Kelly Savoie (00:00):

Hello, Clear Skies Ahead listeners. This is Kelly Savoie, and I'm hoping you can take a moment of your time to rate and review our show wherever you listen to podcasts. We have produced over 100 episodes, and you can help us reach even more individuals that will benefit from the diverse experiences shared by our guests. Thanks so much for listening, and I hope you enjoyed this new episode.

Welcome to the American Meteorological Society's podcast series, Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations About Careers in Meteorology and Beyond. I'm Kelly Savoie, and I'm here with Emma Collins, and we'll be your hosts. We're excited to give you the opportunity to step into the shoes of an expert working in weather, water, and climate sciences.

Emma Collins (00:53):

We're happy to introduce today's guest, Tim Gallaudet, who was the Acting Deputy NOAA Administrator. Welcome, Tim. Thanks so much for joining us today.

Tim Gallaudet (01:01):

Hey, it's great to be here, Emma and Kelly. Thanks for having me.

Kelly Savoie (01:04):

Tim, could you tell us a little bit about what sparked your interest in science and how it influenced your educational path?

Tim Gallaudet (01:10):

Sure. I grew up in Southern California and I went to the beach a lot to swim and surf. And I just became enamored with the ocean, and I really wanted to understand how it works and learn about ocean science. And then it kind of crystallized when I got in touch with Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla near San Diego. And when I learned that there was an institution dedicated to instructing ocean science and developing early career professionals in that field, I thought that's what I want to do. And in time, I learned that at the US Naval Academy, there was a Scripps scholarship available. And I thought, how perfect. I could go to the academy, learn about ocean science, maybe get that degree, and then work on the ocean and do that kind of work for a living. And that's just how it all started.

(02:06):

And that's the path I followed.

Kelly Savoie (02:08):

It's so funny. We've talked to a few people in oceanography and they all have had some passion for surfing. I'd be curious to see how many oceanographers that was their passion, surfing, and that's what got them interested in it.

Tim Gallaudet (02:23):

Yeah, one way or another. You go to Scripps, for example, and if they weren't already surfers, they quickly became surfers because there's the pier right there and a pretty decent break. And I won't lie, I spent some time in the lineup and enjoyed every bit of it.

Emma Collins (02:39):

So you had that scholarship, but can you tell us about some other opportunities that you might've pursued that you knew would be beneficial for securing a job once you graduated?

Tim Gallaudet (02:47):

Well, yeah. So when you go to the Naval Academy, you are commissioned an officer in the Navy or Marine Corps, and so you immediately have employment. And it was unique for me because to become an oceanography officer, which does oceanography, meteorology, and hydrography, that profession is not always open to graduates right away. But I was fortunate because going into the Scripps graduate program there for my master's first, and I came back, got the PhD, that allowed me to go into the Naval Oceanography specialty. And then there I branched out and learned all about weather and some other disciplines and just absolutely enjoyed it for 32 years. It was just a great, great career.

Kelly Savoie (03:32):

So what was your actual first job in the field? Specifically, what types of duties were you doing and how did you end up where you are at this point?

Tim Gallaudet (03:41):

Okay. Well, I'll start out, first job was on an oceanographic ship called the USNS Harkness. And it was really interesting because when I was at the Naval Academy, I selected this ship naively because it was in Indonesia and it was doing hydrographic surveys, collecting bathymetric data to update the nautical charts around Indonesia. And I thought, oh my gosh, they're making port calls in Bali and other…Jakarta… And I said, "This is where I want to go." It was a slogan for the Navy at the time in the '80s, "Join the Navy, See the World". And that was really what I wanted to do. So I did that, but a thing called the First Gulf War broke out. And a lot of naval forces went into the Arabian Gulf and the Arabian Sea area to execute Desert Storm. And that made now, and ever since

really, for the last two and a half decades, we had a permanent presence in the Middle East.

(04:40):

And when the Naval aircraft carriers went into the Arabian Gulf for that war, they realized, “Oh my gosh, all these charts are a hundred years old and they need updating”. And a lot of them had, they said, “Latest survey, Royal Admiralty of 1888.” And so the currents move not only bathymetric features, so you have movement of those, but you also have sedimentation and you have potential hazards that have to be mapped like shipwrecks. And there were actually several abandoned oil derricks and whatnot. So the charts were very old and it was very unsafe to navigate with a large aircraft carrier strike group. So that update, or that made all the fleet requirements in the US Fifth Fleet region, made a priority over Indonesia. And so I ended up getting to go there right away after I got my Scripps degree, which actually was really relevant because, again, Naval forces had a constant presence there for the next two and a half decades or more.

(05:40):

And so the charts we were making, and I did this for two years, from 1991 to 1993, they were used by Naval forces for decades. I came back, fast-forward on the USS Kitty Hawk, an aircraft carrier, and participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom and in Enduring Freedom as well off Afghanistan. And I navigated off charts I made when I was a Deck Watch Officer of those ships.

Emma Collins (06:07):

That’s really cool.

Kelly Savoie (06:08):

Yeah, I guess you didn't make it to Bali, but your contribution, that's going to be set in history.

Tim Gallaudet (06:16):

Yeah, it was very relevant. And I know we're going to talk a little bit about my book, *Holding Fast in Heavy Seas*. It's really my leadership journey. And I write all about that in the science of hydrography, which is a really, really interesting oceanographic discipline. And I really enjoyed performing that duty. And then you asked how did I get here? Well, then I went on to perform a number of other career functions like meteorology, which I just loved. I love weather. And we can talk a little bit about that because I grew up in Southern California, as I mentioned, and there really isn't that much weather. It's quite boring.

Kelly Savoie (06:53):

But it's beautiful. But it's beautiful and perfect.

Tim Gallaudet (06:56):

It's very nice.

Kelly Savoie (06:57):

The weather.

Tim Gallaudet (06:58):

No, I enjoyed it. I lived there for some time and came back, was stationed there several times. But no, when I came to Annapolis in Maryland, summer thunderstorms are a thing. And I love a summer thunderstorm, and I still do. I live in Annapolis now. And that just reinforced my excitement and desire to study oceanography and meteorology and do that job. I still am excited. I'll go watch lightning storms with my family. So I did that job in the Navy several times. I was a meteorologist on two ships, the aircraft carrier I told you about. That was my other job to be a, besides driving the ship as a Deck Watch Officer, I was the chief meteorologist of the ship. And I did that on another ship as well, a helicopter carrier both times. Again, we went to the Arabian Gulf and I navigated off charts I had made years before.

(07:51):

And both those ships have aircraft. And so for aviation safety, the job of the meteorologist and his team of Aerographer's Mates, that's the Navy profession that does meteorology, that's just an important, important job for the ship to navigate safely and the aircraft to operate safely as well. So weather is involved in every type of planning at sea, especially when you're an aviation capable ship.

Kelly Savoie (08:15):

And so you must have gone to higher places because you ended up with a very lucrative position recently. How did you end up as the administrator?

Tim Gallaudet (08:29):

Oh, well, that's interesting, Kelly. So this is a good lesson for early career professionals. So I rose in ranks in the Navy and became a one-star admiral in charge of all the meteorologists and oceanographers in the Navy. And of course, when you're in that kind of position, you speak in public and you attend meetings and you get known. And it turns out that a former NOAA administrator, Admiral Lautenbacher, his chief of staff was a weather professional named Scott Rader. And Scott's pretty well known in the meteorology community. And I believe he's the president of Linker Technologies right now, which is a big NOAA contractor. And anyways, Scott was put on the transition team

for Trump's first term. And so he was looking for political appointees to get the White House to approve. So he asked me, he called me up and said, "Hey," and I barely knew him.

(09:26):

He said, "Hey, would you be interested in the administrator job?" And I said, "Oh my gosh. Yeah, that'd be amazing." And so he goes, "Okay, we're going to put you in for it." Just because he'd seen me speak and he'd read things I've written. And so he just felt that my career history gave me a lot of what Admiral Lautenbacher had. And that the administration was looking for someone like him because he served under Bush for his term as the administrator. And so it was a Republican administration and they were looking for people like they had in the past. And so it turns out the Secretary of Commerce decided he really wanted someone else, but he said, "Would you be the Deputy?" And I said, "Well, sure." And so I was appointed as the Deputy Administrator. But at the time, the nominee for the NOAA Administrator hadn't gotten confirmed by the Senate, and he never was actually.

(10:20):

So I stayed as the Acting Administrator and Deputy Administrator. Now the current Administrator, Neil, him and I swapped out. So we were both Assistant Secretaries. And there was a point in time after about a year and a half where then he took over as the Administrator. And I talk about some of this transition in the book too, and I remained as the Deputy. So we each had some time in the seat as the head of NOAA.

Kelly Savoie (10:42):

Wow, that's so interesting. That must've been exciting for you.

Tim Gallaudet (10:45):

Well, I'll tell you, it is the best job I ever had, no doubt. I didn't expect it to come at all. It was a total surprise because one of my jobs in the Navy, I was the oceanographer of the Navy and the chief meteorologist, but I also had this job to be the liaison officer to the NOAA Administrator for the head of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations. He had a specific job title that was mine to do, so that, because the NOAA Administrator is an Undersecretary, pretty high position. And so we wanted to make sure the Navy did. They wanted to have someone that was always liaisoning and making sure that we were cooperating. Because interestingly, when I took over as the Administrator of NOAA, I had a job very much like I did in the Navy. We had the weather service doing weather, and that's exactly what I did in the Navy.

(11:33):

We did oceanography and made nautical charts just like NOAA's Office of Coast Survey and the like. But at the Navy, I was supporting about 300,000 active duty and reserve naval forces personnel.

Kelly Savoie: Wow.

Tim Gallaudet:

Well, when you come over to NOAA, what are you doing? You're supporting the 330 million or so US citizens with the same information. So it was a much bigger game, but it was all the work I had done, but now for the nation. So it was so rewarding. And I fell into it naturally because of my background. And I was always coming across people at NOAA that had done things like I had done or had degrees like I had, or just passions like I had for the water, the ocean. And so every day wasn't even work to me. It was really just a joy. And to be honest with you, so with my book coming out, what I really wanted to do is, besides just tell my leadership story and give leadership advice, I hope that it really puts NOAA on the map for more Americans, and especially the National Weather Service, all the good that they do and all the different weather regimes that they have to forecast for.

(12:38):

I described all of that in the book. I described visiting different weather forecast offices like in Alaska. I even have a picture in the book of me launching a weather balloon out of the Anchorage office. And I really worked hard to tell the stories. And I mentioned by name many of the forecasters and other scientists at NOAA that I got to know and the site visits I had. I even went scuba diving with a number of marine biologists in different places like Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and off North Carolina. And I described those in the Great Lakes. So those are all sea stories I share in there too.

Emma Collins (13:15):

And speaking of leadership, you've had many leadership roles. So in your opinion, what are the components of being a successful leader?

Tim Gallaudet (13:23):

Good question, Emma. And this is the heart and soul of the book, is a number of things. And I actually put together a leadership philosophy. It's a one-page statement on what I believe in terms of leadership. And that's something I did at every stage of leadership in the Navy. And it was nothing I'd ever thought I'd do at NOAA. But people asked me almost every day my thoughts on leadership, whether it be a certain situation or in general, because I was an Admiral in the Navy and they rightly expected me to know a

little bit about it. And civilians in the government aren't usually trained on this or receive training, even though NOAA had a great program called the Leadership Competencies Development Program, but the demand always exceeded the supply and availability of billets for the course. So I ended up putting this one-pager together.

(14:19):

I shared it with hundreds of employees. Everyone really liked it, and I gave two lectures on it two years in a row, and one of them had over a thousand attendees in terms of dialing in. And in present in the NOAA Silver Spring Auditorium, there was a couple hundred. So they were that interested in learning about leadership. And that's why I wrote the book, because I realized this is what people really want to hear. And it's only been, we're recording here on July 8th, and it's been published for one day. And I've already received dozens and dozens of reviews from NOAA employees who pre-ordered it, and they've enjoyed what I bring forward in it. So to answer your question, sorry, I kind of long-winded there.

Emma Collins (15:06):

That's okay.

Tim Gallaudet (15:06):

In this philosophy I mentioned, I have three pillars, and these are the principles of who I am as a leader, I think I believe in. One is “all in”, and that's just being dedicated and committed to the position and the job and the organization. The second one is “all good”, and I think that's about being positive and inspirational. And then the third pillar is “all for one”, and that's about being a team player and showing humility. And I think the last one's one of the most important leadership traits because it's very easy for people to get, I guess, sort of intoxicated with the power of having a leadership position. And that's the last thing you want to do because every time that happens, someone will make an ethical mistake or the environment then becomes toxic because it's not about the team, it's about the leader.

(15:55):

And so humility is just one of the most important. But those are my principles, Emma.

Kelly Savoie (16:00):

Well, that's some good advice and some good principles that we all should follow. So you mentioned that you have earned the rank of Rear Admiral, which is a very high senior military rank. Congratulations on that distinction. Do you have any advice for individuals interested in serving in that branch of the military? I'm sure it has been challenging, but it's also been very, very rewarding. And are there things that our listeners should know if they're interested in serving in that branch?

Tim Gallaudet (16:33):

Oh, definitely. Well, if anyone wants to serve in the Navy in general, I encourage it. It's very fulfilling to serve your country, to wear the uniform. I'm just very proud of having done that. And now my daughter is at the US Naval Academy and I'm very proud of her. And then if anyone wants to really become a Navy meteorologist, or oceanographer, I'm even more excited about that because I love that job. And the neat thing about that job is you interact with every type of Navy, what they call warfare area. So I've supported pilots, I've worked with Navy SEAL teams. I've been on Navy submarines and supported submarine operations. Of course, I've been on aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships, which carry Marines. It's every type of Naval operation. And so it's so exciting. And all those experiences were just fantastic. I really enjoy working with Navy SEALs because they use every bit of environmental information.

(17:28):

And I describe all this in the book as well, the missions we supported when I was with this one command dedicated to supporting the SEALs in Iraq and Afghanistan. And so there's a lot of science. I geek out a bit in the book because it's just really interesting, I think, how environmental information affects every type of mission. Let me share another sea story with you that's in the book. For example, Navy Admiral Bill McCraven is really well known because he commanded the raid, the Navy SEAL raid that took out Osama bin Laden. It's called Operation Neptune Spear. And I sat down with him after he left the Navy and he was the chancellor of the University of Texas. And it was actually during an AMS meeting. And so, AMS meeting was in Austin, Texas. I forgot, I think it was 2018. And it was one of my first official meetings as the Acting NOAA Administrator.

(18:22):

And I sat down with him and we basically took care of business. He wanted some help. He wanted me to advocate for emergency funding for his Marine Science Center at the University of Texas that got whacked by Hurricane Harvey. And I told him I'd be glad to do it. And then we just again started sharing sea stories and talking about all the people we each knew. And he shared some advice with me. Or some insights. And he said, "When we did this raid to take out bin Laden, weather and climate drove the timeline. And the specific deadline date", and I get this mixed up, it was either May 1st or May 31st, I forgot when, but there was a threshold no-go date basically that the weather would be climatically too warm at night for those special helicopters to get sufficient lift because they were carrying a lot of gear.

(19:12):

And so they had looked at the average nighttime temperatures for that region of Pakistan and they realized, okay, this is the cut line after which we're just not going to be able to do it. And so then there's intel driving and timing as well, but it was intel and climate. And they decided to go because they went right on the last day they could go.

And actually, interestingly, they actually went one more day later because the day they wanted to go, there was all this overcast skies that prevented getting a video feed from the drone that was monitoring the operation for the White House in the Situation Room. So they had actually delayed a day because of weather and they timed the specific day because of climate. So that's an interesting example that I heard firsthand. And that's in the book and no one's ever written about that yet, about that aspect of the operation.

Emma Collins (20:04):

That's really interesting. And as both an oceanographer and someone personally affected by Hurricane Katrina, you mentioned Hurricane Harvey earlier. How did that experience shape the way you think about hurricanes and coastal systems?

Tim Gallaudet (20:18):

Yeah, Emma, that's a great question. And I think it's a really important part of my book too, because that happened. I was a commander in the Navy station at Stennis Space Center, Mississippi. And we lived in South Diamond Head, Mississippi that received the highest storm surge of anywhere during Katrina. And I believe anywhere in the US ever. 27.5 feet of surge. Yeah, imagine that.

Emma Collins (20:40):

Oh my gosh.

Tim Gallaudet (20:41):

And we evacuated. I praised the National Weather Service for saving our lives basically. We evacuated a few miles north and we expected to have the downstairs and maybe second story flooded. So we put all our belongings in the third floor, and then we had an attic and we figured that would get trashed by wind damage, but we'd still have something to come back to. And when we came back the next day, all 200 homes in South Diamond Head were pretty much just wiped clean, really pushed north along the south side of the berm of Interstate 10. It was like a giant hand of God just went whoosh, and every house on the coast just got pushed up. We came back to our slab and there was nothing. And you're kind to be compassionate about it, but that story was actually, like you asked, it taught me a lot.

(21:33):

It taught me a lot about storm surge and the need to improve our predictions for it. It taught us about hurricanes and the importance. And I'll tell you, I shared that story with so many meteorologists in the weather service because I often would do outreach to individual forecasters, thanking them for what they were doing and sharing with them my story and showing that I was genuinely appreciative of what they do. You really can't

get more sincere than that to relate an experience like losing your house in Katrina. But then there was also the aspect of just having gone through that. I became more empathetic. Everybody in the country, or not everybody, every year, people around the country will have some kind of damage or loss of life due to weather. And it could be hurricanes, could be blizzards and floods. And it just made me more empathetic for those who go through that.

(22:27):

And in fact, this is a part of the book too where every time a NOAA employee was affected by something, a hurricane or a wildfire, we had employees lose home in both situations. I would get the list as the administrator of everybody who had evacuated. And I would write each one a personal email just saying, "Hey, I'm really sorry for your loss. I've been through this too. We got stronger as a family," which is true. And this has made me a better person. So just to try to give them a little bit of encouragement. And no one really wrote me back because they were experiencing the most disruptive time of their life. But when I left NOAA, a NOAA fishery scientist wrote me afterwards and he said, "Hey, I just wanted to thank you. After this hurricane," I forgot what it was. He was in North Carolina and he had to evacuate.

(23:18):

And he said, "I got this note from you. And I could tell it wasn't like a form letter type thing. It was actually you wrote me and I figured you must have just looked at some list of people who were affected and then you picked my name out." And he goes, "I'm really thankful you did that." And then he was right.That's exactly what I did. So there's little stories like that where I just try to be personal and a lot of people noticed. And so I hope that is a way in my book to just convey how to be more authentic and sincere and approachable as a leader.

Kelly Savoie (23:51):

And so your book that you said just came out today?

Tim Gallaudet (23:54):

Official publishing date was July 7th. So yeah, it's on bookshelves.

Kelly Savoie (23:58):

That's excellent. So *Holding Fast in Heavy Seas: Leadership for Turbulent Times*. So what inspired you to write it? When did you decide to write this book? And maybe you could give our listeners maybe one special part of it that you liked the most about writing the book.

Tim Gallaudet (24:18):

Sure, sure. Well, so I read the book by Bob Iger, who is the Disney CEO, and it's a really good book. It's very human. And his book is called *The Ride of a Lifetime: My 15 Years at Disne*y…something something. And he broke it into two halves. The first half he titled "Learning". And the second half he titled "Leading". And he starts out and it's all his career progression up to Disney where he starts out of all things as a broadcast meteorologist for ABC. And I thought that, okay, that caught my attention right away. And then he goes on, and I think he really made his mark when he helped lead the coverage of, I think it was the Lake Placid Olympics..? It was an Olympic Games in the US, and that sort of launched him on his really meteoric rise in terms of in the private sector.

(25:14):

And then his second half was all about working at Disney. And I was so impressed by his strategic approach to leading. And he had identified a number of high level goals for Disney, and a lot of it was about modernizing and dealing with the changes in media, like streaming and whatnot. And he also formed these partnerships with these extraordinary well-known figures like George Lucas for Star Wars. They formed a partnership. Steve Jobs, they formed one. Stan Lee, I believe, at Marvel, all these just giants of the media. And every time you go into a meeting with one of these really big names, he'd always just check his ego out of the door and listen and say, "Look, I'm not going to try to own the meeting and be the most important person here and talk all the time. This is what we both want to do.

(26:06):

We want this outcome and I will do whatever it takes, even if it means just shutting up and listening to make sure this outcome is achieved." And I thought, "That is such a good way to be." Ultimately, and I realized, "Oh wow, I have a story like that too", where my time in the Navy was where I was learning. And then my time at NOAA was when I was leading and I was leading during Trump's first term. And whether you like him or not, you got to admit the guy is a very challenging executive to work for. So there's much in this book about that. And I think what's important in the title conveys this, *Holding Fast in Heavy Seas.* There are a lot of times when I think myself and Neil Jacobs probably wanted to leave because it was difficult, but we stuck it through and we were able to get a lot of wins, major environmental wins that no one would really think we could have gotten in the Trump administration and that weren't super well advertised because negative press usually dominated that term.

(27:05):

But we had Neil move forward our modeling effort, the Unified Forecast System and the Earth Prediction Innovation Center, EPIC. I put forward a number of ocean-related issues like a national strategy to map our US exclusive economic zone, a coral reef restoration and disease prevention strategy, a whole blue economy strategy. Here's an interesting thing. The workforce loved this whole idea of the blue economy, the ocean-related

economy that NOAA supports with data and services. Everything from coastal tourism and dive tourism, scuba dive tourism, to seaport operations and maritime transportation to its fisheries. And so at the very…last year, I asked all the line office heads, "Hey, we should put together a NOAA Blue Economy strategic plan and have it lay out all that we're doing as a great communications tool and also a guide for us to act on and do this great work and improve upon it." And so I asked them, "Would you want to do that?

(28:06):

Let your people volunteer to be on my team to write this." And I thought they would say, "Oh, it's late in the term and we have better things to do," but all the line office heads wanted to do it, the assistant administrators and all the people who contributed to the team of 50 people or so, because they loved getting their work in such a big document that was so overarching and really positive. No kidding. I pushed that document through when I had two days left in my tenure. So it was January 19th, 2021. And then two days later, Biden came in and we all left. And a year later, the Biden Secretary of Commerce, Romando, her team put together a list of the top 21 accomplishments for 2021. And the only NOAA entry at number 10 was the Blue Economy Strategic Plan. So how about that?

Emma Collins (28:59):

Nice.

Tim Gallaudet (28:59):

Yeah. So now had they known that a Trump appointee was the person who put that together, I don't know if they would've picked it, but it doesn't matter because it was a good thing, and that's what we should remember. I'll tell you, there are other things I'm really proud of, but I'll leave it at that.

Emma Collins (29:16):

Well, Tim, we're so grateful for everything you've told us about your career. However, before you go, we always ask our guests one last fun question at the end of our show. So what is your favorite hobby?

Tim Gallaudet (29:27):

Ah, this is perfect because it's a tough one between fishing, surfing, swimming, and scuba diving. But I'm going to say scuba diving because I share some of those stories in my book. And one of my favorite examples was going up to Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. So NOAA has these marine sanctuaries. They're like national parks, but underwater. And I describe this dive in detail where we go dive on a couple shipwrecks and the shipwrecks are beautifully preserved. They're 19th century

shipwrecks. They're all wooden because of the fresh water. They've not decayed. And I had just one of the greatest days of my life at NOAA, diving on these shipwrecks and being out on this wonderful Great Lake in the summer. And Jeff Gray is the superintendent up there, and he's put together this great Maritime Heritage Center. We toured that. And then as a blue economy example of success, he shared with me how all their marine sanctuary work attracted local businesses.

(30:23):

And one of them was a new brewery that opened up in Alpena where the town is. So I took out everybody to the brewery and bought them a round, and we had a really nice time together just reflecting on what a great day it was and all the good that the archeologists and scientists at Thunder Bay do for our country.

Kelly Savoie (30:44):

Oh, that must have been an incredible experience to be able to see those old shipwrecks, and it must have been so cool. And you said it was fresh water?

Tim Gallaudet (30:53):

Yes.

Kelly Savoie (30:54):

Then you don't have to worry about my biggest fear, which is sharks. But I'm sure as a scuba diver, you've seen plenty. They terrify me.

Tim Gallaudet (31:02):

Oh, this is interesting. I have been diving with, and just recently in Belize, reef sharks, very close, up close, cage diving with great white sharks.

Kelly Savoie:

Wow.

Tim Gallaudet (31:15):

And free diving with bull sharks, very close too. As long as you know the environment and behavior, you really have nothing to worry about. Now, because for example, the free diving I did with bull sharks, it was in the Gulf, the water was very clear, 100-foot visibility, and we had a crate of chum that was hanging off the bow of the boat. And that just attracted all the sharks, but they're like dogs on a scent. Humans don't present as typical prey, and as long as you're not bleeding, you're not going to smell like prey. So they're going to leave you alone for the most part. And they're beautiful animals really.

I'll share with you, Kelly, after this, some of the photos and videos I have, because it's just a really, again, scuba diving is a passion, and that's one particular aspect of it that's really enjoyable.

Kelly Savoie (32:05):

Well, that makes me feel a little bit better. So are you just leaving out any terrifying stories so I'm not even more afraid? But has there ever been a time where you were like, yikes, I don't think this is a friendly shark, or you felt like you were going to be attacked? That never happened?

Tim Gallaudet (32:23):

I've never been afraid of sharks, diving, because when the visibility is good and I understand the environment and their typical behavior, no. The only time I would be afraid is if the visibility was poor. So that's what happens with the majority of shark attacks in Florida is bull sharks, they hear splashing, there's poor visibility, and someone's either swimming or kicking and doing something that sounds like a prey, and they get confused. And so yeah, scuba diving with good vis, not at all. But yeah.

Kelly Savoie (32:56):

That makes me feel a little better. I love to swim. I love the ocean and I've been snorkeling, but I've always been afraid to scuba dive. But now that I've talked to you and know how often you've been around sharks, that makes me feel like maybe I could do it now. So thank you for that.

Tim Gallaudet (33:14):

Word of caution though. I have been afraid, swimming sometimes in areas that I know sharks exist because when sharks usually attack from below some species and you are presenting like prey when you're swimming on the surface because your silhouette looks like a seal or something. And that gets me a little nervous when I can't see and the visibility's not that good. So I'll say I get nervous sometimes when I'm ocean swimming, or surfing even too, if it's an area where I know sharks do exist, but never scuba diving. Usually you're more on their terms when you do that.

Kelly Savoie (33:51):

Right. Okay. I may just try it, but thanks so much for joining us, Tim, and sharing your work experiences with us.

Tim Gallaudet (33:57):

Oh, it's been great, Kelly and Emma. You're wonderful hosts. I really enjoy your podcast. You have some great guests. I hope this one works out well for you.

Emma Collins (34:06):

Well, that's our show for today. Please join us next time, Rain or Shine.

Kelly Savoie (34:10):

Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations About Careers in Meteorology and Beyond is a podcast by the American Meteorological Society. Our show is edited by Johnny Lay. Technical Direction is provided by Peter Killelea. Our theme music is composed and performed by Steve Savoie, and the show is hosted by Emma Collins and Kelly Savoie. You can learn more about the show online at www.ametsoc.org/clearskies, and you can contact us at skypodcast@ametsoc.org if you have any feedback or would like to become a future guest.