

Gross

Meteorological Aspects of Oil Spills on the  
Open Ocean

FINAL REPORT

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by

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## ABSTRACT

The initial year of work under the terms of the subject contract has been a three-pronged attack on the problem of meteorological aspects of oil spills on the open ocean. The synoptic scale effort has been directed toward producing a geostrophic wind at the site of the spill (the Gulf of Mexico, for example), as input to an atmospheric boundary layer model. Objective analysis, weather types, and forecast sea-level pressures were investigated.

In the atmospheric boundary layer research, a Rossby-number similarity theory approach was used. The direction and magnitude of the surface stress acting on an oil slick was obtained through modifications applicable to a baroclinic, diabatic boundary layer, utilizing input geostrophic wind and other variables from the synoptic scale analysis.

The ocean surface turbulence studies were based on the premise that the dispersive spread of oil slicks is due to the action of random stresses on the surface of the slick, and that the action of these stresses can be related to the kinematics of the ocean surface layer turbulence. The research utilized an apparatus for laboratory-scale measurements of relative dispersion in the uppermost layer of water in a specially designed and constructed tank.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. SYNOPTIC SCALE ANALYSIS	3
A. Objectives and Scope of Research	3
B. Data Analysis and Results of Research	3
III. ATMOSPHERIC BOUNDARY LAYER STRUCTURE	19
IV. OCEANIC SURFACE TURBULENCE STUDIES	28
A. Research Topic Background	28
B. Contract Activity	32
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK	36
BIBLIOGRAPHY	39
A. References Cited in the Report	39
B. Additional References	42
APPENDIX:	
An Experimental Study of Dispersive Spreading, by Zimmerman and Miksad (Attached).	

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
II-1. Map Types (Sabin <u>et al</u> , 1974) of the Texas Window Which Correlate with Objectively Analyzed Sea Level Pressure Data (see text).	5
III-1. Rossby-Number Similarity Relation for $u_* /  \vec{V}_{go} $ and A for Various Values of B, from Equation III-1.	22
III-2. Rossby-Number Similarity Relation for the Angle $\theta$ Between the Surface Wind and the Surface Geostrophic Wind for Various Values of B, from Equation III-2.	23
III-3. Flow Diagram for Evaluating the Magnitude and Direction of the Surface Stress for the Diabatic, Baroclinic, Steady-State Atmospheric Boundary Layer.	27

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page</u>
II-1. Correlation Coefficients for 14 Weather Types, Two Cases (23 January and 16 February 1977).	4
II-2. Geostrophic Wind ( $V_g$ ), Calculated (Barnes) vs. Weather Type $g$ (Sabin) at $26^{\circ}\text{N } 90^{\circ}\text{W}$ , and Observed Surface Wind at Same Location.	6
II-3. Comparison of Observed and Predicted (24h LFM) Sea Level Pressure and Geostrophic Winds at Buoy $26^{\circ}\text{N } 90^{\circ}\text{W}$ .	8
II-4. Comparison of Observed and Predicted (24h LFM) Geostrophic Wind Components at Buoy $26^{\circ}\text{N } 90^{\circ}\text{W}$ , and Correlation Coefficients (11 January - 16 February 1977).	9
II-5. 24h LFM Verification at $26^{\circ}\text{N } 90^{\circ}\text{W}$ (Buoy in Central Gulf of Mexico).	11
II-6. 24h LFM Verification at $28^{\circ}\text{N } 83^{\circ}\text{W}$ (near Tampa, FL).	13
II-7. Comparison of 24h LFM with Observed Geostrophic Wind at $26^{\circ}\text{N } 90^{\circ}\text{W}$ .	14
II-8. Comparisons of Surface Wind at Galveston (GLS) and the Oil Rig at $28^{\circ}\text{N } 93^{\circ}\text{W}$ (19 March - 8 December 1977).	17

## I. INTRODUCTION

The problem of oil spills on the open ocean has become a major one in recent years, with important energy and environmental implications. Much work has been done on handling the clean-up of the oil, particularly in coastal areas. On the open ocean, the concern has been with anticipating the movement and ultimate dispersion of the oil, with some concern for environmental degradation, especially in shallower parts of the ocean. Very little effort has thus far been devoted to the trajectory problem. The objective of the research reported herein is to provide an analysis of the atmospheric contribution to the trajectory problem. Ocean current studies are contributed by others; however, an important part of the research contributed by the Atmospheric Science Group is in the dispersion of the oil at the atmosphere-ocean interface by turbulent motions.

The University of Texas investigation is a closely coordinated three-part study of oil slick movement and natural dispersion:

- (1) the synoptic-scale atmospheric motions are seen as moving the oil slick by means of a stress at the interface which is a function of the geostrophic wind and atmospheric boundary layer characteristics;
- (2) the atmospheric boundary layer is modelled in such a way as to predict the magnitude and direction of the surface stress from an input geostrophic wind; and
- (3) the dispersive spread of the slick at the air-sea interface is seen as a consequence of turbulent motions, predominantly in the uppermost ocean layer.

Each of these investigations is handled by a separate principal investigator; the previous work in each case, and the reporting of current research, will be handled in three separate sections of the report to follow.

The research reported here covers the initial contract work only; the study is continuing under a second contract between NOAA and The University of Texas Atmospheric Science Group.

## II. SYNOPTIC SCALE ANALYSIS (K. H. Jehn)

### II-A. Objectives and Scope of Research

The primary objective of the synoptic scale research has been to produce a geostrophic wind of acceptable accuracy at the site of the hypothetical or actual oil spill, as input to the atmospheric boundary layer model being devised by Dr. N. K. Wagner. This objective of the first year of contract work has been accompanied by several peripheral objectives: (1) to evaluate the usefulness of existing or devised "weather types" in specifying geostrophic wind vectors; (2) to evaluate the usefulness of 24h forecasts of sea level pressure pattern (LFM) in specifying geostrophic wind vectors; and (3) to make direct correlations of anemometer-level winds at coastal and off-shore locations. These points will be considered in turn.

### II-B. Data Analysis and Results of Research

#### II-B.1. Weather Types

In view of the expected scarcity of over-water meteorological data, the original proposal anticipated the need for using existing or devised "weather types" for specifying synoptic scale pressure patterns. This problem was investigated early in the contract period.

The selection of a suitable weather type in a given situation requires an analysis of the available sea level pressure data over the (large) area of interest, and a comparison of the analyzed pattern with the weather type catalog (Sabin, et al, 1974). This was done for seven (7) winter cases. All available sea level pressures for the so-called "Texas window" were plotted, and an isobaric analysis performed by hand.



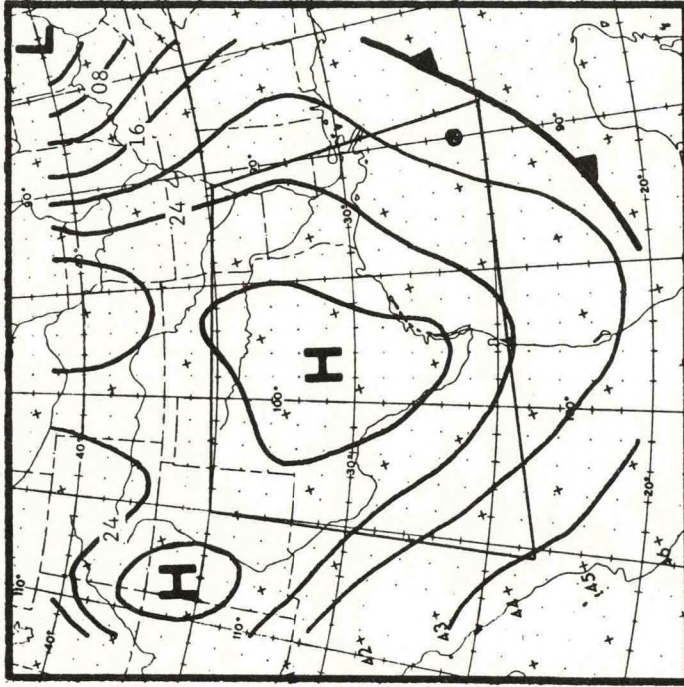
To make feasible the correlation of the sea level pressure pattern with the appropriate weather type, the pressure data were then objectively analyzed, utilizing a technique reported by Barnes (1964), with slight modifications. The fourteen weather types of the Texas "window", based on a 25-year data sample, and obtained by applying a map-pattern classification technique first developed by Lund (1963), were then correlated with each analyzed pressure pattern. The results of this analysis for 23 January and 16 February 1977 are shown in Table 1.

Table II-1. Correlation Coefficients for 14 Weather Types, Two Cases.

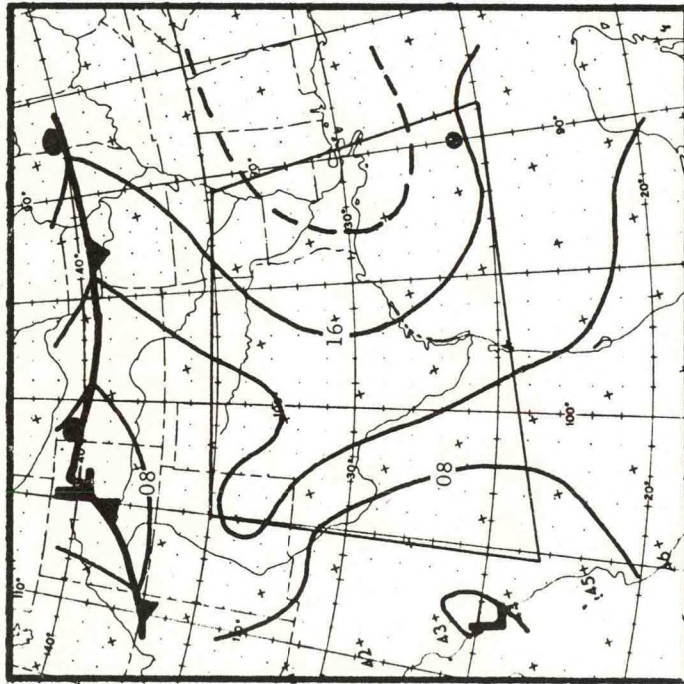
	23 Jan 77	16 Feb 77
<u>Weather Type</u> *	<u>Correlation Coefficient</u>	<u>Correlation Coefficient</u>
1	0.90 ←	-0.14
2	0.06	0.01
3	0.58	0.37
4	0.53	-0.36
5	0.61	-0.52
6	-0.76	0.33
7	-0.16	0.60 ←
8	0.60	0.56
9	0.47	-0.31
10	-0.69	-0.43
11	0.77	0.37
12	0.39	-0.79
13	0.37	-0.21
14	0.39	-0.81

\* Sabin, et al, 1974.

The weather types with the largest positive correlations were #1 on 23 January 1977 (90%), and #7 on 16 February 1977 (60%), marked with arrows in the table. The type patterns are shown in Fig. 1. These are, respectively, fairly characteristic onshore and offshore flow patterns in the Gulf of Mexico area, the former (A) usually representative of maritime tropical air, or possibly returning polar air in winter, the latter (B) usually characteristic of polar air



(B) Map Type 7



(A) Map Type 1

Figure II-1 Map types (Sabin, et al, 1974) of the Texas window which correlate with objectively analyzed sea level pressure data (see text).

invasions of the Gulf.

Since the objective of the synoptic scale research is to produce an acceptable geostrophic wind as input for the atmospheric boundary layer model, a comparison is made in Table 2 for the two cases displayed above, at a location in the Gulf chosen to correspond to a reporting point (the buoy located at  $26^{\circ}\text{N } 90^{\circ}\text{W}$ , marked with  $\theta$  in Figure 1).

Table II-2. Geostrophic Wind ( $V_g$ ), Calculated (Barnes) vs. Weather Type (Sabin) at  $26^{\circ}\text{N } 90^{\circ}\text{W}$ , and Observed Surface Wind at Same Location

	Wind Speed ( $\text{ms}^{-1}$ )	Wind Direction (degrees true)
23 January 1977		
$V_g$ , Barnes	8.0	103
$V_g$ , Weather Type #1	5.2	90
Surface Wind	$2.6 \pm 1.3$	100
16 February 1977		
$V_g$ , Barnes	7.7	58
$V_g$ , Weather Type #7	11.5	23
Surface Wind	$5.2 \pm 1.3$	360

For the 23 January case, geostrophic wind directions are in good agreement (within 13 degrees), although the weather type wind is only 65% of the objectively analyzed magnitude (from sea level pressure data). The measured surface wind is properly smaller in magnitude than either  $V_g$ , although the direction should be more like 80 degrees to more closely agree with geostrophic direction. For the 16 February case, the measured surface wind is more in line with the weather type geostrophic wind (both speed and direction) than with

the objectively analyzed sea level pressure data. It should be mentioned that the buoy location is near the southern edge of the data analysis area.

It became evident in this research that the weather types were generally not worth the considerable effort, including computer time, to obtain the correlations. If there were sufficient data for the objective analysis to give confidence in the weather type correlations, then the correlations themselves were unnecessary, since the pressure pattern is already well defined. In fact, sea level pressure data from the vicinity of any oil spill should be given a high priority, since this will improve the initial pressure pattern, and give an important first step in anticipating the direction and speed of movement of the resulting oil slick.

#### II-B.2. LFM Patterns

At this point in the research, it seemed worthwhile to investigate already available sea level pressure patterns, rather than to undertake objective analyses of surface data. At the time, the initial sea level pressure fields from the Limited-Area Fine-Mesh Primitive Equation Model (LFM) of the National Meteorological Center (NMC) were not available at The University of Texas. The LFM prognostic panels were available, however, so a study was undertaken of the LFM 24-hour prognosis of the sea level pressure field over the Gulf of Mexico area. The chief advantage of this choice was that a preliminary evaluation of the 24h forecast could be made, with some indication of the use of the prognostic series in specifying synoptic-scale air trajectories useful in forecasting oil slick movement.

The preliminary results of this research reported at the contractors'

meeting in Silver Spring on 4 August 1977 are shown in the following two tables. As before, the buoy location in the central Gulf was chosen for the comparison. Table 3 compares observed vs. predicted sea level pressure and its standard deviation; computed geostrophic wind and its standard deviation; and the root-mean-square error in geostrophic wind direction and speed. The "observed" values were extracted from the verifying surface pressure charts, and the "predicted" values were extracted from the 24h LFM panels. The first 80 cases spanned a period from winter to spring, so a shorter winter period (38 cases) was selected to match the available summer period (38 cases).

Table II-3. Comparison of Observed and Predicted (24h LFM)  
Sea Level Pressure and Geostrophic Wind  
At Buoy 26°N 90°W

Dates	Data Set	Sea Level Pressure		Geostrophic Wind		RMS Error		No. of Cases
		$\bar{P}_o$ (mb)	S.D. (mb)	$\bar{V}_{g-1}$ (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	S.D. (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	Direction (deg)	Speed (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	
5 Jan to 8 Apr 77 (12Z only)	Obs.	1017.4	5.42	10.43	4.43	41.7	5.31	(80)
	Pred.	1015.9	6.04	11.46	5.47			
11 Jan to 16 Feb 77 (12Z)	Obs.	1019.5	4.47	10.99	4.75	33.7	5.46	(38)
	Pred.	1018.2	5.28	11.46	5.59			
14 Jun to 23 Jul 77 (00Z & 12Z)	Obs.	1018.2	1.10	6.06	2.04	50.1	2.68	(38)
	Pred.	1015.2	1.46	4.77	1.99			

There was reasonable agreement between observed and predicted geostrophic wind magnitude in all three periods, but standard deviations were relatively

large, compared to the mean magnitudes of the computed geostrophic winds, except perhaps in summer, when winds over the Gulf are steadier. Moreover, root-mean-square (RMS) errors (comparisons between observed and predicted) were probably too large to be tolerated in producing oil spill trajectories. Of course, the worst cases make the largest contribution to RMS errors, and the number of cases is not large in this sample.

To examine another aspect of this situation, the period 11 Jan - 16 Feb 1977 was selected for resolving the derived geostrophic winds into components, with auto- and cross-correlations run on the resulting matched time-series. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table II-4. Comparison of Observed and Predicted (24h LFM)  
Geostrophic Wind Components  
at Buoy 26<sup>0</sup>N 90<sup>0</sup>W, and Correlation Coefficients,  
11 Jan - 16 Feb 77 (12Z)

a. Components

Data Set	East -- West Wind		North -- South Wind	
	$\bar{u}_g$ (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	S.D. $u_g$ (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	$\bar{v}_g$ (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	S.D. $v_g$ (ms <sup>-1</sup> )
Obs.	-7.56	7.73	0.03	5.14
Pred.	-5.34	9.69	0.26	6.34

b. Autocorrelation Coefficient

	$u_g$	$v_g$	(Just about significant at the 0.1 level)
Obs.	0.28	0.27	

c. Cross-correlation Coefficient

	$u_g$	$v_g$	(Significant at a level very much higher than 0.001)
Obs/Pred.	0.82	0.76	

Note that the agreement is reasonable on geostrophic components, and that the cross-correlation coefficients are significant at a level well above 0.001. Standard deviations are still large, however, compared to mean values of geostrophic components.

Since the contractors' meeting in August 1977, the synoptic scale research on LFM patterns has continued, with a view to obtaining additional cases, thus improving the statistical significance of the comparisons. Additionally, the LFM was tested over the eastern Gulf of Mexico near Tampa, FL (in the Alabama "window"), where data density was greater.

Table 5 summarizes the central Gulf data. Some information in the preceding tables is repeated; in general, the number of cases has been significantly increased.

Table II-5. 24h LFM Verification at 26°N 90°W (Buoy in Central Gulf of Mexico)

1977 dates & cases	Mean Sea Level Pressure ( $\bar{p}_0$ )			Mean Geostrophic Wind ( $\bar{V}_g$ )						
	Pred. (mb)	Stand. Dev. (mb)	Obs. (mb)	Stand. Dev. (mb)	Pred. (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	Stand. Dev. (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	Obs. (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	Stand. Dev. (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	RMS Error Azimuth (degrees)	RMS Error Speed (ms <sup>-1</sup> )
80 5 Jan- 8 April (Winter) 12Z only	1015.9	6.04	1017.4	5.42	11.46	5.47	10.43	4.43	41.7	5.31
		(Obs) - (Pred) = 1.5 mb			(Obs) - (Pred) = -1.03 ms <sup>-1</sup>					
113 14 June- 7 Sept (Summer) 00Z & 12Z	1013.9	1.80	1016.0	2.70	5.06	1.96	6.50	4.03	48.5	4.03
		(Obs) - (Pred) = 2.1 mb			(Obs) - (Pred) = 1.44 ms <sup>-1</sup>					
97 14 June- 7 Sept (Hurricane Days Removed)	1014.3	1.66	1016.9	1.70	4.73	1.78	5.46	2.15	45.2	2.39
		(Obs) - (Pred) = 2.6 mb			(Obs) - (Pred) = 0.73 ms <sup>-1</sup>					
88 10 Sept- 4 Nov (Fall) 00Z & 12Z	1014.4	2.78	1015.3	2.69	6.93	3.07	5.86	2.70	34.9	3.04
		(Obs) - (Pred) = 0.9 mb			(Obs) - (Pred) = -1.07 ms <sup>-1</sup>					
118 10 Sept- 23 Nov (Fall) (More cases)	1015.1	3.63	1015.9	3.69	7.27	3.36	6.65	3.21	36.9	3.00
		(Obs) - (Pred) = 0.8 mb			(Obs) - (Pred) = -0.62 ms <sup>-1</sup>					



Mean predicted sea level pressure is too low in all seasons, with the largest difference in summer, compared to observed. Standard deviation of sea level pressure, as expected, is smallest in summer, largest in winter. Predicted geostrophic wind from the LFM tends to be too large in the cold seasons, too small in summer, compared to observed. Root-mean-square (RMS) errors in direction are largest in summer, but RMS errors in magnitude are a minimum in the summer period with hurricane days removed (Anita and Babe occupied the Gulf area successively during the period 29 August through 6 September 1977). This finding is not unreasonable, since RMS direction errors range only between 35 and 45 degrees (neglecting summer hurricane days), and RMS speed errors would be expected to parallel the standard deviation in geostrophic wind speed.

Table 6 makes the same comparisons for the eastern Gulf of Mexico area centered near Tampa, FL. The number of cases is roughly the same. Here, LFM predicted sea level pressure is also too low in all seasons, with a maximum departure in summer, compared to observed. Standard deviations of sea level pressure follow expected patterns. With geostrophic winds, departures are negative in the cold seasons (predicted winds too strong), and positive in summer (predicted winds too weak). Standard deviations of geostrophic wind follow expected patterns. Root-mean-square errors in geostrophic wind direction are larger in summer, and RMS speed error is larger in winter, as in the central Gulf case. However, the RMS direction errors are larger near Tampa than in the central Gulf in summer, possibly because Tampa is located nearer to the center of the Bermuda-Azores anticyclone than is the buoy at  $26^{\circ}\text{N } 90^{\circ}\text{W}$ .

Table II-6. 24h LFM Verification at 28°N 83°W (near Tampa, FL)

1977 dates & Cases	Mean Sea Level Pressure ( $\bar{p}_0$ )			Mean Geostrophic Wind ( $\bar{V}_g$ )						
	Pred. (mb)	Stand. Dev. (mb)	Obs. (mb)	Stand. Dev. (mb)	Pred. ( $\text{ms}^{-1}$ )	Stand. Dev. ( $\text{ms}^{-1}$ )	Obs. ( $\text{ms}^{-1}$ )	Stand. Dev. ( $\text{ms}^{-1}$ )	RMS Error Azimuth (degrees)	RMS Error Speed ( $\text{ms}^{-1}$ )
5 Jan - 8 April (Winter) 12Z	1018.5	5.31	1019.5	4.48	11.05	4.65	8.52	3.47	44.6	4.82
		(Obs) - (Pred) = 1.0 mb			(Obs) - (Pred) = -2.53 $\text{ms}^{-1}$					
14 June - 7 Sept (Summer) 00Z & 12Z	1015.7	1.66	1018.0	1.88	4.41	2.16	5.61	3.54	53.9	3.27
		(Obs) - (Pred) = 2.3 mb			(Obs) - (Pred) = 1.20 $\text{ms}^{-1}$					
14 June - 7 Sept (Hurricane Days Removed)	1015.8	1.60	1018.4	1.71	4.11	2.05	4.68	2.49	56.6	2.42
		(Obs) - (Pred) = 2.6 mb			(Obs) - (Pred) = 0.57 $\text{ms}^{-1}$					
10 Sept - 4 Nov (Fall) 00Z & 12Z	1015.6	2.79	1016.4	2.41	5.77	3.15	5.79	3.07	49.1	2.31
		(Obs) - (Pred) = 0.8 mb			(Obs) - (Pred) = 0.02 $\text{ms}^{-1}$					

Except for this, the patterns displayed by pressure and geostrophic wind statistics are much the same at the two locations. One can infer that in 1977, at least, 24h LFM behavior at sea level over the Gulf of Mexico is well portrayed by these statistics.

Because of the seasonal variability in the LFM statistics, and the rather large RMS errors in geostrophic winds, it was decided to count predicted LFM geostrophic winds during each of the three seasons (winter, summer, fall) within pre-set limits as follows: approximately 70% in speed, and  $20^{\circ}$  in direction, compared to observed. The results are summarized in Table 7.

Table II-7. Comparison of 24h LFM With Observed Geostrophic Wind at  $26^{\circ}\text{N } 90^{\circ}\text{W}$

1977 Dates	No. of Cases	Percent of Cases		
		Predicted V $\geq 70\%$ of Observed Speed	Predicted V $\leq 20^{\circ}$ in Direction	Predicted V $\geq 70\%$ of Observed <sup>g</sup> Speed and $\leq 20^{\circ}$ in Dir.
<u>Winter</u>				
5 Jan-8 Apr	80	55	51	31
<u>Summer</u>				
14 June-7 Sept (Hurricane days removed)	97	62	62	32
<u>Fall</u>				
10 Sept-4 Nov	88	59	57	35

It would appear that through much of 1977, the probability of having a predicted geostrophic wind in the central Gulf of Mexico amounting to 70%

or more of the observed geostrophic wind speed and within 20 degrees in direction amounted to about 1 in 3, a rather dismal percentage for the particular arbitrary limits set. There is a factor of a little less than 2 to 1 involved when the limits are applied separately. There is no obvious seasonal variation in the percentages shown in the table. The longest string of days with both limits satisfied was four, February 7 through 10 1977. Lesser strings appeared in summer and fall.

These results of the examination of LFM 24h forecasts of sea level pressure and geostrophic wind are encouraging in the sense that the LFM produces very few geostrophic wind forecasts which are more than  $90^{\circ}$  off in direction (less than 5 percent) and less than 50% of the observed speed (less than 20%). For both limits simultaneously, the cases drop to less than 2% of the total number of comparisons.

### II-B.3. Correlations of Surface Winds, Land vs. Ocean Stations

The initial synoptic scale proposal indicated that correlations would be sought between land-based and over-water winds, on the grounds that plentiful data from land stations could be used to advantage to obtain over-water data. This is shown by the work of Resio and Vincent (1977) and Overland and Gemmill (1977), among others. But in all cases, atmospheric boundary layer characteristics are heavily involved. Nonetheless, some linear correlations of anemometer level winds were attempted, using Galveston (GLS) as the land station, and the offshore oil rig at  $28^{\circ}\text{N } 93^{\circ}\text{W}$  as the ocean station. The separation between the two observation points is approximately 230 kilometers. Because diurnal variations in correlation were anticipated, as well as effects of off-shore and

onshore flow, the data were stratified as shown in Table 8. Seasonal stratification was not feasible, since the total number of cases available was too small for further subdivision.

The number of onshore cases exceeded the number of offshore cases by a factor ranging from 2 at 12Z to 3 at 18Z to 7 at 00Z, evidence of a sea-breeze type circulation operating at Galveston, since the Galveston data were used to separate onshore from offshore cases. As expected, mean surface wind speed at the oil rig exceeded that at Galveston for all offshore cases, although the difference was small at 12Z, when the number of cases was largest. During onshore flow, mean surface winds at Galveston and the rig were nearly the same in magnitude, except at 12Z, when the average effect of a sea-breeze type circulation might account for the  $1.1 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  smaller wind at Galveston.

The mean absolute difference in direction of the wind at Galveston and the oil rig was consistently larger for the offshore cases than the onshore cases, and with a pronounced diurnal variation in the onshore cases, smallest at 12Z.

It was anticipated that the wind would veer or back from the rig to Galveston in individual cases, because of expected isobaric curvature. There was a pattern in the statistics, as seen in the table, where the number of cases of veering (clockwise turning of the wind from the oil rig to Galveston) during onshore flow exceeded the number of veering cases during offshore flow by a large margin, especially at 00Z. The definition of veering applies always from the oil rig to Galveston, so veering in onshore flow suggests anticyclonic isobaric curvature, and veering in offshore flow suggests cyclonic isobaric curvature.

Table II-8. Comparisons of Surface Wind at Galveston (GLS) and the Oil Rig at 28°N 93°W [19 March - 8 December 1977 (267 cases)]

Time	Flow Pattern	No. of Cases	$\bar{V}$ (GLS) (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	$\bar{V}$ (Rig) (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	Diff. (GLS)-(Rig) (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	Mean Absolute Difference		No. of Cases Veer	Mean Diff. Veer (degrees)	No. of Cases Back	Mean Diff. Back (degrees)	Corre. Coeff. (GLS) vs (Rig)
						Speed (ms <sup>-1</sup> )	Dir. (deg.)					
(a)	12Z	(offshore flow)	33	4.2	4.6	0.4	1.9	59	21	11		0.57
		(onshore flow)	59	4.5	5.6	1.1	2.0	33	43	10		0.53
		(total)	92						49			-45
(b)	18Z	(offshore flow)	16	4.5	6.6	2.1	3.1	55	12	3		0.63
		(onshore flow)	51	5.7	5.3	-0.4	2.5	40	34	12		-0.03
		(total)	67						45			-58
(c)	00Z	(offshore flow)	13	5.3	7.4	2.1	4.3	55	9	4		0.09
		(onshore flow)	95	5.1	4.9	-0.2	2.4	54	66	25		0.31
		(total)	108						54			-59
(d) Combined Statistics, 268 cases												
	Offshore	62	4.5	5.7	1.2	2.7	57	42	61	18		0.52
	Onshore	206	5.1	5.2	0.1	2.3	44	144	46	47		0.28

Similarly, there was a pattern in the backing cases (wind turning counterclockwise from the oil rig to Galveston), although the difference was noticeable only at 18Z and 00Z. As to the angles involved in veering and backing, the number of cases was too small to subdivide into offshore and onshore flow at the three times (12Z, 18Z, 00Z), so an average veering and backing angle is given for each time, with offshore and onshore cases combined. Since the average veering and backing angles range only from 45 degrees to 60 degrees, approximately, it was thought worthwhile to do a set of combined statistics (12Z, 18Z, and 00Z) as part (d) of the table. The combined statistics eliminated the diurnal variations noted in (a), (b), and (c), but emphasize the offshore versus onshore flow pattern already mentioned. Additionally, it is seen that the offshore veering angle (cyclonic curvature) exceeds the onshore veering angle, a not unexpected finding in view of the cyclonic storms which move across the northern Gulf. The backing angles are nearly alike in both offshore and onshore flow, suggesting that onshore cyclonic flows differ little in curvature from offshore anticyclonic flows in the region between Galveston and the oil rig some 230 km to the southeast, although the average angle is rather large, especially in offshore flow, between the surface wind directions at the two locations.

Surprisingly, correlation coefficients for surface wind speeds in offshore flow exceeded those in onshore flow, except at 00Z. Overall, the offshore correlation coefficient significantly exceeded the coefficient for onshore flow.

### III. ATMOSPHERIC BOUNDARY LAYER STRUCTURE (N. K. Wagner)

In the idealized situation, a given synoptic scale atmospheric structure will be associated with a unique planetary boundary layer configuration. This in turn will produce surface water movement in response to the tangential stresses at the air-ocean interface. The planetary boundary layer is essentially driven by the "external" synoptic scale and transfers momentum to (or on rare occasions, from) the oceanic lower boundary. In what follows it is assumed that the synoptic scale structure is known and that a prediction of the direction and speed of the surface water (or oil) movement will be obtained from appropriate atmospheric boundary layer, air-ocean interface, and oceanic models.

Equations for the structure of the horizontally homogeneous, steady-state planetary boundary layer can be obtained from Rossby-number similarity theory. Assuming a linear variation of geostrophic wind ( $\vec{V}_{go}$ ) with height and a height scaling parameter  $u_*/f$  gives equations (1) and (2) for the diabatic, baroclinic planetary boundary layer [see Hess (1973) and Clarke and Hess (1974)] where  $\mu$  is a dimensionless stability parameter involving the von Karmán constant  $k$ , friction velocity  $u_*$ , Coriolis parameter  $f$ , and the Obukhov length  $L$ ;  $T$ ,  $\rho$  and  $c_p$  are the temperature, density and specific heat capacity at constant pressure of air,  $g$  is the acceleration of gravity, and  $Q_H$  is the vertical heat flux.

$$\ln R_o = A(\mu, \hat{S}_x, \hat{S}_y) - \ln (u_*/|\vec{V}_{go}|) + [k^2 |\vec{V}_{go}|^2 / u_*^2 - B^2(\mu, \hat{S}_x, \hat{S}_y)]^{1/2} \quad (\text{III-1})$$

$$\sin \theta = (Bu_*) / (k|\vec{V}_{go}|) \quad (\text{III-2})$$



where

$$\mu = ku_*/fL, \quad L = -(u_*^3 T \rho c_p)/(k g Q_H), \quad R_o = |\vec{V}_{go}|/(f Z_o)$$

$$\hat{S}_x = \frac{k^2}{f} \frac{\partial u}{\partial z} g \doteq - \frac{k^2 g}{f^2 T} \frac{\partial T}{\partial y}$$

and

$$\hat{S}_y = \frac{k^2}{f} \frac{\partial v}{\partial z} g \doteq \frac{k^2 g}{f^2 T} \frac{\partial T}{\partial x}$$

Dimensionless baroclinic parameters are given by  $\hat{S}_x$  and  $\hat{S}_y$  where the x-axis is in the direction of the surface wind,  $R_o$  is the surface Rossby number, and the angle  $\theta$  is measured positive from the surface geostrophic wind to the surface stress.

The functions A and B are presumably universal functions to be evaluated experimentally. Because the amount of field data suitable for this type of evaluation is very limited, several researchers have analyzed essentially the same data with somewhat differing results [Clarke and Hess (1974), Arya (1975), Arya and Wyngaard (1975) and others.] Many of these have been summarized recently by McBean (1976). The magnitude of the diabatic function  $\mu$  should never be very large over the open ocean, that is generally  $|\mu| \leq 90$ . For a rough comparison,  $\mu = 90$  would be associated with an air-ocean temperature difference of about  $10C^0$ . Hence, the cubic term of Arya (1975) may be neglected. Taking some liberties in adjusting the remaining coefficients and utilizing the baroclinic coefficients given by Clarke and Hess (1975) yields equations (3) and (4).

$$A(\mu, \hat{S}_x, \hat{S}_y) = A(\mu) + 0.20 \hat{S}_x - 0.04 \hat{S}_y \quad (\text{III-3})$$

$$B(\mu, \hat{S}_x, \hat{S}_y) = B(\mu) - 0.32 \hat{S}_x + 0.33 \hat{S}_y \quad (\text{III-4})$$

where

$$A(\mu) = A_0 - 0.10\mu - 0.001\mu^2$$

$$B(\mu) = B_0 + 0.13\mu + 0.001\mu^2$$

except when  $\mu < -50$ , then  $A(\mu) = A(-50) = 3.50$  and  $B(\mu) = B(-50) = 1.00$ .

Neutral barotropic values of  $A_0 = 1.00$  and  $B_0 = 5.00$  will be used in later examples. These are close to those determined by Arya (1975).

Equations (1) and (2) can be solved for the expected range of values for A and B. From equation (1) a family of B curves can be obtained as a function of  $\ln R_0 - A$  on abscissa and  $u_* / |\vec{V}_{go}|$  on ordinate. This was done by Clarke and Hess (1974). All values have been recomputed and plotted in slightly different form in Figure III-1. Equation 2 can also be displayed in graphical form. A family of B curves appears in Figure III-2 with  $u_* / |\vec{V}_{go}|$  as the abscissa and  $\theta$  as the ordinate.

For barotropic, adiabatic conditions these graphs provide a quick and convenient means for obtaining surface stress (i.e.  $u_*$ ) and the cross-isobaric angle of the surface wind. For example, with  $\vec{V}_{go} = 10 \text{ ms}^{-1}$ ,  $f = 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ,  $A_0 = 1.0$ ,  $B_0 = 5.0$ , and a site roughness  $Z_0 = 1 \text{ cm}$ , then  $R_0 = 10^7$ , and  $\ln R_0 - A = 15.12$ . From Figure 1,  $u_* / |\vec{V}_{go}| = 0.031$  or  $u_* = 31 \text{ cm s}^{-1}$ . From Figure 2 it is then found that  $\theta = 23^\circ$ . Thus, for an air density of  $1.2 \times 10^{-3} \text{ gm cm}^{-3}$ , a surface stress of  $1.15 \text{ dynes cm}^{-2}$  is determined, directed at an angle of  $23^\circ$  across the isobars toward lower pressure.

Application of this scheme to the open ocean for neutral barotropic conditions presents a slight additional complication since the surface roughness may be a function of surface stress. For illustrative purposes, a friction velocity-roughness parameter relation is assumed of the form proposed by Charnock (1955) and given by equation (5), where m is a constant.

$$Z_0 = \frac{m}{g} u_*^2 \doteq (1.63 \times 10^{-5} \text{ cm}^{-1} \text{ s}^2) u_*^2 \quad (\text{III-5})$$

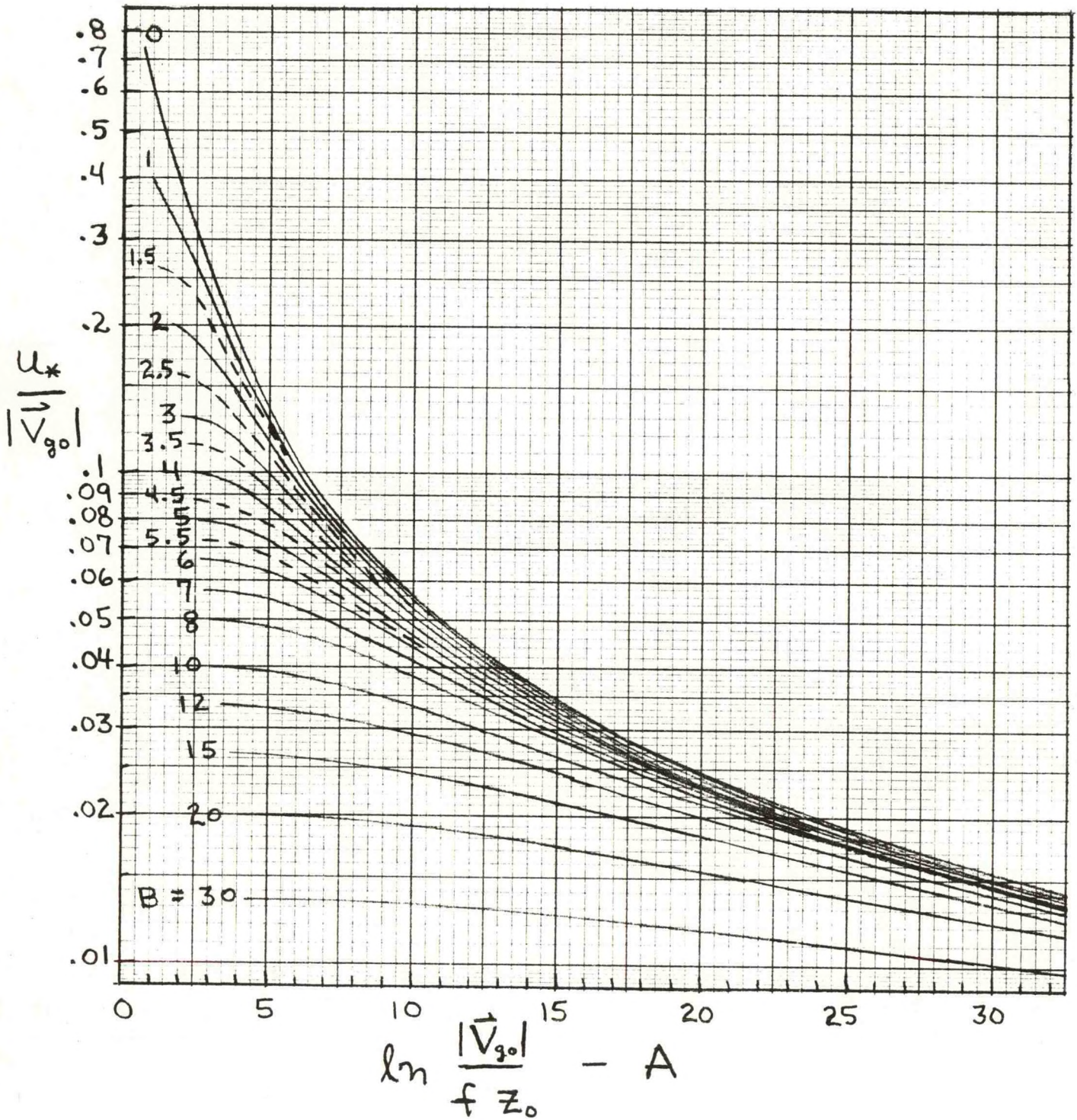


Figure III-1: Rossby-number similarity relation for  $u_*/|\vec{V}_{g0}|$  and  $A$  from equation 1 plotted for various values of  $B$ . Note that equation 1 is quadratic in  $B$ , hence the lines apply to both positive and negative values of  $B$ .

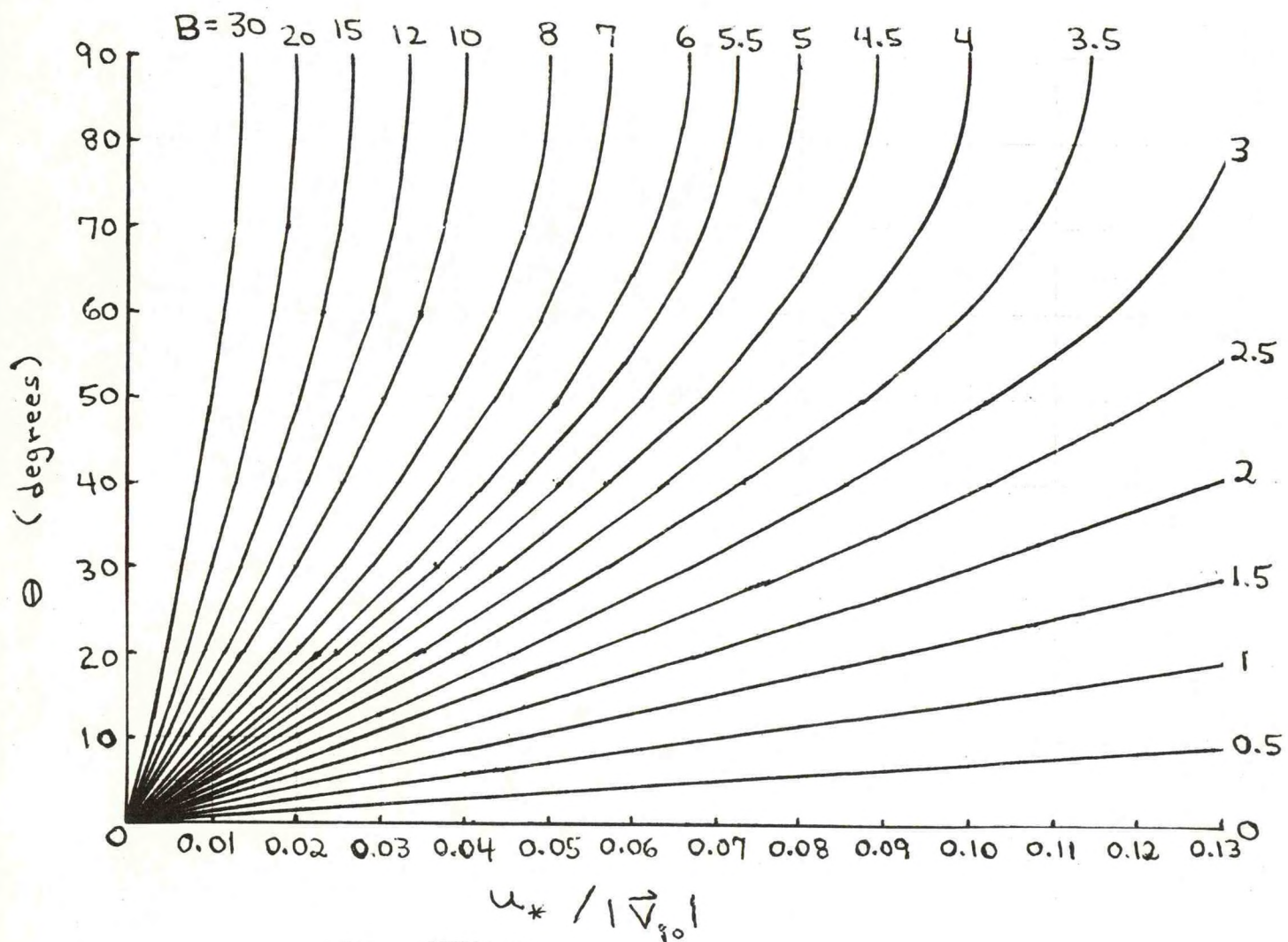


Figure III - 2: Rossby-number similarity relation for the angle  $\theta$  between the surface wind and the surface geostrophic wind (equation 2) plotted for various values of  $B$ . The quantities  $B$  and  $\theta$  will have the same algebraic sign.

A value of  $m = 0.016$  is used [Wu (1969), Hicks (1972, 1975)]. Because  $Z_0$  is assumed to be a function of the friction velocity, Figure 1 now requires iteration. A first guess  $Z_0$  gives a first guess surface Rossby number, which in turn provides an associated  $u_*$ . This  $u_*$  is used to give a new value for  $Z_0$  by equation 5, a new Rossby number and hence a new  $u_*$ . Convergence is rapid with any reasonable  $Z_0$  first guess. Once the value of  $u_*$  is obtained,  $\theta$  can be determined from Figure 2 as before. Using the same initial values as in the previous example, it is found over the water that  $u_* = 23 \text{ cm s}^{-1}$  with  $Z_0 = 0.0086 \text{ cm}$  and  $\theta = 17^\circ$ . It should be pointed out that this iterative step is necessary only if the surface roughness is assumed to be a function of the external forcing functions, in this case  $u_*$  through the geostrophic wind speed. If  $Z_0$  is assumed constant, then no iteration is necessary, and the solution proceeds as in the first example. The evaluation of surface roughness over the ocean is still a subject of lively debate and represents an area that deserves additional study.

The next level of complication includes diabatic effects. Much of the time the air over the open ocean is in nearly neutral stratification, and hence the adiabatic assumption employed in the previous two examples would be valid. However, important exceptions occasionally occur; for example, air may flow over cold or warm ocean currents, or cold or warm fronts may move through the area. In diabatic conditions the stability parameter  $\mu$  is required. Sufficient accuracy for the vertical heat flux can probably be obtained by bulk transfer methods such as discussed by Hicks (1975) and Haase and Dunckel (1974). The main requirement is information on the air-sea temperature difference, which presumably would be obtained by ship reports or from satellite data.

Notice that since  $\mu$  is a function of  $u_*$ , it will have to be included in the friction velocity iteration loop. Selecting a first guess  $Z_0$ , the friction velocity is computed from equation 5 and used to calculate  $\mu$ . This  $\mu$  is then used to determine  $A(\mu)$  and  $B(\mu)$ . Figure 1 is then utilized to obtain a "better"  $u_*$  and new values for  $\mu$ ,  $A$ ,  $B$ , and  $Z_0$ . Figure 1 is then used again as needed. Once convergence is reached to a sufficiently precise value for  $u_*$  and  $B$ , these values can be used to determine  $\theta$  from Figure 2. Increasing stability ( $\mu > 0$ ) gives  $A < A_0$  and  $B > B_0$ . This results in decreased  $u_*$  (from Figure 1) and increased  $\theta$  (from Figure 2) as compared to neutral conditions [see for example, Clark (1975)]. Unstable conditions ( $\mu < 0$ ) are associated with  $A > A_0$  and  $B < B_0$  and yields increased  $u_*$  from Figure 1 and decreased  $\theta$  from Figure 2.

In neutral baroclinic conditions,  $\mu = 0$  but  $\hat{S}_x$  and  $\hat{S}_y \neq 0$ . Following Clarke and Hess (1974), the following difficulty is encountered: The x-axis is defined by the direction of the surface wind. But to know the direction of the surface wind (or equivalently,  $\theta$ ), values of the Rossby number similarity functions  $A$  and  $B$  must be known. But  $A$  and  $B$  depend on  $\hat{S}_x$  and  $\hat{S}_y$ . Hence the direction of the x and y axes needs to be known before  $A$  and  $B$  can be explicitly computed.

Solution to this problem again involves iterative techniques. A first estimate of the x direction can be obtained from the barotropic model. The first estimates of the baroclinic functions  $\hat{S}_x$  and  $\hat{S}_y$  are then computed and used to calculate new values for  $A$  and  $B$ . These are used in Figures 1 and 2 to obtain a better estimate of the orientation of the x-axis, and so on. Convergence is anticipated for all reasonable combinations of the various quantities. Consider the following example: Assume  $f = 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$  and  $\vec{V}_{go} = 10 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  from  $315^\circ$  (i.e. the surface isobars are oriented

northwest-southeast with lower pressure toward the northeast). The mean isotherms in the boundary layer are oriented perpendicular to the flow with colder air to the northwest. The temperature gradient is taken to be  $3^{\circ}\text{C}$  per degree latitude (or  $2.7 \times 10^{-5} \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C m}^{-1}$ ). For a mean temperature of  $7^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $280^{\circ}\text{K}$ ) and  $g = 9.81 \text{ ms}^{-2}$  this gives  $|\frac{\partial \bar{V}g}{\partial z}| = 9.46 \times 10^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$  and  $|\hat{S}| = [\hat{S}_x^2 + \hat{S}_y^2]^{\frac{1}{2}} = 15.14$ . The barotropic solution gives  $Z_0 = 0.0086 \text{ cm}$ ,  $u_* = 23 \text{ cm s}^{-1}$  and  $\theta = 17^{\circ}$ . Using this value of  $\theta$  yields  $\hat{S}_x = 4.68$  and  $\hat{S}_y = 14.40$ ; then  $A(\hat{S}_x, \hat{S}_y) = 1.36$  and  $B(\hat{S}_x, \hat{S}_y) = 8.25$ . Iteration on  $u_*$  and  $Z_0$  eventually results in a friction velocity of  $23.3 \text{ cm s}^{-1}$  and a value of  $\theta$  slightly less than  $26^{\circ}$ . This represents an additional nearly  $9^{\circ}$  of backing due to the baroclinity of the atmospheric boundary layer.

A flow diagram for performing computations for all the preceding cases as well as the most general diabatic-baroclinic case is shown in Figure III-3. A computer program for this flow diagram has been written.

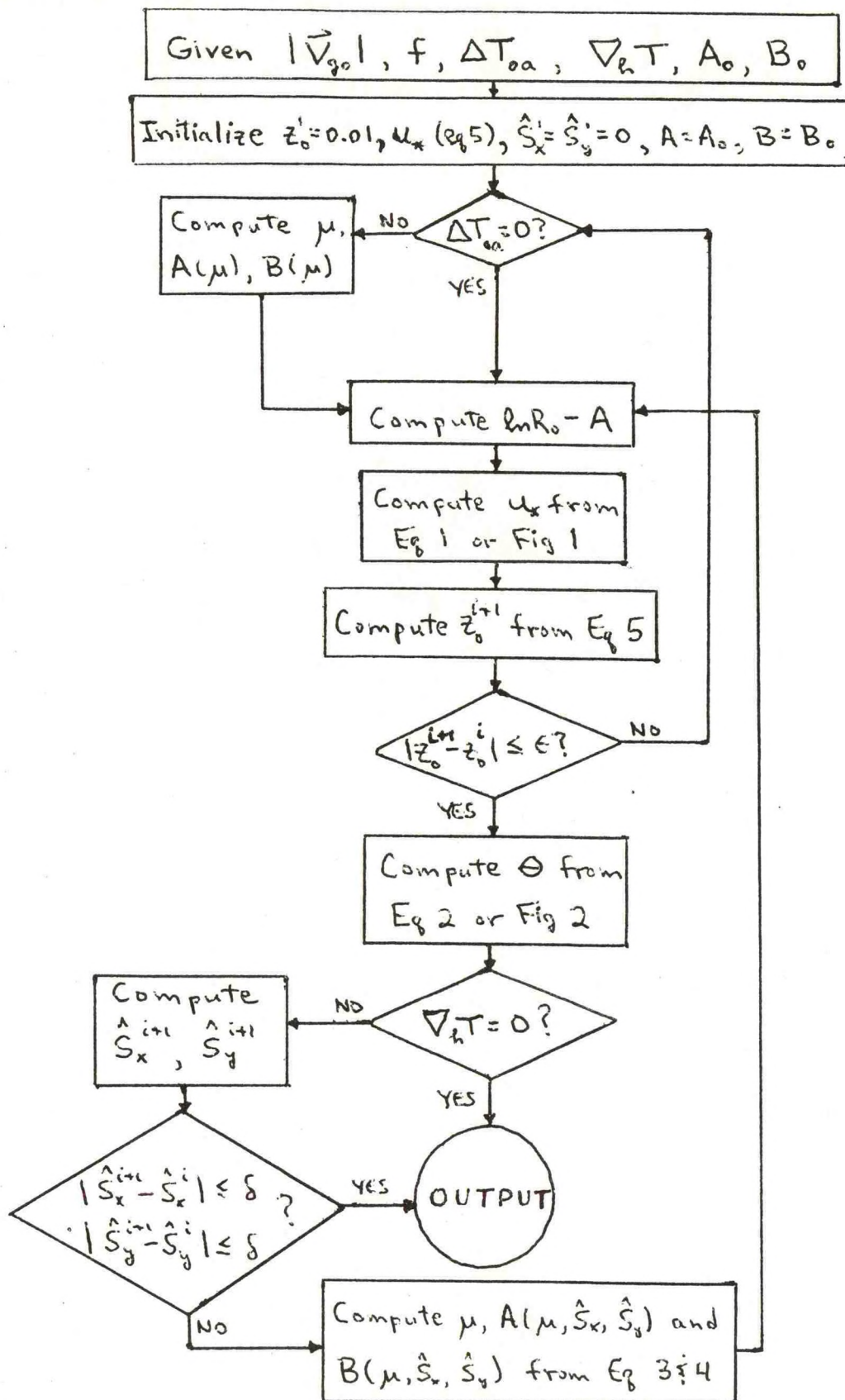


Figure III-3: Flow diagram for evaluating the magnitude and direction of the surface stress for the diabatic, baroclinic, steady-state atmospheric boundary layer.



#### IV. OCEAN SURFACE TURBULENCE STUDIES (R. W. Miksad)

##### IV-A. Research Topic Background

The spread of oil on the ocean is customarily viewed as being due to the action of forces arising from either the properties of the slick itself (i.e. density differences and surface tension) or from external influences such as turbulent stresses due to random ocean movements. Spreading due to slick properties will be referred to as "dynamic spreading", while spreading caused by random external influences will be referred to here as "dispersive spreading."

Existing models of "dynamic spreading" have not taken oceanic turbulence effects into account. The most popular models are due to Fay (1969) and Hoult (1972) and assume a quiescent laminar water layer on which a constant-property oil spill spreads, the spreading being due either to gravity or surface tension, and inhibited by inertia or viscous drag. Fay and Hoult find that four basic spreading stages exist; viz.,

<u>SPREADING FORCE</u>	<u>RETARDING FORCE</u>	<u>CHARACTERISTIC SLICK LENGTH VARIATION WITH TIME</u>	<u>SLICK AREA VARIATION WITH TIME</u>
Gravity	Inertia	$l \sim \left( \frac{\Delta\rho}{\rho} g \Psi \right)^{1/4} t^{1/2}$	$A \sim t$
Gravity	Dynamic Pressure	"	$A \sim t$
Gravity	Viscous Drag	$l \sim \left( \frac{\Delta\rho}{\rho} \frac{g\Psi^2}{v^{1/2}} \right)^{1/6} t^{1/4}$	$A \sim t^{1/2}$
Surface Tension	Viscous Drag	$l \sim (S_{o/w}^2 / \rho^2 v) t^{3/4}$	$A \sim t^{3/2}$

where  $l$  = characteristic slick length

$\Delta\rho = \rho_{H_2O} - \rho_{oil}$  (density difference)

$\Psi$  = slick volume

$v$  = kinematic viscosity of the oil

$S_{o/w}$  = surface tension spreading coefficient of oil on water

For deep ocean situations, (where several days to several weeks may elapse before a spill reaches shore or sinks due to weathering), it is the long time behavior of slick spreading which is of primary concern. As pointed out by Fay (1969), the time of residence in the inertial and viscous stages of spreading depends on the volume of spilled oil, while the residence time in the final surface tension stage depends on the rate at which the net surface tension characteristics of the slick change with time. For very large spills, such as the 20,000 ton Torrey Canyon discharge, it may take a day or so for a slick to enter the final surface tension stage. For smaller spills, the surface tension stage may be reached within hours after release. In the Fay-Hoult formulation, the surface tension stage is the final stage of spread, and slick area should increase as  $t^{3/2}$ . As can be seen in Fay's data and in subsequent work discussed by Stolzenbach et al (1977), dynamic spreading theory consistently underpredicts final spill size growth rates and eventual final spill size areas. The failure of dynamic spreading models to predict long-time slick behavior is apparently due to their neglect of dispersive spreading induced by oceanic turbulence. This neglect becomes more important as time progresses and the slick grows larger.

"Dispersive spreading" is produced by the effects of shear stresses exerted on the oil slick surface by random water movements. Dispersive spreading is basically a problem in relative diffusion (i.e. diffusion relative to the slick center of mass), and should be viewed in a coordinate frame that moves with the center of mass (Csanady, 1973). Also, although dispersive spreading is produced by the action of random stresses, its complexity forces us to view it in terms of turbulent kinematics. By kinematics, we mean that passive particles (tracers) in a turbulent

field will spread with time, and this spreading can be related to the kinematics of the turbulent flow field. Of course, unless an oil slick breaks up into many smaller patches it cannot be considered as a collection of discrete tracers, and the general relation between the spreading of a continuous slick and that of a collection of passive tracers has yet to be established.

However, recent measurements of turbulent spreading of oil by Murray (1972), and Drapeau et al (1974) indicate that a direct connection may indeed exist between the spreading of oil slicks at long times, and the turbulent spreading rates of passive tracers in the water column beneath the spreading oil slick. Drapeau's measurements are of most interest since they involved relatively small releases (370 and 500 liters) of Venezuelan crude oil. The small releases insured a relatively short stay in the inertial and gravity stages of dynamic spreading. Furthermore, measurements of dissolution of the oil with time indicated that the higher spreading rate, more volatile constituents, left the slick within a short period of time after release. Thus, the net surface tension coefficient of the residual was reduced very quickly, and the final stage of dynamic spreading, which is due to surface tension, was limited in duration and intensity, if indeed it was able to occur at all. However, Drapeau's measurements showed extensive long term spreading. Since this long term spreading was apparently not driven by surface tension, it must have been due to surface turbulence. Thus, Drapeau's data seem to provide an excellent example of turbulence-induced spreading. According to Drapeau's data, the area of his measured slicks increased with time as

$$A \sim t^n$$

$$\text{where } 2.65 < n < 3.15$$

which is a much more rapid time dependence than the  $t^{3/2}$  rate predicted by Fay (1969) for the final surface tension stage of dynamic spreading, and significantly greater than the rates predicted for either of the earlier gravity or inertial dynamic spreading stages.

We can gain some insight into the meaning of Drapeau's results for continuous slicks if we consider existing experimental data and theory on the spread of passive tracers in the turbulent ocean surface layer. The variance  $\sigma^2$  of a dye patch, or discrete tracer cluster, is a reasonable measure of the area of coverage.

Batchelor (1952) has shown that the variance and hence the area of coverage of passive tracers in a horizontally homogeneous turbulent field undergoing relative diffusion should theoretically grow as

$$\sigma^2 \sim t^{3.00}$$

when the characteristic cluster or patch scale is larger than the Kolmogoroff eddy scale but smaller than that of the energy-containing eddies, (i.e. in the so-called inertial sub-range of turbulence). Experimental confirmation of this relative dispersion time dependence can be found in various oceanic spreading measurements, analyzed by Okubo (1974) which show that over some 10 decades of oceanic scales, passive surface tracers spread as

$$\sigma^2 \approx t^{2.34}$$

while on a local scale (i.e. one to two decades) they spread somewhat faster, as

$$\sigma^2 \approx t^3$$

The area spreading rates found by Drapeau for a continuous oil slick agree quite well with that expected from theory and experiment

for the turbulent spreading of discrete passive tracers and continuous dye patches in the water column beneath the slick. Thus, there is good reason to suspect that in the final stage of oil slick spreading, the spreading forces exerted on a continuous slick are due to oceanic turbulent stresses and that the final rates of dispersive slick spreading are related to the rate at which passive tracers disperse in the oceanic surface layers. Furthermore, if a slick does break up into a cluster of smaller slicks, then the net spread of this cluster relative to its center of mass will also be due to oceanic surface turbulence and should be governed by the same relative dispersion constraints.

#### IV-B. Contract Activity

The premise of this portion of the funded research program is that the dispersive spread of an oil slick is due to the action of random stresses on its surface, and that the action of these stresses can be related to the kinematics of the ocean surface layer turbulence.

The objectives of this first year's research effort have been:

- (1) To construct an experimental research apparatus which can be used to study surface layer relative dispersion under controlled conditions.
- (2) To conduct experiments to study the dispersive spreading of passive surface tracers in order to verify the relative dispersion characteristics of our apparatus vis à vis oceanic behavior of clusters of discrete surface tracers.
- (3) To lay the ground work for subsequent experiments (to be conducted during the second year of this contract) to study the connection between the spread of continuous oil slicks, and the dispersive spread of passive tracers within the turbulent water layer acting on the slick.

Contract activity to date has proceeded along two complementary lines.

First, a literature study has been made of oil slick characteristics, and of existing measurements on the influence of oceanic turbulence on oil spill spreading rates. This information has been analyzed in the context of theories and experiments on relative diffusion to aid us in the design of our laboratory experiments. A combined bibliography of selected literature is attached to this final report.

Secondly, laboratory experiments have been conducted, specifically designed to study the relation between slick spreading rates (due to oceanic turbulence) on the one hand, and passive tracer spreading (due to turbulent kinematics) on the other.

In order to study dispersive spreading, a facility has been constructed to generate a horizontally homogeneous turbulent field in a water surface layer. Experiments have been conducted in an 89 x 89 cm square by 46 cm deep water tank. A horizontally homogeneous turbulent field is generated by vertically oscillating a horizontal grid of 1 cm square plexiglass bars placed beneath the water surface, at precisely controlled frequencies and distance of travel [Thompson and Turner (1975)]. The spacing of bars in the grid is 5 cm on centers.

The experiments are progressing through five stages:

- I. Flow visualization of the surface layer turbulence generated by an oscillating grid.
- II. Measurements of the kinematics of two-particle relative diffusion in the surface layer.
- III. Measurements of the kinematics of particle cluster spreading in the surface layer.

IV. Quantitative measurements of the turbulent field spectral characteristics.

V. Measurements of oil spill equilibrium lens spreading due to surface layer turbulence.

Contract activity during the first year has been placed on stages I, II, and III. The guiding principle is to understand the basic behavior of each stage before proceeding to the next. One need only consider the general lack of understanding of the turbulent spreading of discrete passive tracers to appreciate the need for establishing the nature of the turbulent behavior of this experiment before one proceeds to the even less understood problem of the spread of a continuous slick of oil.

As is common in most experiments, a significant portion of the first year effort has been expended in designing, machining, fine tuning, and calibrating the apparatus so that it functions properly and produces a physically meaningful representation of oceanic conditions. Considerable effort has been expended in finding the proper combination of grid oscillation frequency, grid throw, and water depth above the grid, to insure the generation of a reasonably horizontally homogeneous turbulent field in the water surface layer.

Experiments have been conducted to check the dispersive nature of surface layer turbulence generated in the tank. The results of two-point relative dispersion measurements were reported on at the contractors' meeting in August 1977. Spreading in the apparatus follows the so-called  $4/3$ -power law dependence of turbulent diffusivity on patch size that is characteristic of the inertial sub-range of turbulent theory, and apparently representative of spreading on the ocean surface (Okubo, 1974). Subsequent experiments have studied the relative dispersion of clusters

of passive particles in the turbulent surface layer. The results of these experiments have established that the basic dispersion of passive surface tracers in the apparatus does indeed follow the  $4/3$ -power law. This work on cluster spreadings formed the basis of a Master of Science thesis by Mr. K. Zimmerman, and is included as an Appendix to this final report.



## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK.

The synoptic scale analysis during the contract period has accomplished the main objectives of the research for the first year, including sea level pressure analyses for the Texas and Alabama "windows," and the correlation of surface wind velocity between coastal stations and offshore oil platforms.

The pressure analyses have specified geostrophic wind vectors at two locations, one in the central Gulf of Mexico (a data-sparse area), the other near Tampa, FL in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Still needed is a specification of the accuracy of geostrophic wind input needed for the boundary layer model to function effectively, compared to the accuracy of geostrophic wind possible from sea level pressure analyses at initial time. Part of this problem can be addressed by specifying geostrophic winds from the LFM initial panels for the Gulf of Mexico area. The remainder will involve a sensitivity analysis of the atmospheric boundary layer model. Both of these aspects will be addressed in the contract renewal period.

Comparison of surface winds at Galveston and the offshore oil rig 230 km to the southeast of Galveston has revealed some interesting relationships which may have value in near-shore spills. The linear correlation coefficients, however, have not been particularly useful, mostly because stratification by boundary layer characteristics has not been attempted. Data for such an analysis are not readily available, so it is unlikely that this problem will be seriously pursued in the contract renewal period. Our attention should really be centered on techniques for producing the best possible geostrophic wind vector over

the open Gulf, and in supplying the necessary analyses to give other inputs to the diabatic and baroclinic boundary layer model.

The Technique Development Laboratory has provided computer tapes of initial sea level pressure analyses at 00Z and 12Z for the period December 1976 through December 1977, plus prognostic fields out to 48 hours, for the Gulf of Mexico and adjacent areas of the southeastern U.S. These data tapes should prove useful in removing some of the uncertainties still present in the statistics displayed in Tables 3 through 7 in Section II of this report. Beyond that, it would be worthwhile to assess the value of LFM geostrophic wind forecasts at 12, 24, 36, and 48 hours for use in constructing geostrophic trajectories, as well as their value as direct input to the atmospheric boundary layer model and the resulting surface air trajectories.

As to the atmospheric boundary layer itself (Section III), many shortcomings are contained in the present model. The work currently in progress seeks to reduce these shortcomings. For example, it is necessary to couple the atmosphere to the ocean. This has been done by Spillane (1971), Clark and Hess (1975), and Hess (1975). Their results need to be examined critically in the context of the oil spill problem, and improved to the extent possible.

The significance of acceleration of the mean wind in the boundary layer should also be examined. Recent investigations by Mahrt (1974, 1975) and Augstein and Heinricy (1976) may be of value. Short term accelerations associated with gusty winds could also contribute to enhanced dispersion of the oil.

Even a perfect planetary boundary layer model will be of little

value if either the synoptic conditions or the oceanic coupling is inadequately or inaccurately specified. Put another way, there is little point in having a boundary layer model any more complicated than necessary to be consistent with the synoptic input and oceanic coupling output. Continued research in all three areas is required.

The air-sea interaction research has successfully utilized a piece of laboratory apparatus which generates a turbulent surface layer field which can be used to study the turbulent spreading of oil slicks under controlled conditions. Experiments have been successfully conducted to check the relative dispersion of passive surface tracers in the apparatus. The experimental results agree with theoretical conjectures on relative diffusion. More importantly, they also agree with previous experimental measurements of dispersion in the ocean at larger scales. The necessary ground-work has thus been laid for the second year study which will investigate the direct connection between continuous spill spreading, and dispersive discrete particle spreading.

Detailed discussions of the experimental apparatus and methodology, data accumulation and analysis techniques, and relevance of the laboratory results to those of other research on oceanic spreading can be found in the attached Appendix.

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\*BL= boundary layer; SS= synoptic scale; A/S= air/sea interaction.

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