

## May 4<sup>th</sup> 2024 Severe Weather

On May 4<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 a strong weather system and cold front brought severe thunderstorms to portions of West Texas. This was an active severe weather day with hail up to 4" in diameter, wind damage due to severe wind gusts up to 100 mph, and several EF-Unknown tornadoes with one EF-2 tornado.

### Pecos County Straight-Line Winds and Hail

A supercell thunderstorm developed and strengthened west of Fort Stockton, TX along I-10. This thunderstorm would slowly move east before impacting parts of the Fort Stockton area. Straight-line winds and wind driven hail along US Highway 285 near the Pecos County Airport caused extensive damage to a home. Windows were broken, two power poles were snapped near the base, and there was exterior wall damage due to wind and hail at this location. Wind speeds were estimated to have reached up to 100 mph with this thunderstorm.

Additional supercell thunderstorms in Pecos County would go on to produce very large hail. This hail often reached between 3"-4" in diameter. Thankfully, no damage was reported with these storms as they remained over rural terrain, roughly following US Highway 285 south of Fort Stockton.



**Photos of hail damage to a home and a snapped power pole due to straight-line winds. Photos are courtesy of Kendra Reed and Pecos County EM.**

## Pecos County Tornadoes

The same supercell thunderstorms that produced the very large hail spawned several tornadoes as well. The first tornado began just east of US Highway 385 south of Fort Stockton in rural central Pecos County. This tornado was documented by numerous observers and an NWS employee, quickly developing into a photogenic stovepipe before becoming increasingly wrapped in rain. The tornado slowly moved southeast, before completely wrapping in rain and likely dissipating. This tornado occurred over mainly open terrain only causing damage to vegetation and a few wooden electrical power poles in the area. This tornado was rated as a mid-range EF-2 given the degree of damage to these wooden power poles which were snapped cleanly from near the base.



**Photo of the first tornado during its photogenic stovepipe phase. Photo courtesy of Justin Weaver.**

Several other tornadoes were reported by observers as the same parent supercell thunderstorm continued to slowly track southeast, nearly parallel to US Highway 285. The second tornado was seen roping out about 20 minutes after the previous tornado was believed to have dissipated. This tornado was believed to be a separate tornado spotted in its dissipating stage. A few observers then reported a brief rope tornado developing as the second tornado dissipated. This third tornado likely traveled for several minutes to the southeast before the condensation funnel was

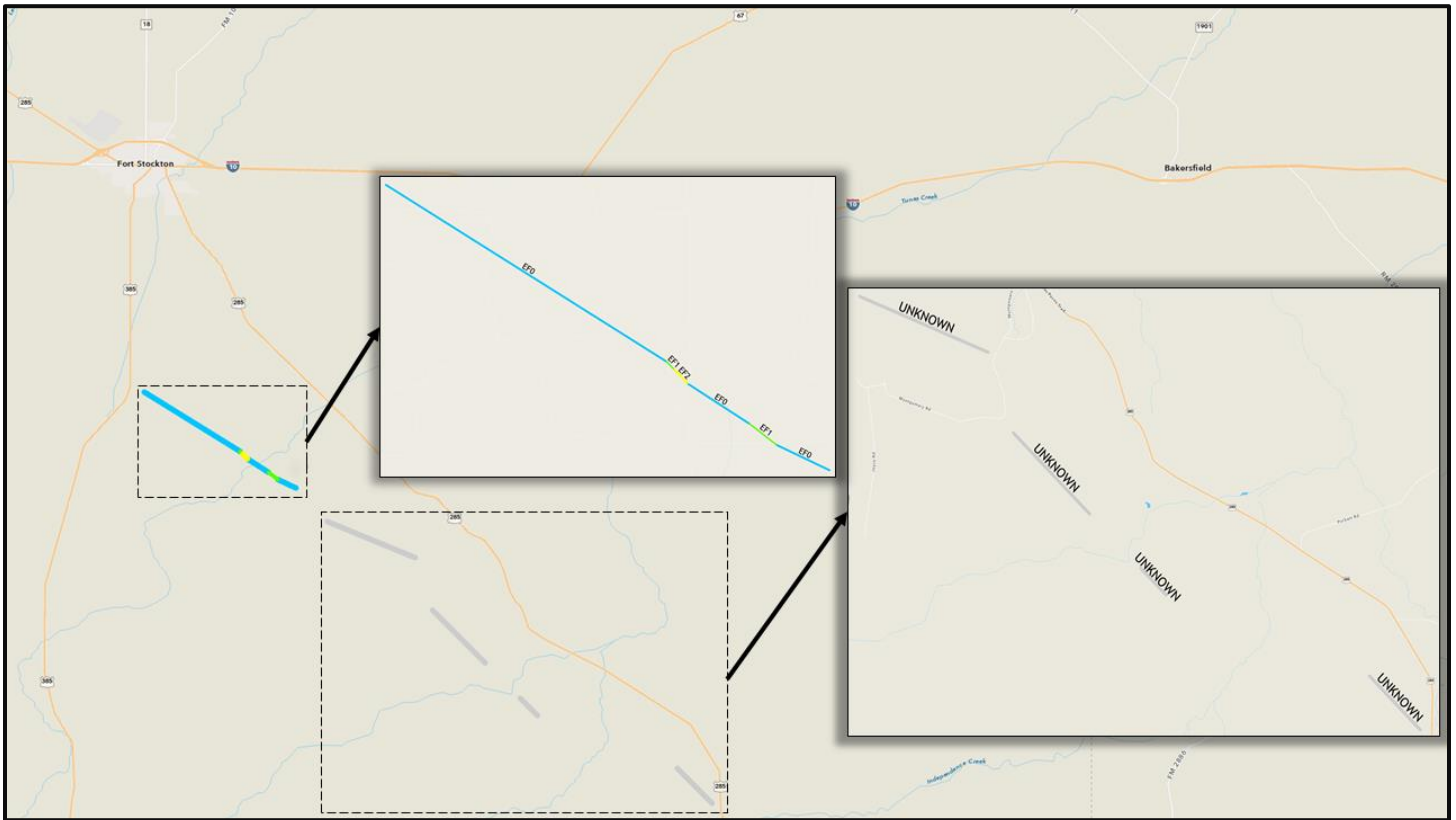
lost. Rapidly rotating rain curtains were noted afterward and the tornado was likely still ongoing. This tornado was later photographed by numerous observers when it was briefly visible through the rain. This tornado slowly traveled southeast before observers lost visual of the tornado within the rain and it likely dissipated.



**Photo of the third tornado as a partially rain-wrapped stovepipe. Photo courtesy of Daniel Shaw.**

An observer reported a separate fourth tornado in its dissipating stage. This tornado appeared to the observer as a brief rope tornado visible through the rain. This tornado only lasted a few minutes before dissipating. It was noted that a strong couplet was maintained on radar during this timeframe but this tornado was reported as a separate tornado by observers. Lastly, an observer shared video of a fifth tornado briefly caught through heavy rain just west of US Highway 285. Observers lost visual of the tornado a short time afterward. A strong couplet was noted on radar data for several minutes after this video as the tornado likely slowly moved southeast, dissipating just west of US Highway 285. All of these tornadoes (second through the fifth) occurred over rugged and rural terrain west of the highway and were unable to be surveyed. The approximate tracks (plotted on the

map below) of these tornadoes were estimated based on observer reports and radar data.



**Summary of surveyed and estimated tracks of all tornadoes reported in central Pecos County.**



**Zoomed in photo of the track of the EF-2 tornado that occurred south of Fort Stockton.**

## **Additional Event Information**

Other notable storms that developed on May 4<sup>th</sup> produced very large hail, affecting rural areas of Winkler and Scurry counties. One specific storm slowly progressed through Winkler County for over an hour before reaching Kermit, likely producing large hail the entire time. There were multiple reports of large hail once the storm reached Kermit, including one hailstone measuring 4 inches, as seen below. Another storm earlier in the day followed Highway 180 in western Scurry County where multiple large hailstones were photographed, including one which measured 4 inches. In addition, heavy rainfall was recorded with these storms, leading to a few areas of localized flooding across multiple counties.



**Thanks to all the spotters, chasers, and local emergency personnel for sending in your reports and photos. This greatly aides in warning operations and post-storm surveys.**

**In addition, a special thank you to Jessie Dominguez (Pecos County Emergency Management Coordinator) for assisting with this damage survey.**