Wet, windy week to come after Christmas

Cold front expected to bring 1-2 inches of rain

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The fog that rolled into the Upstate on Christmas morning will give way to gusty storms Wednesday and the chance for more severe weather.

An overnight cold front was expected to bring 1-2 inches of rain along with strong winds of up to 35 miles per hour, said Pat Tanner, a hydrologist with the National Weather Service in Greer.

The chance for severe thunderstorms would be highest between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., Tanner said. Temperatures would remain in the mid-50s with lows dipping into the 30s.

"The winters are when we recharge and get some of our rainy conditions, but we're still behind and still in a drought," Tanner said.

Dangerous weather sweeping through the midlands and lower parts of the state could bring a 45 percent chance of thunderstorms or tornadoes with 75 mph winds or 2-inch-wide hail, according to The Associated Press.

A brief respite should come Thursday; then more rain and cooler days are expected through the weekend, Tanner said.

Severe weather headed to SC

Nasty storms blamed for 1 death

THE JOURNAL STAFF

SENECA — The Upstate can expect strong winds and a good soaking through today, as a major winter storm system works its way through the eastern United States.

Heavy rains and increasing winds over Christmas night were forecast to dump up to 2 inches of rain on Oconee County, according to the National Weather Service. That is predicted to give way to overcast skies and drier weather through the rest of the week, with daytime temperatures hovering in the mid-50s and plunging to near freezing each night.

The northeast section of South Carolina is predicted to be in for the worst of it. There is a 45 percent chance of tornados or thunderstorms with 75 mph winds or hail 2 inches in diameter for much of the state north and east of Columbia.

The severe storms in the Midlands, Pee Dee and Grand Strand were part of the same system that brought dangerous weather to Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia on Christmas Day.

Winds toppled a tree onto a pickup truck in the Houston area, killing the driver. Icy roads already were blamed for a 21-vehicle pileup in Oklahoma, where authorities warned would-be travelers to stay home.

Fog blanketed highways, including arteries in the Atlanta area where motorists slowed as a precaution.

At least three tornadoes were reported in Texas, though only one building was damaged, according to the National Weather Service. Tornado watches were in effect across southern Louisiana and Mississippi for much of Christmas Day.

Christmas lights also were knocked out with more than 70,000 people without power in east Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana.

Meanwhile, blizzard conditions were possible for parts of Illinois, Indiana and western Kentucky with predictions of 4 to 7 inches of snow.

Much of Oklahoma and Arkansas braced under a winter storm warning of an early mix of rain and sleet forecast to eventually turn to snow.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.