

Breaking: Florida's first hurricane in 11 years, no record of hurricane-force winds on land

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The National Hurricane Center released its postmortem this week on Hermine, the first hurricane to make landfall in Florida since 2005's Hurricane Wilma.

The long-awaited, but tepid storm, barely mustered 80 mph winds before making landfall in Florida's Big Bend region after midnight on Sept. 2.

And according to the center's analysis, no sustained hurricane-force winds were measured on land.

The highest sustained wind was 61 mph measured by a private weather station at Bald Point State Park.

There was a hurricane-force gust of 78 mph measured at the same station when the western eyewall of the cyclone went through.

Meteorologists note that where Hermine made landfall was a rural area just east of St. Marks on Apalachee Bay and that there is a sparse network of measuring devices in the area.

But just because there were not hurricane-force winds recorded, doesn't mean Hermine didn't menace Florida.

A 56-year-old homeless man died in Ocala when a tree fell on his tent behind a gas station. On Sept. 3, a 64-year-old man driving a tractor trailer across a bridge in eastern North Carolina died when winds gusting to 80 mph overturned the truck.

"The NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information estimates that wind and water damage from Hermine totaled around \$550 million," the center's report notes. "Damage assessments in Florida concluded that 1,600 homes and businesses in the state were destroyed or sustained major or minor damage, rendering them uninhabitable."

The report also notes that 253,000 people lost power in Florida, including 65 percent of City of Tallahassee customers.

That caused quite a small dust up between Gov. Rick Scott and Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum.

From reporter John Kennedy:

Social media also gave out-of-power residents an envious view of those sitting in air-conditioning, enjoying a home-cooked meal or watching college football.

“The whole incompetence of TALGOV is getting ridiculous,” lobbyist and former Republican aide Bill Helmich wrote on Facebook, marking six days of no power at his house a mile from the state Capitol.

The Governor’s Mansion ran on a generator until power was restored Tuesday night. Scott, though, likened his approach to working with the city to running a company.

“It’s no different,” Scott said. “If you’re here and you want to get to there, it’s just trying to meet in the middle. I’m trying to bring people together.”