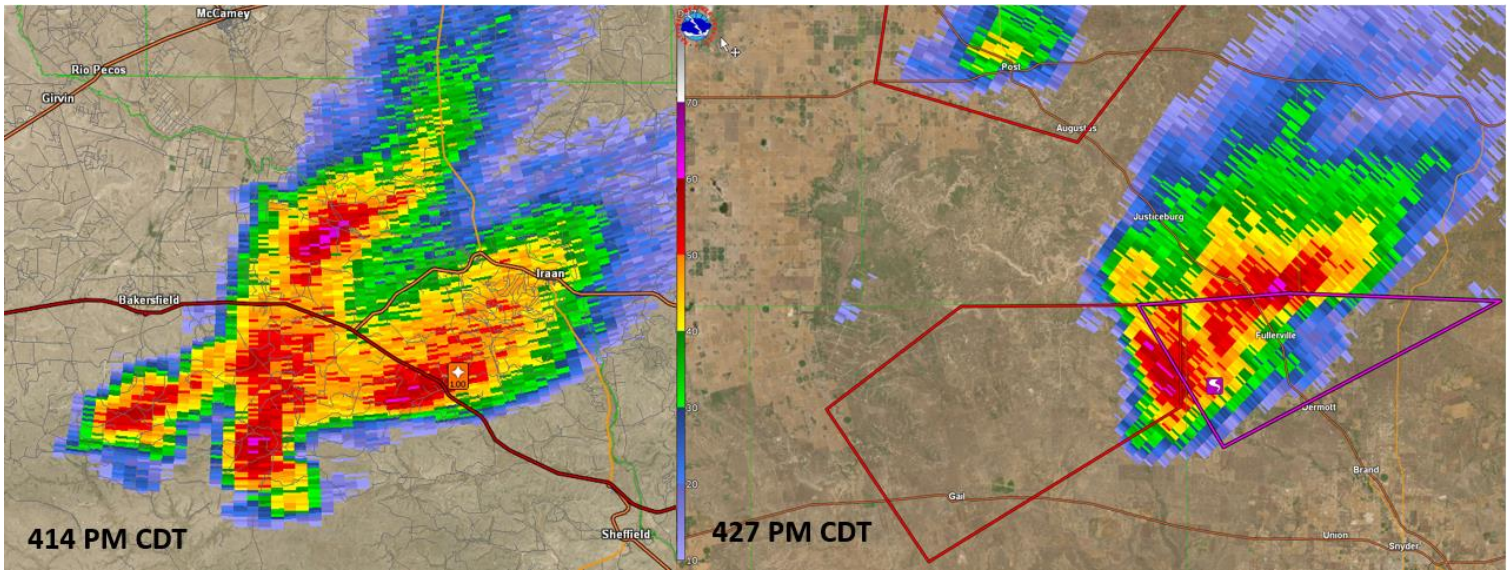
Severe Weather Across West Texas & Southeast New Mexico April 30th- May 5th, 2019

Beginning April 30th, much of west Texas and southeast New Mexico would endure one of the longer stretches of severe weather this area has received in several years. A series of disturbances would enter our region during that week with an upper-level, broad trough positioned over the Western US. The dryline, which is a boundary that separates warm moist air to the east and dry air to the west, as well as an integral part of our weather in the spring, was situated across the area for multiple days. Areas on the east side of the dryline have a higher probability of seeing thunderstorms, some severe, thanks to the moisture available and a pronounced increase in instability. A lot of times, the dryline will eventually push eastward, allowing dry air to flow into the area, leaving us dry for periods before it returns. Unfortunately, the pattern over the Western US would not allow that to occur, leaving much of the area vulnerable to what would be an active week of severe weather. Below is a recap, day by day, of what the area has seen over the aforementioned period.

April 30th, 2019

The active period began with a marginal risk of severe weather across the Permian Basin and Lower Trans Pecos area during the afternoon and early evening hours. Multiple tornadoes were reported in the region, as well as some large hail reports across the northern Permian Basin and Pecos River Valley. A tornado was reported south of I-10 by

the McCamey Fire Dept, 13 miles southeast of Bakersfield around 413pm CDT that afternoon as a supercell developed in the area. At 427pm CDT, a second reported tornado developed 1SE of Fluvanna in Northwest Scurry county. Large hail up to golf ball size (1.75” diameter) was reported in multiple areas including the Greenwood area in Midland county, as well as down near Sheffield in Pecos county. Other severe hail reports of quarter size were made in other areas.



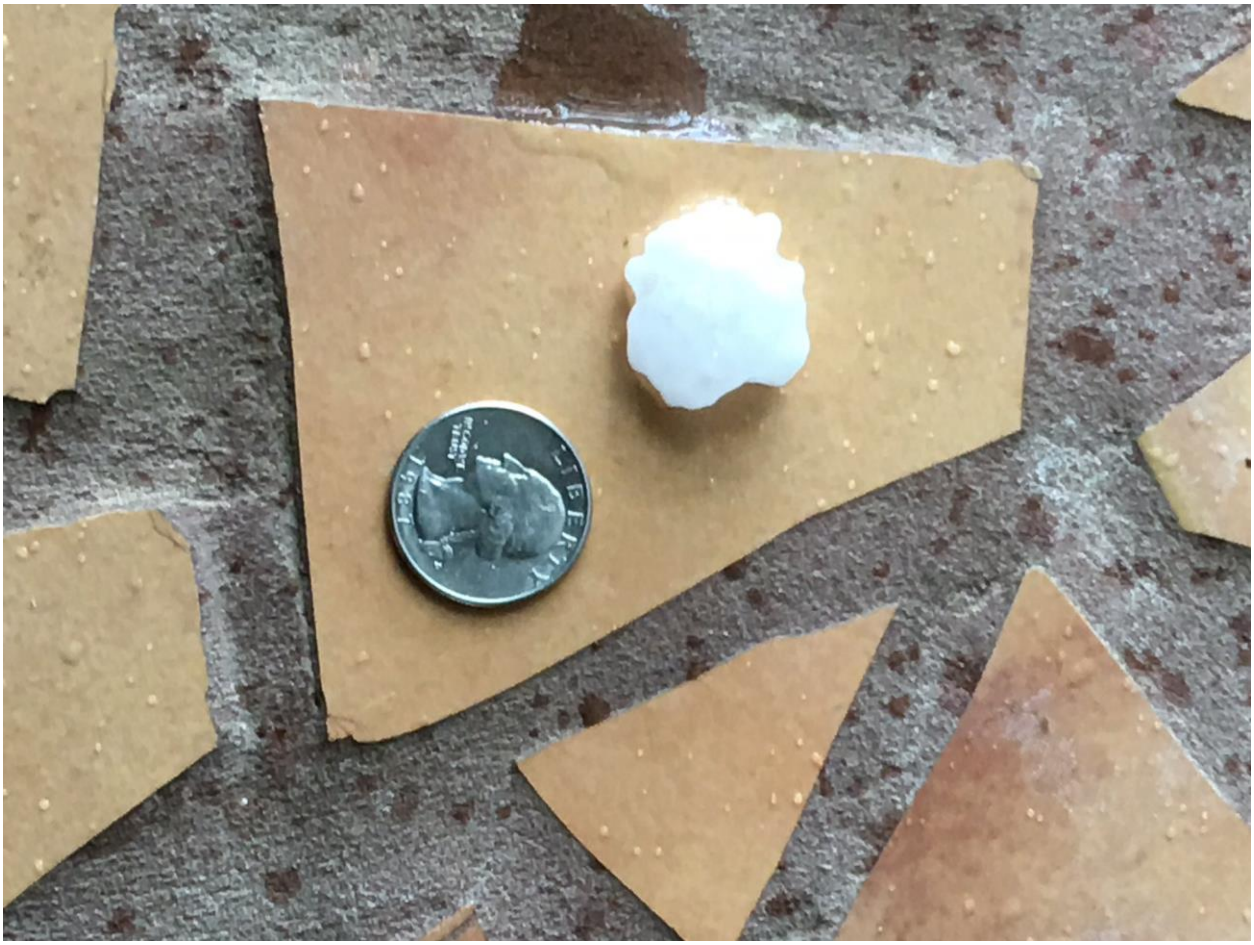
Radar images of the two tornadoes that developed across the region. At 413pm CDT, supercell across Pecos county dropped the first of two tornadoes on the afternoon (Left Image). At 427pm CDT, the second tornado of the day developed over Scurry county, 1SE of Fluvanna from a thunderstorm that developed quickly over the area (Right Image).

Tornado 1SE of Fluvanna, TX in Scurry county. Photo and credit to Mike Olbinski via Twitter

May 1st and May 2nd, 2019

The beginning of May brought hail in multiple areas of the region with the northeast Permian Basin the target for the 1st and the Lower Trans Pecos region for the 2nd. On the 1st, severe hail reports of quarter size were reported in Loraine, TX across eastern Mitchell county as severe storms developed near Colorado City and moved eastward. On the 2nd,

a slight risk of severe thunderstorms was focused across the Lower Trans Pecos with the main concern for large hail. Multiple severe hail reports were made across eastern Pecos county, as well as the Big Bend areas of Brewster and Terrell counties. Many quarter size reports of hail were made for the day, but the most severe storm brought ping-pong and golf ball size hail to Sheffield, TX in eastern Pecos county. Warnings were heeded thankfully and no injuries were reported for the large hail.



Quarter size hail fell in Loraine, TX on May 1st. Photo and Credit to Shannon Tubb via Twitter

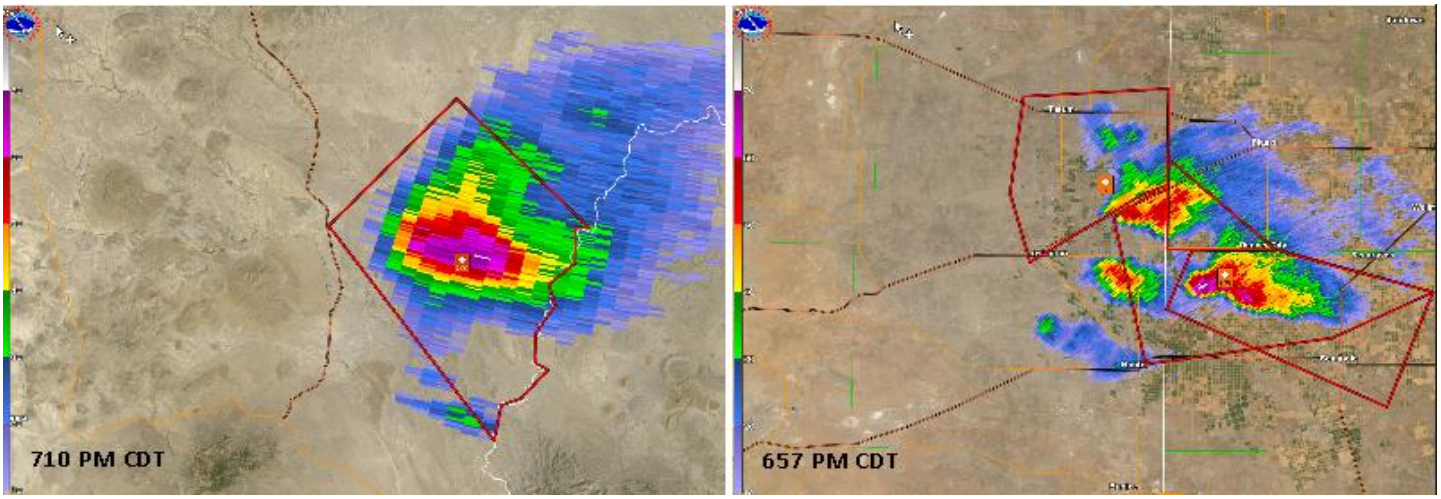
May 3rd, 2019

The active stretch of weather continued into the end of the first week of May with numerous severe reports. On May 3rd, the western Permian Basin down through the Pecos River Valley was placed in a slight risk of severe thunderstorms with the main concern being hail as the dryline positioned itself further west into the region. Multiple severe thunderstorms formed in the area of highest risk with a few supercells developing within the bevy of storms. The most prominent of the thunderstorms was a supercell that dropped south from Ward county into Pecos county, giving the towns of Pyote and Coyanosa a barrage of tennis ball to baseball size hail in its path. Wind shields of vehicles were damaged across parts of town as the hail fell over the area. A wind gust of 61 mph was reported with the storm as well from a trained spotter in the Coyanosa area. Later that day, a strong thunderstorm across Glasscock county produced a brief circulation seven miles north of Saint Lawrence. Other reports of quarter to tennis ball size hail were made in several areas such as Lea county in southeast New Mexico and Winkler and eastern Reeves counties as other severe thunderstorms impacted the area.


Pictures of Coyanosa, TX hail from a severe thunderstorm on May 3rd. Tennis to baseball size hail was common for the areas impacted by the storm. (Left image) Picture of baseball size hail courtesy of Kendra Brianne Rayos via report to NewsWest9 social media. (Right image) Hail damage back of car window in Coyanosa. Picture courtesy of Victor Carreon via report to NewsWest9 social media.

May 4th, 2019

The weekend of the 4th continued the severe stretch with increasing risk of tornadoes and long track supercells as the trough over the western US slowly pushed east and the dryline sharpened across southeast New Mexico and the western Permian Basin. Conditions deteriorated quickly that afternoon as multiple storms developed over the Caprock in New Mexico and across the higher terrain of west Texas. Multiple supercells were present across the region with the two most impactful cells located across Lea County near Tatum, New Mexico and Brewster County across the Big Bend.



Radar imagery from the two supercells that developed around 6 pm CDT on May 4th. At 6:57 pm CDT, multiple reports of golf ball sized hail were relayed to the office via social media and trained spotters in the area from the supercell moving slowly to the southeast into Gaines County, northwest of Seminole (Right Image). At 7:10 pm CDT, our supercell over Brewster county was indicating very large hail falling just outside Big Bend National Park with areas like Persimmon Gap just missing the brunt of the storm. This cell would end up dropping baseball sized hail down near the US border (Left Image).

Simultaneously, the two cells would go on to produce picturesque supercells both on radar and in classic structure, especially the storm over New Mexico. Hail reports of golf ball size were common with the storm over New Mexico as it slowly pushed into Gaines County and became almost stationary for one to two hours. Multiple severe thunderstorm warnings and even a tornado warning was issued for the storm as radar indicated strong rotation throughout the storm's lifecycle. In Brewster County, another supercell was ongoing with very large hail falling across the open country, just north of Big Bend National Park area. A report of tennis ball sized hail was sent in via social media, confirming what was thought on radar during the storm's lifecycle. Thankfully, no one was injured in either of the supercells as warnings were heeded.

Low Precipitation (LP) Supercell over Gaines County in Texas, NW of Seminole.
Photo and credit to Mike Olbinski via Twitter

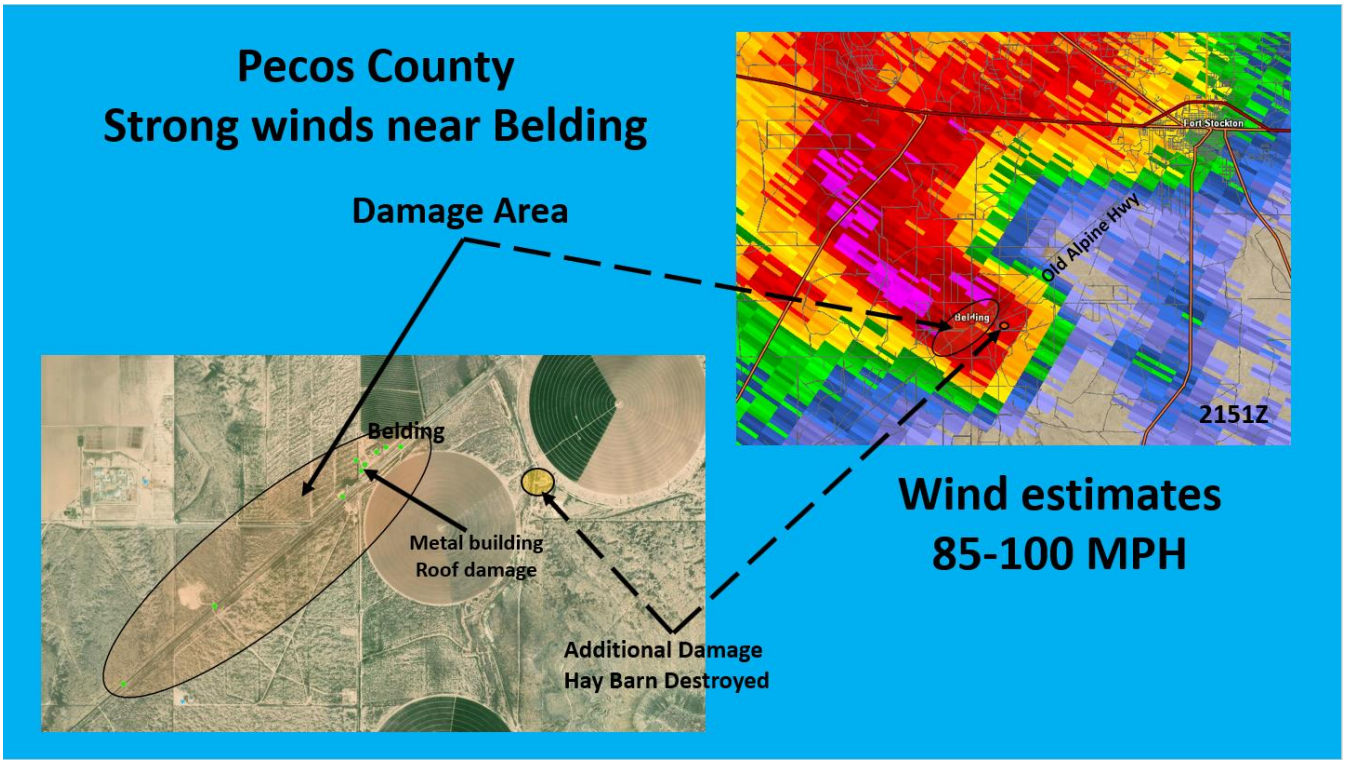
Sunset behind the Low Precipitation (LP) Supercell over Gaines County in Texas. NW of Seminole.
Photo and credit to Daniel Shaw www.severestorms.com.au via Twitter

Tennis ball sized hail from the Brewster County supercell via Ryan on Twitter

May 5th, 2019

Active weather continued through the end of the weekend as more supercells developed across the Texas Panhandle and the higher terrain of west Texas. Two more supercells really stood out with impact looming for areas of Pecos county during the afternoon and Borden county later in the evening. Numerous hail reports were received throughout the day with golf ball sized hail and damaging winds for the first storm of the day across Pecos county. A supercell developed across

western Pecos county and began moving to the southeast, narrowly missing the I-10 corridor on its path. The town of Belding, Texas south of Fort Stockton, took the brunt of the storm with wide spread wind damage and golf ball sized hail. Numerous power poles were snapped around the town with a metal roof blown off a building in town, as well as the collapse of multiple hay barns on a local farm. No injuries were reported with the storm, but the damage was done.



Storm survey conducted by NWS Midland for the damage in Belding, TX. The green dots on the map to the left indicate areas of damage. To the top left, radar was taken during the time when damage was occurring. Belding was right in the core of the strongest part of the supercell. Estimated winds from damage ranged between 85-100 mph.

Metal roof of a large barn in Belding blown off due to the winds from the storm (Left Image). One of many snapped power poles along Old Alpine Hwy, FM 2057 due to the strong winds (Right Image).

Hay Barn in Belding, TX that completely collapsed due to the severe winds from the storm

The second of the higher impact severe storms occurred later that evening as a very strong storm with a history of producing a tornado moved slowly southward from Tahoka, TX in Lynn county, all the way into Borden county. Communication between NWS Midland and NWS Lubbock were key, along with receiving updates via storm spotters to the north who tracked the storm for many miles, and Borden county Sheriff's Office who were giving updates as the storm approached the county. The supercell was responsible for not just the threat of tornadoes, but reports of golf ball to even tea cup size (3 inch) diameter hail as it made it into the area. Gail, TX avoided the worst as the storm passed just to the west of the town, but areas along US 180 and FM 1054 were not as fortunate. Thankfully, no injuries were reported and the storm ended up dying out as it approached Howard county and the I-20 corridor.

Tornado eight miles south of Tahoka from the supercell that moved into Borden county. NWS Lubbock and NWS Midland, as well as several other entities were in constant communication as this storm moved south.

The string of severe weather across the region is a testament as to what can occur out here in west Texas and southeast New Mexico. The prolonged stretch was anomalous and severe weather would continue on May 7th with a one-day break Monday May, 6th. From baseball sized hail to severe winds and damage, this week of weather had many on edge. We are thankful that no injuries were ever reported for any of the storms that occurred. We want to thank everyone who sent in reports, sent pictures, videos, and kept us informed every step of the way. We are thankful for our community, and we are proud to see our region being proactive and weather ready!