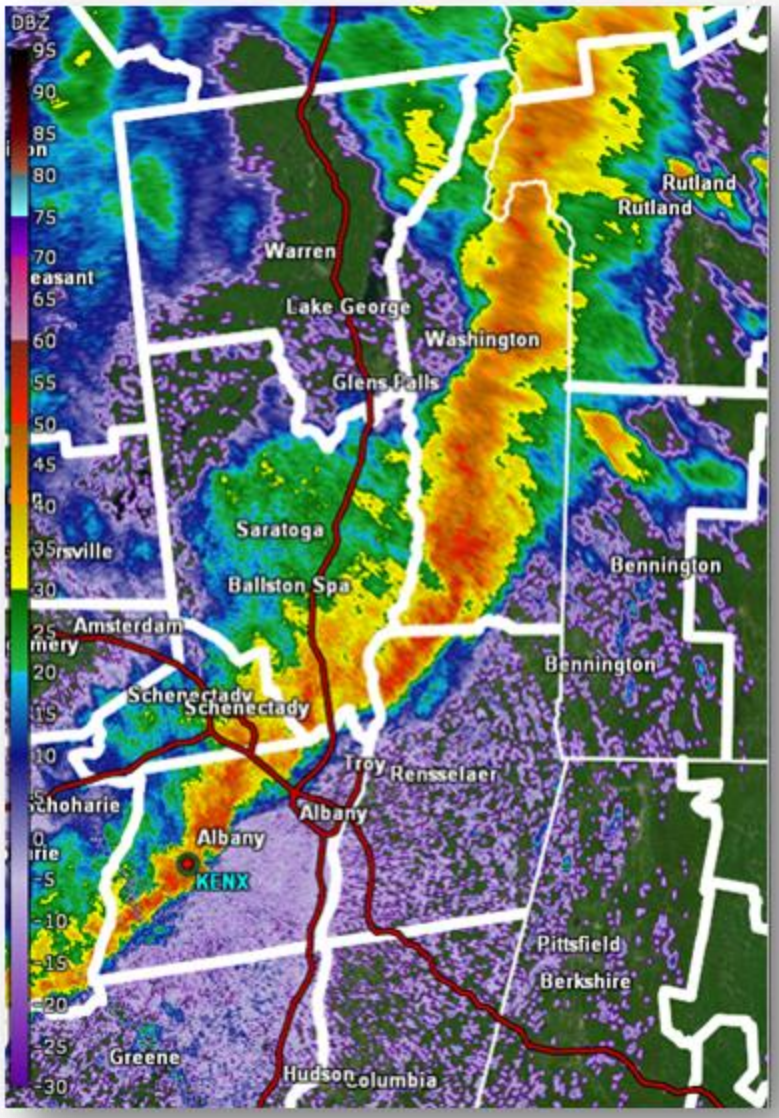
the NWS Integrated Warning System works and how the spotter fits into this system
- Identify the ingredients needed for organized thunderstorms
- Recognize the visual and environmental clues suggestive of severe weather
- Distinguish between legitimate clues and non-significant features associated with severe weather
- Learn about the different types of winter weather and how to measure each
- Learn how to stay safe when storm spotting
- Learn proper storm reporting procedures

Approximately one-third of NWS-Albany's spotters also are amateur radio operators. This dual role can be helpful, especially during a major storm such as a hurricane, when phone and power lines are downed and amateur radio may become the primary means of communications.

Below are few resources hosted locally at the National Weather Service in Albany, NY, as well as National and Amateur Radio resources concerning SKYWARN™.

Storm Prediction Center | National Hurricane Center | Weather Prediction Center | Northeast River Forecast Center | Climate Prediction Center

- NWS Albany Latest Storm Information
- SKYWARN™ Operations Manual for Amateur Radio - Appendices (B, C, D)
- WX2ALY Amateur Radio | National Association for Amateur Radio (ARRL) | ARES
- Weather Spotters Field Guide | Other Publications - Brochures & Booklets
- Stormbuster Newsletter
- National SKYWARN™ Page
- Additional Training Videos and Slide-shows (CoCoRaHS)



SKYWARN™ volunteers also help the NWS by reporting winter weather, flash flooding, etc., according to the established criteria. It must be stressed that we are looking for reliable and objective reports. When snowfall reports are inflated or hail sizes are exaggerated, for example, it can do more harm than good. While not a requirement, it is preferred that our SKYWARN™ volunteers would be available to receive a call from the NWS, in the event we feel that something suspicious is happening in their area. A questionnaire form handed out at the training sessions allows one to give additional information, such as hours of availability, access to rivers/streams, type of weather equipment owned (if applicable), etc.

Training sessions are held throughout eastern New York and western New England, typically in the spring and fall months. The latest training dates can be found on the *Training Schedule* tab just above. One can also find announcements on our website or on social media.

Relationship to COMET Training

We understand that some SKYWARN™ training courses are available through COMET (the Cooperative Program for Operations Meteorology, Education, and Training) entitled "Role of the SKYWARN™ Spotter" and "SKYWARN™ Spotter Convective Basics". These COMET courses do meet the requirements to become a NWS-Albany SKYWARN™ Spotter. In order to attain a Albany SKYWARN™ Spotter handout, you may either attend one of the in-person training classes offered, an online webinar session, or complete the online courses. Once you are a trained spotter, re-certification can also be done online.

Please contact us with your completed certificates.