

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena - March 2008

Location	Date/Time	Deaths & Injuries	Property & Crop Dmg	Event Type and Details
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TEXAS, South Panhandle

(TX-Z021) PARMER, (TX-Z022) CASTRO, (TX-Z025) HALL, (TX-Z029) HALE				
	03/06/08 09:00 CST		0	Winter Weather
	03/06/08 14:00 CST		0	

A period of light snowfall occurred during the morning and early afternoon hours of the 6th. A few locations across the South Plains region received snow accumulations. Reported accumulations of at least 1 inch follow: 3 inches at Turkey (Hall County), 2 inches at Friona (Parmer County), 1 inch at Dimmitt (Castro County), and 1 inch at Plainview (Hale County).

(TX-Z038) KING, (TX-Z042) GARZA, (TX-Z043) KENT				
	03/14/08 11:30 CST		0.25M	Wildfire
	03/16/08 15:00 CST		0	

(TX-Z028) LAMB				
	03/14/08 15:00 CST		0	High Wind (MAX 54 kt)
	03/14/08 15:00 CST		0	

A combination of increasing drought conditions, strong downslope southwest to westerly winds, and very dry air all contributed to the growth of at least a half dozen wildfires across the west Texas South Plains region during the afternoon and evening hours of the 14th. Four of these wildfires burned thousands of acres and/or resulted in property damage.

Although wind speeds on the 14th were generally sustained in the 25 to 35 mph range, an isolated severe wind gust of 62 mph was recorded by a Texas Tech University West Texas Mesonet station near Amherst (Lamb County). No wind damage was reported throughout the region.

Damage resulting from wildfire activity, however, prompted a disaster declaration from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and President George W. Bush. Wildfires on this day scorched more than 135,000 acres across a broad area of the Southern Plains stretching from eastern New Mexico to central Texas.

The first wildfire to ignite on the west Texas South Plains began around 11:30 CST when a vehicle sparked a fire in thick grasses on an eastern King County ranch. By late afternoon, two large wildfires had merged to account for 19,000 acres of burned rangeland. Texas Forest Service officials reported that the massive wildfire damaged a number of ranch homes and destroyed at least two oil pipelines. Although up to 230 structures were threatened, only one was reportedly destroyed. Portions of U.S. Highway 82 and Texas Highway 222 were closed by local officials as a result of the raging fire. The fire burned out of control for more than twenty-four hours, and then flared up again on multiple occasions during subsequent days.

A 2,000 acre wildfire started in rough canyon terrain north of U.S. Highway 380, prompting the closure of that highway, in western Kent County around 15:45 CST. The fire was reportedly difficult to suppress due to complex terrain, but no serious damage was reported. The fire remained largely uncontained for approximately two days and also flared up again on a few occasions during subsequent days.

During the evening hours, a large wildfire in Garza County destroyed two trailer homes near Lake Alan Henry. The fire, estimated to have consumed more than 1,200 acres, started around 19:30 CST east of Justiceburg.

Total damages from South Plains wildfires on the 14th were estimated to be near \$250,000.

(TX-Z021) PARMER, (TX-Z022) CASTRO, (TX-Z023) SWISHER, (TX-Z024) BRISCOE, (TX-Z026) CHILDRESS, (TX-Z027) BAILEY, (TX-Z028) LAMB, (TX-Z033) COCHRAN, (TX-Z034) HOCKLEY, (TX-Z036) CROSBY, (TX-Z039) YOAKUM				
	03/02/08 18:30 CST		14K	High Wind (MAX 54 kt)
	03/03/08 02:35 CST		0	

(TX-Z021) PARMER, (TX-Z022) CASTRO, (TX-Z027) BAILEY, (TX-Z028) LAMB, (TX-Z033) COCHRAN, (TX-Z034) HOCKLEY, (TX-Z035) LUBBOCK, (TX-Z039) YOAKUM, (TX-Z040) TERRY				
	03/02/08 23:00 CST		0.22M	Winter Weather
	03/03/08 14:00 CST		0	

A powerful winter storm brought a combination of high winds and winter weather, including accumulating snowfall, to the west Texas South Plains region during the evening hours of the 2nd and into the 3rd.

Post frontal northerly winds gusted as high as 62 mph and were sustained at speeds up to 47 mph during the evening hours of the 2nd and the early morning hours of the 3rd over the northwestern half of the South Plains per measurements from the Texas Tech

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University West Texas Mesonet. These winds destroyed a metal storage shed when it was blown through a fence in Muleshoe (Bailey County) and snapped a power pole in Childress (Childress County). Observed severe wind gusts follow:

62 mph at White River Lake (Crosby County), 59 mph at Hart (Castro County), 58 mph at Muleshoe (Bailey County), 58 mph at Olton (Lamb County), and 58 mph at Plains (Yoakum County).

In addition, snow began to fall over much of the South Plains shortly before midnight on the 2nd. With high winds continuing into the morning hours of the 3rd, periods of blowing snow significantly reduced visibilities to near blizzard conditions. This contributed to at least two dozen automobile accidents across the region. Injuries were reported as a result of accidents in Castro and Hockley Counties.

Reported snowfall accumulations of at least 1 inch follow: 3 inches at Dimmitt (Castro County), 3 inches at Friona (Parmer County), 3 inches at Morton (Cochran County), 2 inches at Denver City (Yoakum County), 1 inch at Muleshoe (Bailey County), 1 inch at Olton (Lamb County), 1 inch at Brownfield (Terry County).

Combined estimated damages totalled nearly \$235,000.