

# **May 1<sup>st</sup> Scurry and Pecos Counties Tornadoes and Wind Damage**

During the afternoon and evening of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, numerous severe thunderstorms developed across southeast New Mexico and the Trans Pecos, moving across the Stockton Plateau and the Permian Basin. These storms produced multiple tornadoes, very large hail up to softball size, heavy rainfall leading to localized flooding, and damaging winds. One severe storm in particular impacted Scurry County, resulting in flash flooding in the city of Snyder and various damage in southeast Scurry County near Hermleigh. A separate round of storms in Pecos County produced damage in the city of Fort Stockton while multiple eyewitnesses reported several tornadoes that moved across portions of the county. On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the National Weather Service conducted a storm survey around Hermleigh and determined that the damage on the north side of town was caused by a tornado while other damage to the south in southern Scurry County was caused by rear-flank downdraft winds. Peak wind speeds on the north side of town were determined to be 115 mph, equivalent to an EF-2 tornado. Estimated peak wind speeds for the south side of town were 85 mph. On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the National Weather Service conducted another storm damage survey in Pecos County, where severe thunderstorm winds impacted eastern portions of Fort Stockton. Many tornadoes were reported to have occurred across the county as well but due to the rural nature of the area, the survey team was unable to access any damage. Damage was found in the city of Fort Stockton with estimated peak wind speeds of 90 mph, equivalent to an EF-1 tornado.

## **Hermleigh, TX Tornado and Wind Damage**

Significant damage found on the northwest side of Hermleigh, TX included multiple homes with the roofs torn off, bent metal steel beams, snapped power poles, RVs and vehicles that had been moved or flipped, and significant structural damage to a detached garage. Various debris had become projectiles and resulted in additional damage. The observed damage on the northwest side of town was found to be consistent with an EF-2 tornado with peak wind speeds of approximately 115 mph. With the assistance of eyewitness accounts and the re-analysis of the radar data, it was determined that the tornado started 1 mile northwest of Hermleigh. The tornado then slowly moved in an east-northeast direction, crossing Highway 84 and ultimately damaging a mobile home park. The tornado was estimated to have a width of 150 yards and a path length of 0.3 miles.

Damage was identified in multiple other parts of southern Scurry County including areas northwest of Hermleigh, locations to the south of the tornado track, and in a rural area just east of Dunn. This damage included snapped power poles, significant damage to trees and rooves, and an overturned manufactured home. Given the orientation of this damage, and re-analyzing radar data, this damage was determined to be caused by rear-flank downdraft winds, with estimated peak wind speeds of 85-100 mph.



**Severe storm in Scurry County. Photo courtesy of Nathan Hines.**





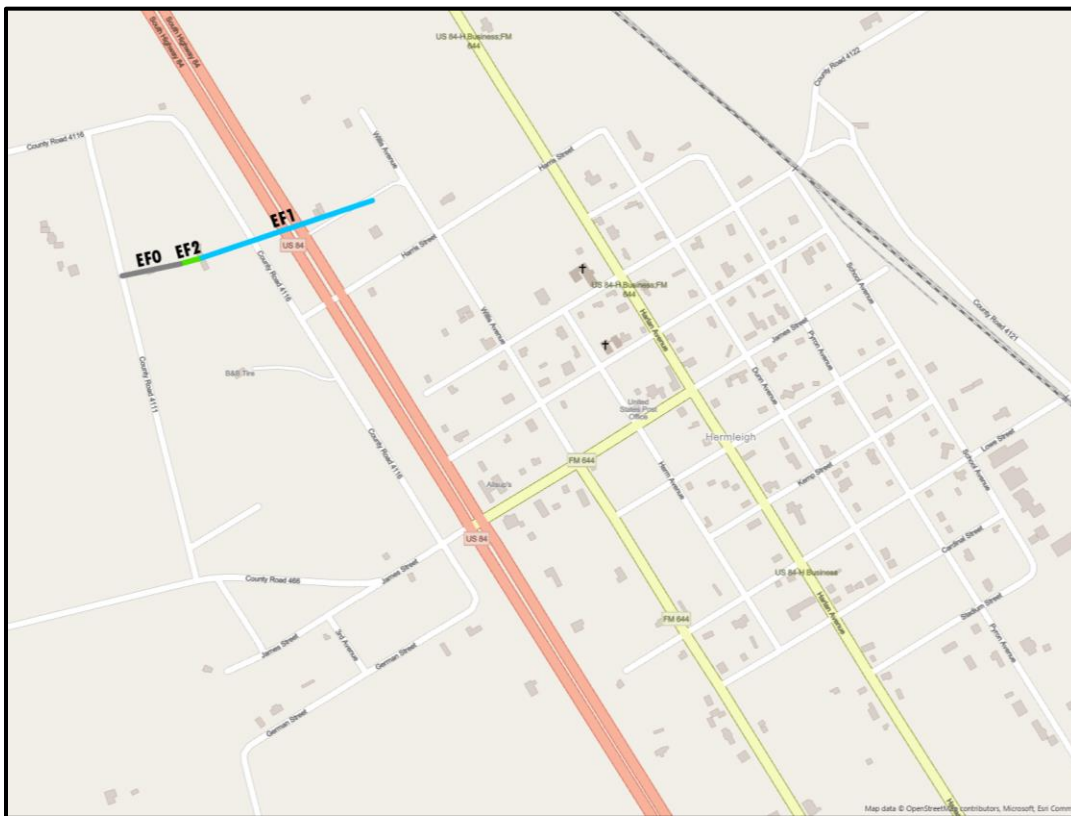
**Tornado damage. Photo courtesy of Michael Beard – Live Storms Media.**



**Tornado damage. Photo courtesy of Michael Beard – Live Storms Media.**



# Tornado Track Through Hermleigh





**Thunderstorm wind damage in southern Scurry County.**

**\*\* Special thanks to Scurry County EMC, Perry Westmoreland, for assisting with this damage survey.\*\***

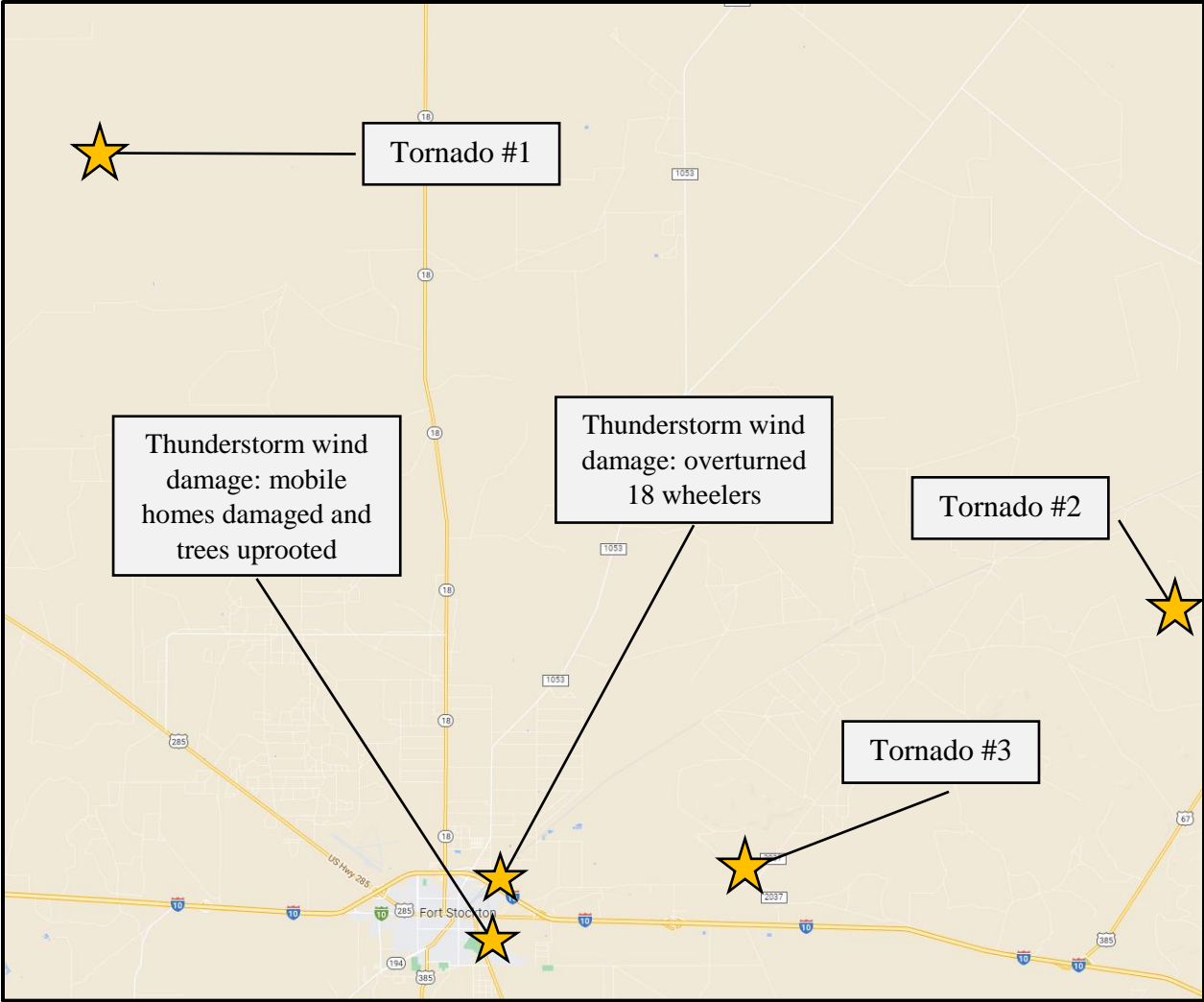
## **Pecos County Tornadoes and Wind Damage**

Significant damage was reported by emergency managers on May 1<sup>st</sup> along a stretch of I-10 on the northeast side of Fort Stockton. This damage included multiple destroyed billboards, a damaged metal building, and two 18-wheelers flipped along I-10. Additional damage was discovered on the southeast side of town about a mile and a half away. Here, multiple mobile homes were damaged and trees uprooted. Due to the orientation of the damage, along with a re-analysis of radar data, the damage in both locations was determined to be caused by rear-flank downdraft winds with estimated peak wind speeds of 90 mph, equivalent to an EF-1 tornado.

Around 5 PM CDT on May 1<sup>st</sup>, a spotter reported a tornado on the ground approximately 19 miles north-northwest of Fort Stockton on the afternoon of May 1<sup>st</sup>. This tornado was difficult to photograph as it quickly became rain-wrapped and eventually dissipated as the storm approached State Highway 18 in northern Pecos County. This tornado was estimated to have lasted around 12 minutes and traveled southeast approximately 4 and half miles. These calculations were determined from both radar data and eyewitness reports on the ground. Due to the rural location of this tornado, access to any damage indicators was impossible and thus the tornado was rated EF-Unknown with unknown peak windspeeds.

A little over an hour later, a separate tornado was reported in northeastern Pecos County just to the west of Highway 67 at mile marker 816. Given the proximity to the highway, many storm spotters were able to identify and photograph this tornado. Based upon eyewitness reports, videos, and radar data, this tornado tracked northeastward for two and half miles and was estimated to have lasted around 10 minutes. Again, due to the rural nature of the tornado and lack of access to damage indicators, this tornado was rated EF-Unknown with unknown peak wind speeds.

The final tornado was reported approximately 7 miles to the east-northeast of Fort Stockton and 2 miles north of I-10 from mile marker 267. This tornado only briefly touched down, lasting less than a minute, and no damage was reported. Given that no damage indicators were accessible, this tornado was also rated EF-Unknown with unknown peak wind speeds.





**Tornado #1** photographed in northern Pecos County, courtesy of Chad Casey.



**Tornado #2** photographed off of Highway 67, courtesy of Adam Wiley.





**Tornado #3 photographed near I-10, courtesy of Jose Lujan.**



**Overturned 18-wheelers along I-10. Photo courtesy of Jessie Dominguez.**



**Mobile home damage in south Fort Stockton. Photo courtesy of Jessie Dominguez.**

**\*\* Special thanks to Pecos County EMC, Jessie Dominguez, for assisting with this damage survey.\*\***



## Additional Event Information

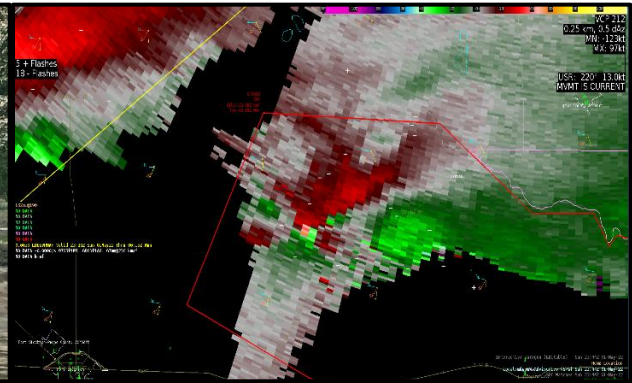
Many of the storms on May 1<sup>st</sup> produced large hail ranging from golf ball to softball sized across New Mexico, the Permian Basin, and lower Trans Pecos. One storm in Lea County dropped baseball sized hail on the outskirts of the city of Lovington, NM.

Heavy rainfall was recorded with some of these storms, leading to some localized flooding. A slow-moving storm through Scurry County dumped nearly 5 inches of rain over the course of an hour in the city of Snyder and major flooding was reported by emergency managers in town. One high-water rescue was reported.

Please see the pictures below for more details on the event.



**Flooded roadways in Snyder, TX courtesy of Nathan Hines**



**Velocity radar data of tornado near Fort Stockton**



**Baseball sized hail near Lovington, NM courtesy of Wendell Malone**



**Lots of hail on the ground along State Highway 137 near Patricia, courtesy of Eric Webb**