

Storm: Plenty of weekend events were canceled

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Major cancellations

The Great Columbia Crossing slated for Sunday was canceled.

The event organizers made the decision after talking with the Oregon Department of Transportation and law enforcement.

With first responders and medical personnel having to attend to emergencies around the area Saturday night and Sunday morning, they might be unavailable to help at the 10K run/walk over the Astoria Bridge.

"It would be unwise and unsafe for us to continue without adequate staffing for traffic control, security, medical response," Kelsey Balensifer said in a release.

"Additionally, we are aware that many of our participants are traveling considerable distances to participate in our event, even while possibly facing dangerous road and weather conditions. We do not want anyone to risk their safety for the sake of our event — it's simply not worth it," she said.

Organizers plan to try to reschedule the Great Columbia Crossing for later this year and will contact all entrants with the news.

"We apologize for any inconvenience or hardship this has caused," Balensifer said. "We hope you will be able to join us on the bridge again in the future, under better circumstances."

The final Astoria Sunday Market of the year was also canceled, along all high school football games, state parks, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, Astor Street Opry Company and Coaster Theater productions, Clatsop Community College, Cannon Beach Dog Show on the Beach and many other businesses and events.

Coastal football games were rescheduled for tonight, including Seaside's homecoming game against Tillamook.

Typhoon Songda

The storm carried the remnants of Typhoon Songda, which wreaked havoc in the western Pacific days ago. It closely followed a separate storm that on Friday brought a tornado to Manzanita (see related story); injured a 4-year-old boy and his father when a tree branch fell in West Seattle; and prompted the Coast Guard and other emergency officials near Port Angeles, Washington, to make several boat trips across a lake to rescue 40 teenagers and six adults who became stranded at an outdoor recreation camp after they lost power and downed trees blocked their way out.

The tornado destroyed two businesses and rendered one home uninhabitable, but no injuries were reported. Another twister was confirmed near Oceanside but it caused no damage.

What happened to the big blow?

Here are some questions and answers about the storm that was originally forecast to be one of the worst in recent history.

What was predicted?

The storm was a remnant of Typhoon Songda, which had



Storm debris is seen here on Friday, in Manzanita. More photos from this weekend's storms online at DailyAstorian.com



Waves crash against the South Jetty of the Columbia River on Saturday at Fort Stevens State Park in Hammond.



A park visitor braces himself against the wind from atop a viewing deck overlooking the South Jetty of the Columbia River on Saturday at Fort Stevens State Park in Hammond.



Storm debris is seen here on Friday in Manzanita.



Park visitors take photos from atop a viewing deck overlooking the South Jetty of the Columbia River as a storm rolls in on Saturday at Fort Stevens State Park in Hammond.

wreaked havoc in the western Pacific last week. Heavy rains and strong winds were expected when it hit land on Saturday.

Officials estimated 80 mph wind gusts in some regions as the storm moved up the Oregon coast early Saturday and eventually into Washington later that day. Residents were warned to keep off the roads, while parks and zoos were closed to help keep people inside.

What was the damage?

The 50-mph wind squalls were big enough to down power lines and toss tree branches onto streets and vehicles, particularly closer to the coast where winds were the strongest.

At one point, tens of thousands of residents were left without electricity. A spokesman for the Portland Bureau of Transportation told The

Oregonian that the agency received more than 200 calls on Saturday about fallen trees, flooding and other issues.

No injuries have been immediately reported. A tornado brought on by a separate storm Friday hurt a 4-year-old boy and his father in Oregon when it dropped a tree branch on them in Seattle.

The storm brought heavy rain and wind as far south as Northern California.

Why wasn't it so intense?

The National Weather Service attributed the weaker-than-predicted winds to the storm ending up with two pressure centers when it approached the Oregon coastline. Meteorologists thought it would only have one. This helped break up the intensity.

However, the subdued nature of the storm still has meteorologists puzzled. In a statement released late Saturday, the weather service said it would be studying the storm over the next few weeks to help better their forecast models.

"(When) a forecast does not work out as expected, it is frustrating as a forecaster. Weather science and model forecasts are getting better every day, but this is just another reminder that Mother

Nature will always keep a certain level of unpredictability," the weather agency wrote.

In the future

It wasn't hard to find people joking on social media about the storm's lackluster performance. Several memes had already popped up Saturday and some Twitter users in Portland joked that they were just thankful they could still go to the farmer's market.

But the National Weather Service says that doesn't mean people should stop believing storm warnings.

"It's good to be prepared for any storm. Following warnings is just good advice," said Jay Nehler, a meteorologist in Seattle. "Sometimes forecasts are right and sometimes they're not — doesn't mean you shouldn't listen to them."

Tornado: A second twister was reported in Oceanside

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On Manzanita Avenue, contractor Mark Whitten was busy clearing wood. He'd been working since right after the tornado.

"Just takin' down a tree," Whitten said. "Then I'll start taking down more trees."

Steve Feltz, whose home was undamaged, said the tornado angled through town in a narrow swath. "It didn't come up straight up Laneda," Feltz said "It looks like it came from the southwest to the northeast. It surprises me there's not more damage to the houses."

Starlight Frost of Manzanita News and Espresso said she was at her home near Highway 53 early Friday



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian
Damage along Laneda Avenue on Sunday.

morning when "bright pink lightning lit up the sky."

She received a call from

the barista on duty that "a small tornado just hit Manzanita."

"From here, this seemed small to her," Frost said Sunday morning at the cafe, located at 500 Laneda. "The funnel went right on the other side of the building."

At Manzanita Sweets and Toylandia, "no one was in the building luckily," Mark Eckstrom, whose mother owns the store, said. "I was at my house over in Pine Ridge when I got the tornado warning. Then I heard that it came to Manzanita and I came down to check on things."

Eckstrom spent the weekend trying to clean up and boarding windows at the shop and for neighbors.

Have you ever seen anything like this here?

"Not really," Eckstrom said. "You don't really expect

a tornado to come down in the middle of Manzanita."

Gordon McCraw, the director of Tillamook County Emergency Management, said Monday morning that the cleanup continues.

McCraw said 128 structures were damaged, from minor to severe. Four structures — two residences and two businesses — are too dangerous to enter. All but 44 residents had power by Saturday afternoon.

"(The public utilities department) planted a lot of poles really quick and connected the wires to get the electricity restored," McCraw said. "Those guys are rock stars."

The tornado came on shore to the south of Laneda Avenue

and headed northwest crossing Laneda and other streets, before dissipating prior to striking U.S. Highway 101.

McCraw said the National Weather Service calculated that it was an EF2 tornado and was on the ground for seven-tenths of a mile. The tornado scale extends from zero to 5, and an EF2 classification describes a tornado that can cause considerable damage.

A second tornado was reported in Oceanside.

"The remarkable thing is being one of the stronger tornados to strike Oregon in recent history and for the distance it traveled, we had no deaths and no reported injuries," he said.

Lyra Fontaine contributed to this report.