



Tornadoes Produce Extensive Damage To Pinellas County in 1992

Fact Sheet

- Date: October 3, 1992
- Time: 840-930 am
- Estimated Tornado Intensity: F3
- Estimated Maximum Wind: 158-206 mph
- Tornado Width (Yards): 200
- Path Length (Miles): 3
- Deaths: 4
- Injuries: 130
- Damage Amount: 2.5 M
- Number of Homes Damages: Unknown
- County: Pinellas



Figure 11. Minivan that became airborne and struck this home in the Beacon Hill subdivision in Pinellas Park.



Figure 1. Damage to the Indian Rocks Mobile Home park from the Largo tornado.

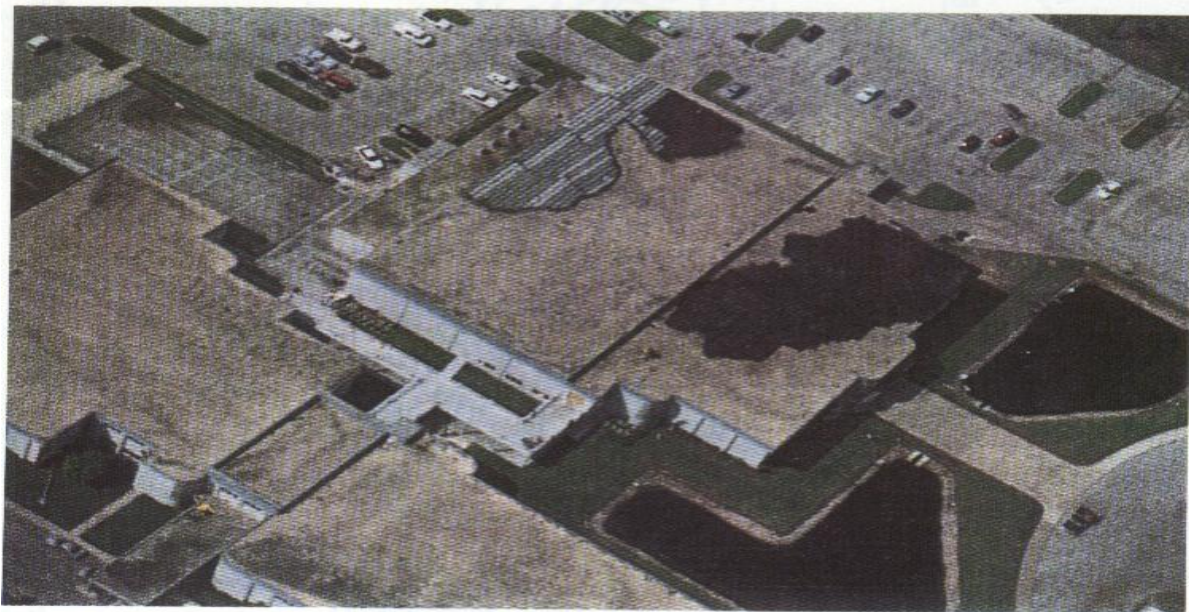


Figure 2. Peeled-back roofing of a shopping mall near the beginning of the Largo tornado track.



Summary of event:

In the early morning of October 3, 1992 several tornadoes skipped their ways across Pinellas County, killing four people and injuring several others. There was a two-day storm that plowed its way across the gulf and into Pinellas. This thunderstorm spawned several tornadoes that caused a massive amount of damage.

Detailed experience:

"It looks like a bomb blast: buildings down, roofs gone, windows out of cars," said a spokesman for the Pinellas Park police, Lee Lerchen. **"It appears to be one major tornado."** She added that more than 100 homes had been severely damaged or destroyed. Sgt. Don Holcomb of the Pinellas Park police said the Largo tornado left damage in a path three miles long and a half mile wide. **"The storm did a lot of jumping and skipping,"** Sergeant Holcomb said. **"We actually had people in their yard watch a tornado pass over and then drop down and hit another home a block away. One big logistical problem is traffic. It's a very densely populated area."** In Largo, a woman was killed and her husband injured at the Indian Rocks Mobile Home Park, where many of the 152 trailers were damaged, the park's manager, Jennie Husfelt, said. (<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/04/us/four-killed-as-tornadoes-hit-florida-trailer-parks.html>).

Most residence had no warning about the tornadoes until it was there. **"It was a three-second warning and then, bang, the house across the street from me was gone,"** said Jim Milne, a 39-year-old meat cutter who lives in Pinellas Park. **"The things are unbelievable,"** Mr. Milne said. **"It's so fast. We heard the wind, the pressure, we thought tornado! And it was all over in three seconds. I'm sitting in my living room. We heard a whoosh. It sort of lifted me up, like being in an airplane."** He said his home was damaged but still standing because of the huge trees that stood around it. **"It sucked up all the trees,"** Mr. Milne said. Across the street, the door knob from the front door was imbedded in the back wall of the house. (<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/05/us/late-warnings-on-tornadoes-prompt-review.html>).

Not too far away in a mobile home park, a tornado ripped through the area destroyed mobile homes left and right. **Mr. Glenn Moore stood on the blood-soaked spot where his wife, Theresa, had died in one of the tornadoes. He said he and his wife had bought a mobile home in May, planning to spend the winters in Florida and the summers in Toms River, N.J. "They found my wife's body here,"** the retired 64-year-old executive said. **"There's her blood."** All he could do today was pore over the tiny bits left of what had been their life together. (<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/05/us/late-warnings-on-tornadoes-prompt-review.html>).

NOAA AND THE PRESERVE

AMERICA

Initiative



A tornado ripped through Dansville, which is a community that are very close and has a “rich African-American history.” (<http://www.pinellascounty.org/community/Dansville.htm>). This area is a very poor community and needed a lot of help from the county to rebuild and fix the homes that were destroyed and damaged during the storm. **Pinellas County continues to work at solving community challenges by taking a collaborative approach and developing creative solutions to keep our neighborhoods family-friendly.** (<http://www.pinellascounty.org/community/Dansville.htm>).

President Bush was in Pinellas County a little over an hour before the thunderstorms hit Florida. His was in town for one of several campaigns that was scheduled in Florida. He was fortunate enough to get out before the thunderstorms turbulence had any chance to take down Air Force One.



Damages to a community after the tornado ripped through it
<http://www2.sptimes.com/weather/SW.4.html>



Figure 3. Strong F3 damage to the Beacon Hill subdivision. Construction of homes were either reinforced concrete block or wood frame.



Figure 4. Warehouse buildings heavily damaged by the Pinellas Park tornado.



Figure 5. Aerial photo of damage to the Park Royale Village mobile home park from the Pinellas Park tornado. Notice the apparent skipping pattern indicating that the tornado may have become a multiple vortex storm.



Figure 6. Close-up view of the Park Royale Village mobile home park. Many homes were totally destroyed.

NOAA AND THE PRESERVE

AMERICA

Initiative



Figure 7. Remains of a mobile home in the Park Royale Village that became airborne and struck a home. One person that was in the mobile home was killed.



Figure 8. Aerial photo of the mobile home (above) that struck a home in a residential subdivision (center of photo). The mobile home moved from left to right.



Figure 9. A mobile home in Park Royale Village that that was ripped apart. Note the frame and flooring of the mobile home is still tied down.



Figure 10. Close-up of the mobile home above indicating how the bottom plate was connected to the frame. Nails approximately 1 1/2 to 2 inches long held down the plate.