March 13, 2026 High Wind Event

Intense Winds Bring Damage & Power Outages

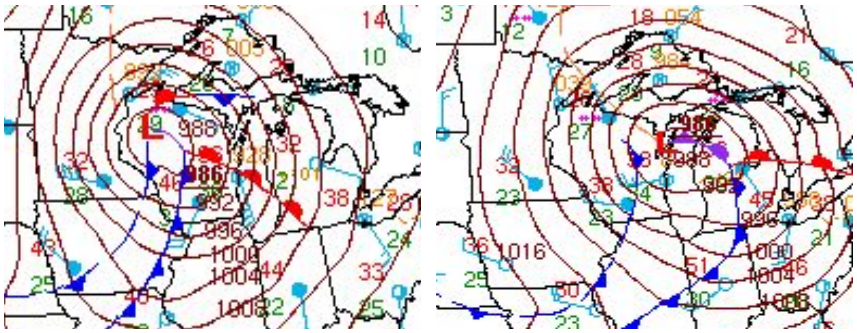
Event Overview: Gusty non-thunderstorm winds occurred across southern Wisconsin during the morning and afternoon hours of March 13, 2026 as a deepening area of low pressure moved quickly from northern Wisconsin across Lake Michigan. Numerous reports of 50 MPH or greater wind gusts were received through the course of the event, with readings approaching 70 MPH occurring at General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee. While the March 13 system was anything but tropical in origin, it would bring at least one report of tropical storm force winds (39-73 MPH) to all 20 counties in the NWS Milwaukee/Sullivan forecast area! The anticipated winds prompted High Wind Warnings over land & Storm Warnings over the southern half of Lake Michigan in advance of the event. Considerable impacts occurred, with numerous power outages and tree & structural damage being reported regionally.

Highest Wind Gusts - March 13

Milwaukee - Mitchell Arpt	68 MPH
Madison - Dane Co Arpt	64 MPH
Port Washington	64 MPH
Sun Prairie	63 MPH
Sheboygan	63 MPH
Monroe	62 MPH
Racine - Batten Arpt	61 MPH
Fond du Lac - Arpt	59 MPH
Brigham	59 MPH
Lone Rock - Arpt	59 MPH
Sheboygan - Arpt	59 MPH
Brookfield	58 MPH
Janesville - Rock Co Arpt	58 MPH
Milwaukee - McKinley Beach	58 MPH
DeForest	57 MPH
Darlington	57 MPH
Juneau - Dodge Co Arpt	55 MPH
Brooklyn	54 MPH
Lost Lake	54 MPH
Kenosha - Arpt	54 MPH
Waukesha - Arpt	53 MPH

Tree damage just north of Watertown. Photo courtesy of Marcia Cronce.

Event Setup: An area of rapidly-deepening low pressure was responsible for the gusty winds occurring on March 13. Meteorologically, “deepening” refers to decreasing central pressure, which implies that an area of low pressure is becoming stronger. The decreasing pressure results in a tightening gradient in the surface pressure field, which allows winds to increase. Steady increases in winds occurred as a warm front crossed southern Wisconsin during the overnight hours of March 12-13, with winds reaching their peak along & behind a passing cold front during the morning and afternoon of March 13.



4 AM CDT (left) & 10 AM CDT (right) surface analysis from the Weather Prediction Center

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Milwaukee, WI