

Challenges of Storm Surveying: The Massachusetts Tornado of June 1, 2011

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The most significant tornado to strike Massachusetts in 16 years occurred on June 1, 2011. It traveled 39 miles from Westfield to Charlton, Massachusetts and resulted in 3 fatalities and 72 injuries. This presentation will focus on the difficulties of surveying such a far reaching tornado in an area that rarely sees a storm of this intensity and the tell-tale signs that went into classifying this tornado as an EF3. Considerations of the intensive media and political scrutiny a tornado such as this presents to the storm survey team members, as well as the sensitivity the survey team members must take when dealing with those who have lost everything, will be presented.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Alan E. Dunham began his weather career in the United States Air Force in 1973. Alan spent his first 4 years in the Air Force as an Electronics Technician fixing weather observing equipment. He cross-trained to the weather observer classification and finished his Air Force career as a forecaster stationed at Westover Air Force Base in Chicopee MA. He spent the next year and a half as a civilian forecaster for the Air Force at Pease AFB in Portsmouth, NH.

Alan became a member of the National Weather Service in September of 1986 as a Meteorological Technician at the Portland, ME Forecast Office. From Portland he transferred to the Weather Service Office at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, CT. Alan was assigned to the Boston Forecast Office in 1992 and stayed with the office when it moved to Taunton in 1993, where he was the Data Acquisition Program Manager. Part of Alan's job was to commission the 25 Automated Surface Observation Systems (ASOS) across southern New England.

Over his years in the National Weather Service, Alan has expanded his knowledge of not only surface weather observations, but also his knowledge of conducting storm damage surveys. Alan is often the lead investigator on storm damage surveys conducted in Southern New England.