



STATE OF ARKANSAS
SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS
GOVERNOR

May 29, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Through: Regional Administrator George A. Robinson
FEMA Region 6
800 North Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209

RE: Request for Presidential Disaster Declaration Major Disaster

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for the State of Arkansas as a result of severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding that began on May 24, 2024, and are continuing.

In response to this event, I took appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the Arkansas Emergency Management Plan on May 24, 2024, and declared a State of Emergency on May 26, 2024. As a result of severe weather across the state, the State Emergency Operations Center was activated on May 26 and remained activated through 5:00 p.m. on May 27. The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) remained in close contact with emergency managers throughout the affected areas and coordinated with agencies and organizations including the Arkansas Department of Transportation, Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division, Arkansas Department of

Agriculture and Natural Resources, Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Department of Human Services, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, Arkansas National Guard, US Army Corp of Engineers, National Weather Service, Arkansas American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the Arkansas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. The State Emergency Operations Plan has been activated and resources of all State departments and agencies available to meet this emergency are hereby committed to the reasonable extent necessary to protect lives and to prevent, minimize, and repair injury and damage.

The sheer magnitude of this event created disastrous amounts of debris, extensive destruction to homes and businesses, and resulted in the death of nine citizens and injuries to countless others.

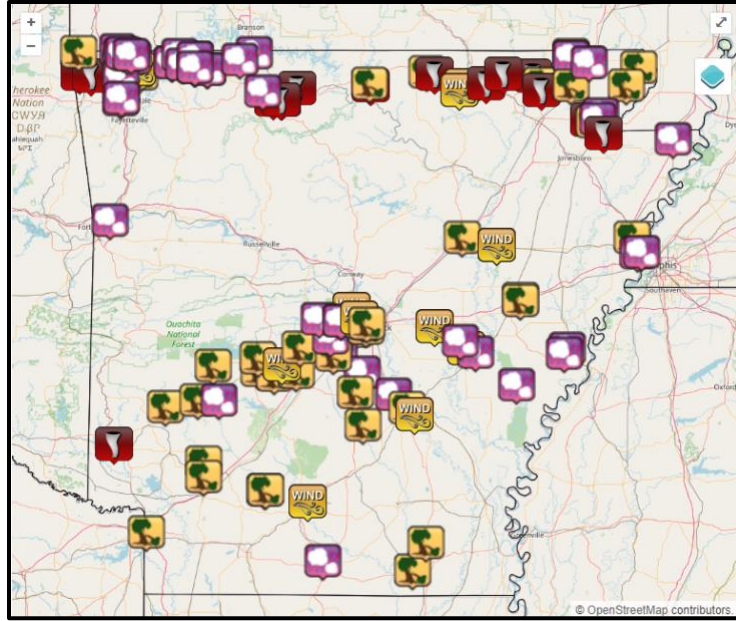
Weather Summary

Two rounds of severe thunderstorms associated with a cold front and a passing upper-level disturbance developed across Arkansas during both the early morning and late evening hours on May 24. Severe thunderstorms produced wind damage in Pike County and one EF-1 tornado in central Sevier County during the early morning hours of May 24; sporadic areas of thunderstorm wind damage occurred during the second round of severe thunderstorms during the evening hours of May 24. While no severe weather was observed in Arkansas on May 25, another round of severe thunderstorms developed across Oklahoma on May 25 as another upper-level disturbance lifted across the Southern Plains and pushed east into Arkansas early on May 26, interacting with a nearly stationary cold front across western Arkansas. These severe thunderstorms produced twelve tornadoes across Baxter, Benton, Boone, Fulton, Greene, Marion, and Randolph counties with damage ranging from EF-1 to EF-3. Numerous reports of large hail and damaging wind were also received.

No reports of severe weather were received after May 26, 2024, in Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Fulton, Greene, Madison, Marion, Nevada, Pike, Randolph, Sevier, and Sharp counties.

Storm Report Summary

The map below contains all of the Local Storm Reports gathered by NWS Offices during this event. For more detailed information, you can view them individually at <https://mesonet.agron.iastate.edu/lsr/#AR/202405240500/202405291539/010010>



Storm Reports from May 24-29, 2024

 Tornado
  Severe Thunderstorm Winds
  Hail
  Flash Flooding

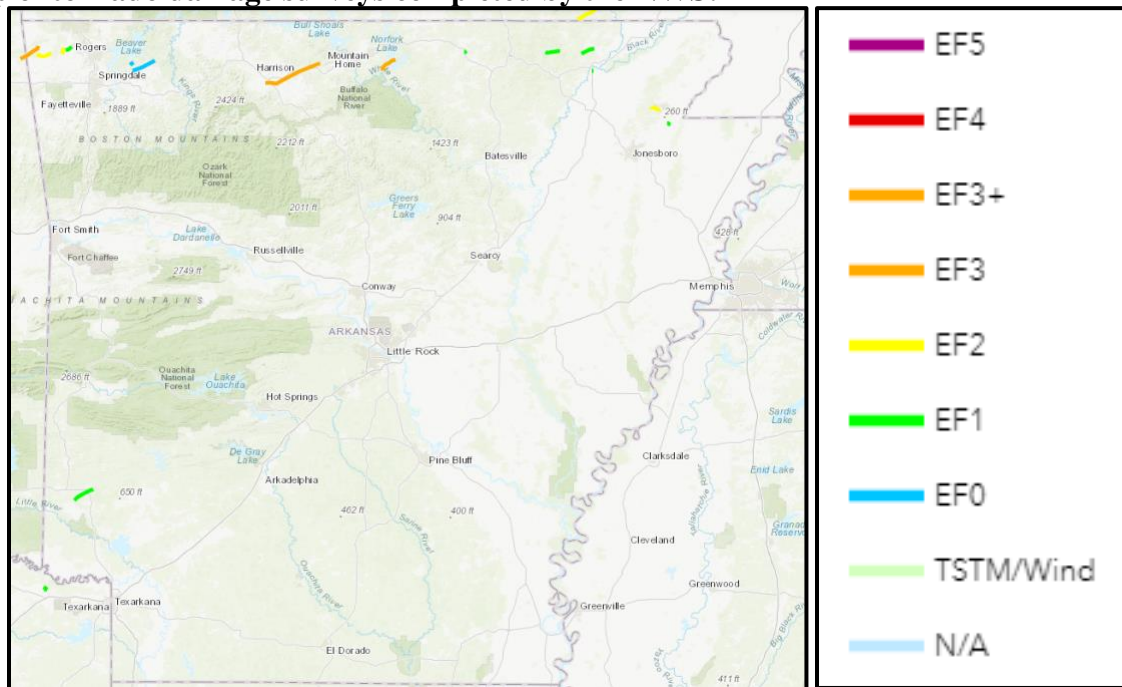
Tornado Summary

The table below includes any confirmed tornadoes by NWS Offices for this event

County	Location	Date	Start (CDT)	End (CDT)	EF Rating	Maximum Wind Speed (MPH)	Information Statement
Sevier	5 SE De Queen	5/24	3:08 AM	3:18 AM	EF-1	110	PNSSHV
Benton	3 NW Decatur	5/26	12:59 AM	1:21 AM	EF-3	145-155	PNSTSA
Benton	3 WSW Decatur	5/26	1:06 AM	1:20 AM	EF-2	120-130	PNSTSA
Benton	2 NNW Vaughn	5/26	1:23 AM	1:28 AM	EF-1	90-100	PNSTSA
Benton	3 WNW Vaughn	5/26	1:24 AM	1:28 AM	EF-2	115-125	PNSTSA
Boone/Marion	2 S Bellefonte	5/26	3:27 AM	4:07 AM	EF-3	140	PNSLZK
Baxter	2 W Salesville	5/26	4:25 AM	4:40 AM	EF-3	140	PNSLZK
Fulton	7 NNW Horseshoe Bend	5/26	6:11 AM	6:12 AM	EF-1	100	PNSLZK

Randolph	2 SW Attica	5/26	6:24 AM	6:30 AM	EF-1	105	PNSLZK
Randolph	2 SSE Pocahontas	5/26	6:29 AM	6:30 PM	EF-1	110	PNSLZK
Randolph	2 NW Ravenden Springs	5/26	6:12 AM	6:17 AM	EF-1	100	PNSLZK
Greene	3 W Paragould	5/26	11:00 PM	11:07 PM	EF-2	120	PNSMEG
Greene	6 SSE Paragould	5/26	11:24 PM	11:27 PM	EF-1	105	PNSMEG

Map of tornado damage surveys completed by the NWS:



To obtain more detailed information on these damage surveys, you can go to <https://apps.dat.noaa.gov/stormdamage/damageviewer/> (use the menu in the upper right corner to filter to the correct dates)

Hail Reports Any known hail reports (greater than 1") that were sent to NWS Offices are listed below.

Date	Time (CDT)	County	Location	Mag.
5/26	1:36 AM	Benton	4 N Bella Vista	1
5/26	1:41 AM	Benton	2 N Bella Vista	1
5/26	1:47 AM	Benton	2 N Bella Vista	1
5/26	2:31 AM	Carroll	4 SW Grandview	1
5/26	2:53 AM	Carroll	1 E Berryville	1
5/26	4:19 AM	Boone	Omaha	2.5
5/26	4:55 PM	Benton	5 NNW Bella Vista	1
5/26	5:03 PM	Benton	3 NE Bella Vista	1
5/26	5:07 PM	Benton	2 W Pea Ridge	1
5/26	5:41 PM	Carroll	Eureka Springs	1
5/26	5:46 PM	Carroll	4 SW Grandview	1.5
5/26	5:48 PM	Carroll	1 W Grandview	1
5/26	6:12 PM	Carroll	3 N Denver	1.75
5/26	6:13 PM	Carroll	4 SW Grandview	1.5
5/26	7:19 PM	Boone	1 S Harrison	1
5/26	11:02 PM	Greene	3 NNE Paragould	1.25
5/26	11:05 PM	Greene	Paragould	1.5

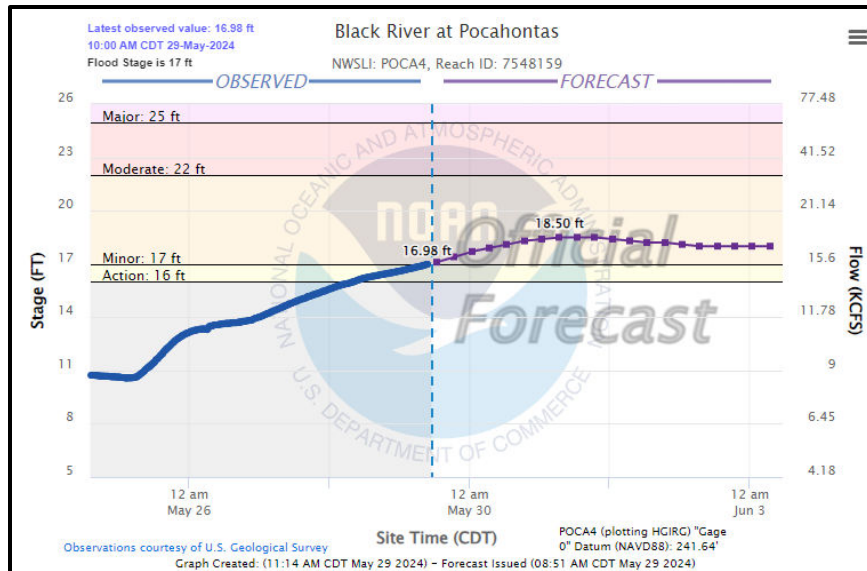
Damaging Wind Reports

Date	Time (CDT)	County	Location	Event Type	Wind Gust (MPH)	Remark
5/24	3:36 AM	Pike	Newhope	TSTM WND DMG		Trees reported down at the intersection of US Hwy 70 and Hwy 369 blocking the roadway.
5/24	4:10 AM	Pike	1 NNE Kirby	TSTM WND DMG		Multiple trees and power lines down across Pike County. Ebenezer road near Kirby has the worst damage.
5/24	9:15 PM	Benton	2 ENE Rogers	TSTM WND DMG		Large tree down.
5/24	11:00 PM	Nevada	2 SSE Bluff City	TSTM WND DMG		Several trees were uprooted at the White Oak Lake State Park southeast of Bluff City near the Ouachita County line.
5/26	1:47 AM	Benton	2 NNW Bentonville	TSTM WND DMG		Extensive tree damage. Multiple trees down. Large tree limb penetrated home. Near intersection of Ridgefield and Robson Way.
5/26	1:47 AM	Benton	1 SSE Bentonville	TSTM WND DMG		Large trees down.
5/26	1:52 AM	Benton	3 WNW Rogers	TSTM WND DMG		Reports of damage in Rogers...possible tornado.

5/26	1:52 AM	Benton	3 NNE Rogers	TSTM WND GST	62	
5/26	4:07 AM	Carroll	1 W Grandview	TSTM WND DMG		Trees damaged by thunderstorm wind gust.
5/26	4:26 AM	Baxter	Briarcliff	TSTM WND DMG		Trees reported down and roof damage reported to homes. Report related by KY3.
5/26	4:31 AM	Fulton	1 SSW Salem Airport	TSTM WND DMG		Multiple roads in county blocked due to downed trees and power lines. Time estimated by radar observations.
5/26	5:53 AM	Sharp	1 WSW Lake Navajo	TSTM WND GST	86	Measured at Sharp County Regional Airport.
5/26	6:00 AM	Sharp	1 NE Ash Flat	TSTM WND GST	60	**This is a delayed report** Mesonet station FW0859 Ash Flat.
5/26	6:21 AM	Randolph	2 NE Pocahontas	TSTM WND DMG		Report of multiple roads blocked due to downed trees and power lines.
5/26	4:50 PM	Benton	6 W Sulphur Springs	TSTM WND DMG		trees uprooted or damaged; relayed by NWS employee; time estimated by radar.
5/26	5:01 PM	Benton	3 W Pea Ridge	TSTM WND DMG		Tree limbs down near Metfield Golf Complex. Winds estimated at 55-60 mph.
5/26	10:20 PM	Greene	2 NNE Delaplaine	TSTM WND DMG		Three silos were destroyed and thrown into a nearby field along Highway 280 near the Greene-Clay County line between Delaphaine and Brookings. Time estimated by radar.
5/26	11:02 PM	Greene	2 SW Paragould	TSTM WND DMG		Damage reported to homes. Extent unknown. Time estimated by radar.

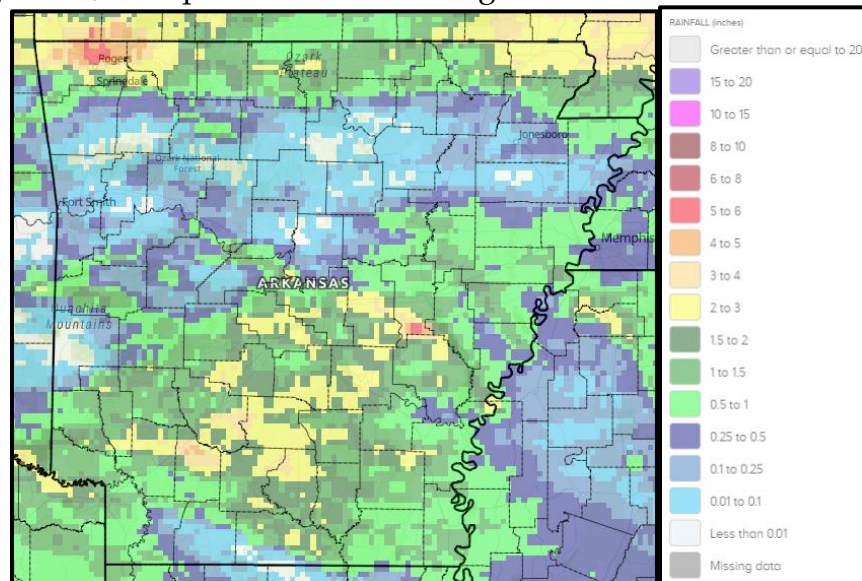
River Flooding

Minor river flooding was observed and forecast for the Black River at Pocahontas in Randolph County with agricultural lands along the river east and south of Pocahontas impacted by high water. No river flooding was observed in Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Fulton, Greene, Madison, Marion, Nevada, Pike, Sevier, and Sharp counties from May 24 to May 29, 2024.



Rainfall/Flooding

Rainfall amounts across Arkansas were generally under 2 inches from May 24-28, 2024, but localized 3 to 6 inch amounts occurred across Benton County. Most of this rain fell from May 25-26; no reports of flash flooding were associated with this rainfall.



Precipitation Estimates from May 24-28, 2024

Flash Flood Reports

No reports of flash flooding were received May 24-29, 2024.

Housing Damage Assessments:

A Joint State and FEMA aerial assessment was conducted on May 28, 2024, and Joint preliminary damage assessments on the ground began May 29, 2024. Damage

assessments will continue to occur as residents return to their homes and assess the damage to their residences, as well as the locally owned businesses. After the aerial assessment and a review of geospatial data, open source data, and Civil Air Patrol flights, there have been 914 structures assessed:

- 217 categorized as destroyed,
- 94 categorized as major,
- 125 categorized as minor, and
- 478 categorized as affected.

Loss of Life:

This event resulted in the loss of nine lives. In Benton County, there were five confirmed fatalities, one of the fatalities was reported by the Blossom nursing home prior to the nursing home being evacuated. In Marion County, there were two confirmed fatalities. In Baxter County, there was one confirmed fatality. In Boone County, there was one confirmed fatality. There have been multiple injuries reported throughout these counties.

Socioeconomic Impact:

These counties are in dire need of assistance in order to help individuals regain suitable living conditions that cannot be obtained at their current financial status. The average unemployment rate for the three counties under Individual Assistance is 3%. Because several of the hardest-hit areas also experienced major damage to infrastructure, industry, trade, and local businesses, as well as agricultural enterprises, it is expected that applications for disaster-related unemployment will be high.

<i>Percentage of the population:</i>	<i>for whom poverty status is determined</i>	<i>Pre-disaster unemployment rate</i>	<i>65 years and older</i>	<i>18 years and younger</i>	<i>with a disability</i>	<i>who speak a language other than English</i>
Data Source*	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau
National Average	12.6%	3.9%	17.3%	21.7%	13.4%	22%
State Average	16.8%	3.4%	17.7%	22.8%	18.1%	8.1%
Requested Jurisdictions						
Benton	7.9%	2.5%	14%	25.2%	9.7%	17%
Boone	13.2%	2.9%	20.8%	22.7%	20%	2.5%
Marion	17.8%	3.7%	28.8%	18.4%	25%	2.7%

While infrastructure is crucial to economic growth, citizens also play a vital role in the need for recovery efforts. According to the United States Census Bureau, Arkansas currently has 16.8% of individuals below the poverty level, making the state the fifth in the nation among impoverished states. While this may not appear to be a large number, the average number of individuals living below the poverty level within the counties affected is 12.77%, with Marion County representing the most significant number of residents below the poverty level at 17.8% and Boone County at 13.2%, both in one of the hardest hit areas. However, each affected county struggles with poverty. Severe poverty is a significant component of economic depression, leading to the need for assistance. The median income for Arkansans is \$55,432. A large percentage of homes affected house individuals below the poverty level, which creates a hardship for individuals needing to repair or replace their property.

The individuals residing in the three counties seek to remain in their communities but ask for assistance to repair their property. Based on preliminary damage assessments conducted by FEMA, FEMA has estimated housing assistance for 528 households.

Housing Stock:

There is a significant deficit in available and affordable housing in the rural affected areas and this could lead to a future housing mission. The area is limited in available housing stock for purchase and/or rental. A temporary housing mission would help keep citizens in their communities and allow for the tax base to stay in place.

Sheltering:

At the peak of the event, there were 8 shelters, 2 cooling centers, 2 feeding centers, and one reunification center opened. Two shelters are currently open. At the peak of the event, there were 37 individuals housed in shelters.

Power Outages:

At the peak of the event, an estimated 125,000 households were without power, and, as of writing, there are currently 25,000 households still without power. The power companies are working to restore lines and power where it is safe to do so. Even as the damage assessment teams continue to survey the damage, there are downed power lines throughout the affected area.

Other Impact:

In Benton County, it was reported that a nursing home had sustained damage and patients were evacuated to a sister facility. In total, 97 patients were moved to other facilities. Six patients were moved to the Circle of Life Hospice, 19 patients were moved to Berryville Blossoms, 2 went home with family members, 12 patients were moved to Van Buren Blossoms, and 58 patients were moved to Eureka Springs Blossoms. There was one fatality reported at the nursing home prior to the evacuation. The nursing home

sustained roof damage, and currently there is not an estimate when the facility will be operational again. The Rogers Health Unit also sustained severe damage. The lab of the facility was severely impacted and was reported as a potential loss.

Public Assistance Impact:

The current estimate for Public Assistance Categories A and B exceeds \$6.4 million. Estimated debris in Benton County to date is \$1,217,060.00, Boone County to date is \$2,704,800.00, and Marion County to date is \$2,241,120.00.

In Benton County, multiple trees and power lines were reported down and blocked highways throughout the county. 210 National Guardsmen were deployed to Benton County to perform traffic control points, staging area security, and security for utility companies to restore power. The business district in the City of Rogers was severely damaged and many businesses were destroyed. There has been 4 confirmed fatalities and 3 injuries were reported at this time.

In Boone County, the county jail was reported to have sustained damage and 3 businesses were reported to have been destroyed. Search and rescue operations were conducted in the county. There was one fatality reported and 6 individuals were transported to local hospitals.

In Marion County, multiple trees and power lines were reported down and blocked highways and local roads throughout the county. Multiple volunteer fire departments were assisting in debris removal. Snow Access Campsite had 40 sites impacted and all vehicles at the sites were damaged. All the campers present were transported to a shelter. There were 6 respite centers opened throughout the county. There were 2 confirmed fatalities reported.

Electric Cooperatives throughout the affected area are estimating more than \$50 million in damages.

Public Assistance preliminary damage assessments have been requested to begin June 5, 2024, and those assessments will assist in validating the current estimates and provide additional estimates for categories C-G.

In conclusion, without the assistance of a Major Disaster Declaration, it will be difficult for Arkansas to bear all of the responsibilities and properly recover from this event. I have determined that these storms are of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments, and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am requesting Individual Assistance, U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans and Public Assistance Categories A-B for Benton, Boone, and Marion Counties and

Hazard Mitigation Statewide. Your favorable consideration for this declaration is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah Sanders".

Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor

Enclosures:

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13