



National Weather Service

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



March 2006

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons Killed	Number of Persons Injured	Estimated Damage Property	Estimated Damage Crops	Character of Storm
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TEXAS, South Panhandle

TXZ021>044

Parmer - Castro - Swisher - Briscoe - Hall - Childress - Bailey - Lamb - Hale - Floyd - Motley - Cottle - Cochran - Hockley - Lubbock - Crosby - Dickens - King - Yoakum - Terry - Lynn - Garza - Kent - Stonewall

01	0000CST								
31	2359CST				0	0	0	0	Drought

The drought that commenced over the south-central U.S. in the autumn of 2005 persisted over west Texas in March. During the first week of the month, D3 (extreme) drought conditions, per the U.S. Drought Monitor, were ongoing over the extreme southern panhandle, with D2 (severe) drought conditions over the remainder of the South Plains region. By the month's end, conditions were classified as D2 over the entire area. This following a few light precipitation events, including the light snow accumulations that were observed on the 23rd.

The drought related fire danger remained extreme over much of the Southern Plains of the U.S. throughout the month, and the destruction caused by wildfires again made national news headlines. The most adverse fire weather conditions were observed on March 12th, when a regional outbreak of massive wind-driven wildfires scorched land, destroyed homes, and claimed lives over much of the Southern Plains. Sources at the Texas Forest Service ranked the wildfires on March 12th as the worst in state history.

Most crops across the region had been harvested by the time the drought commenced, and the dry weather actually helped farmers extract cotton from the fields during the late fall. Despite the light moisture amounts received in March, the drought is expected to have long-term adverse effects as fields are prepared and planting begins during the upcoming growing season. Thus agricultural losses resulting from the drought will likely be realized at future dates according to local extension agent.

Hockley County

4 S Levelland	08	1740CST			0	0	0	0	Thunderstorm Wind (MG51)
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Lubbock County

Lubbock Intl Arpt	08	1749CST			0	0	0	0	Thunderstorm Wind (MG54)
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Hale County

5 NE Abernathy	08	1805CST			0	0	0	0	Thunderstorm Wind (MG50)
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TXZ024-028

Briscoe - Lamb

08	1910CST				0	0	0	0	High Wind (MG52)
	1945CST								

High based showers and a few thunderstorms developed in an environment characterized by 40 degree surface dewpoint depressions during the late afternoon of the 8th. This as a potent upper level storm system propagated east from the southern Rockies over the Texas Panhandle. The mid level cold pool associated with the upper low was sufficient to generate shallow moist convection despite breezy westerly winds that advected very dry low level air and dust across the area earlier in the day

A series of dry microbursts accompanied this activity as it spread from southwest to northeast over the South Plains and the extreme southern Panhandle. Lightning accompanied several of the convective cells responsible for the microbursts. Convection waned by early evening and was no longer electrified when severe gusts were recorded in Briscoe and Lamb Counties at 19:10 and 19:45 CST respectively. Radar data suggest that convective downdrafts evaporating in a very dry and deep boundary layer were sufficient to enhance gradient winds that were generally sustained in the 20 to 25 MPH range. Gusts as high as 62 MPH were recorded by the West Texas Mesonet and the ASOS located at Lubbock International Airport during the event. No reports of property damage were received.



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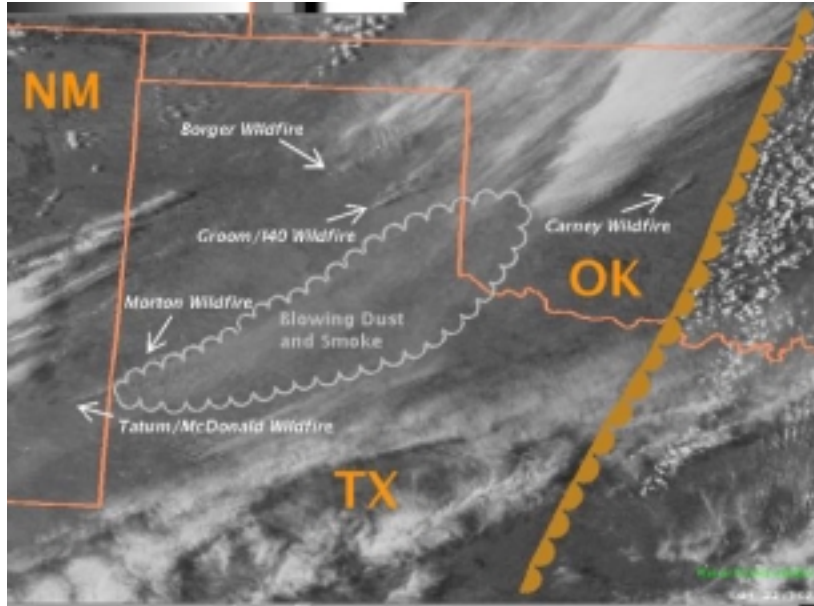


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TEXAS, South Panhandle

TXZ021>024-035-039-041 **Parmer - Castro - Swisher - Briscoe - Lubbock - Yoakum - Lynn**
12 **1130CST** **0** **0** **50K** **0** **High Wind (MG54)**
1650CST



Visible satellite imagery showing widespread blowing dust and smoke from numerous wildfires over west Texas during the late afternoon hours of the 12th. Image courtesy: National Weather Service - Lubbock, Texas.

The Texas Tech West Texas Mesonet recorded a total of seven severe wind gusts across the South Plains region during the daytime hours on the 12th. The high westerly winds, with gusts up to 62 MPH, blew dust and smoke from ongoing wildfires over much of the region. The visibilities were dramatically reduced during much of the afternoon. Minor roof damage to several homes was reported in Lubbock and a few power lines were additionally blown down by the winds. No injuries were reported. A list of measured severe wind gusts follows:

- Friona (Parmer County).....59 MPH
- Tulia (Swisher County).....60 MPH
- Silverton (Briscoe County).....59 MPH
- Tahoka (Lynn County).....59 MPH
- Lubbock (Lubbock County).....58 MPH
- Hart (Castro County).....62 MPH
- Plains (Yoakum County).....60 MPH

TXZ026-029-032-032>033 **Childress - Hale - Cottle - Cochran**
12 **1215CST** **0** **0** **280K** **50K** **Wildfire**
17 **2000CST**



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TEXAS, South Panhandle



Flames scorched open rangeland in Cochran County on the 13th. An 8,000 acre wildfire ignited south of Morton during high winds and adverse fire weather conditions on the afternoon of the 12th, destroying two homes. Residual fires in southern Cochran County burned through the night before they were extinguished during the early afternoon hours on the 13th. Photo courtesy: Chris Woolam - Morton Tribune.

Very large wind-driven wildfires burned tens of thousands of acres and destroyed property in association with the high winds on the 12th. At least a half dozen wildfires were sparked during the event, four were significant fires. The two largest fires burned out of control for nearly a week.

A fire that began west of Abernathy in southern Hale County destroyed a rural residence just after noon. Another significant wildfire south of Morton in Cochran County destroyed two homes before it was contained during the afternoon hours of the 13th.

Major wildfires charred 40,000 acres of open grassland in Cottle and Childress Counties. One massive fire ignited near the Cottle and Childress County line during the afternoon hours, and burned a swath six miles wide and fifteen miles long across southern Childress and northern Cottle Counties.

Weather conditions remained favorable for explosive fire growth and behavior through much of the overnight hours as a passing cold front maintained strong winds and continued to usher in very dry air. A second fire was sparked near U.S. Highway 62/83 just north of Paducah around midnight. The complex of fires in Childress and Cottle Counties continued to burn until light rain aided in extinguishing them late on the 17th. Although several structures were threatened and several head of livestock perished, no significant structural damage or injuries were reported.

TXZ036

Crosby

13 0350CST 0 0 0 0 High Wind (MG53)

A West Texas Mesonet site northwest of White River Lake recorded a severe wind gust to 61 MPH. These winds were associated with the passage of a strong cold front, and may have been enhanced by local effects as northwesterly winds were channeled through canyons along the slopes of the Caprock Escarpment. No damage was reported.

March 12-17 Wind and Wildfire Event Summary: High westerly winds with occasional severe gusts affected much of west Texas,



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TEXAS, South Panhandle

including the South Plains region, on the 12th. The winds resulted in a few reports of minor damage in the Lubbock vicinity, and blowing dust and smoke reduced visibilities over most of the region.

At least a half dozen wildfires were sparked during the high winds over the South Plains and the extreme southern panhandle. More than 50,000 acres of prairie were burned across the area, with a few fires persisting through the 17th. At least three homes were destroyed and several head of livestock were lost, but no injuries were reported. Total damage estimates totaled at least \$380,000 dollars.

TXZ034>035-042

Hockley - Lubbock - Garza

20	1205CST 1420CST		1	9	200K	0	High Wind (MG55)
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Rescue workers search for trapped victims in the rubble of the Little Panda restaurant after high winds contributed to the building's collapse. One woman died and nine people were injured when a sign was blown down and caused the roof of the structure to fail. Photo courtesy: David Johnson - The Daily Toreador.

Strong to occasionally severe gradient winds were associated with the passage of a strong storm system over the Texas Panhandle on the 20th. Westerly winds were generally sustained in the 30 MPH range with gusts approaching 55 MPH over a large part of the South Plains region. Winds were enhanced, however, over the central sections of the South Plains where three severe gusts were recorded by the Texas Tech West Texas Mesonet. These severe gusts were immediately south of an advancing cold front. Weak and very high based cumulus clouds with virga were observed in advance of the front, but it is unclear through radar analysis and observations if the wind gusts were convectively enhanced.

Damage that resulted in one death and nine injuries was associated with the winds at 12th Street and Slide Road in Lubbock. A local restaurant, The Little Panda, was destroyed during the noon lunch hour when a wind gust blew down a sign mounted to the structure's roof and caused the establishment to fail in a collapse. Nearly thirty people were trapped under the rubble when rescue teams arrived. Minor roof damage to several homes also was reported throughout the city.

Several utility poles also were blown down north of Post in Garza County.

A list of severe wind gusts follow:

- Anton (Hockley County).....60 MPH
- Reese Center (Lubbock County).....61 MPH
- Graham (Garza County).....63 MPH

F23BU



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TEXAS, South Panhandle

TXZ021>030-034-036 **Parmer - Castro - Swisher - Briscoe - Hall - Childress - Bailey - Lamb - Hale - Floyd - Hockley - Crosby**
23 **1500CST** **0** **0** **0** **0** **Winter Weather**
2330CST

A strong upper level storm system propagated east over the Texas Panhandle on the 23rd and interacted with sufficiently cold air to result in light accumulating snows over the extreme southern panhandle and the northern South Plains. Snow accumulations generally ranged between one to three inches. The wintry weather, however, did not significantly impact travel conditions given recent warm temperatures that helped to keep area roadways and highways clear of ice and snow. Locales reporting one or more inch accumulations are listed below:

- Lazbuddie...3 inches
- Plainview...2 inches
- Anton.....1 inch
- Childress...1 inch
- Dimmitt....1 inch
- Floydada...1 inch
- Friona.....1 inch
- Hart.....1 inch
- Memphis...1 inch
- Muleshoe...1 inch
- Tulia.....1 inch

Garza County
5 W Post **31** **2244CST** **0** **0** **0** **0** **Hail(1.00)**
Quarter size hail was reported along U.S. Highway 380 west of Post.

Crosby County
14 SE Crosbyton **31** **2310CST** **0** **0** **0** **0** **Hail(1.00)**
The public reported quarter size hail at White River Lake in southeastern Crosby County.

A severe thunderstorm erupted over the Permian Basin of west Texas on the nose of a developing low level jet during the late evening of the 31st. The storm produced large hail as it propagated northeastward over Garza and Crosby Counties.