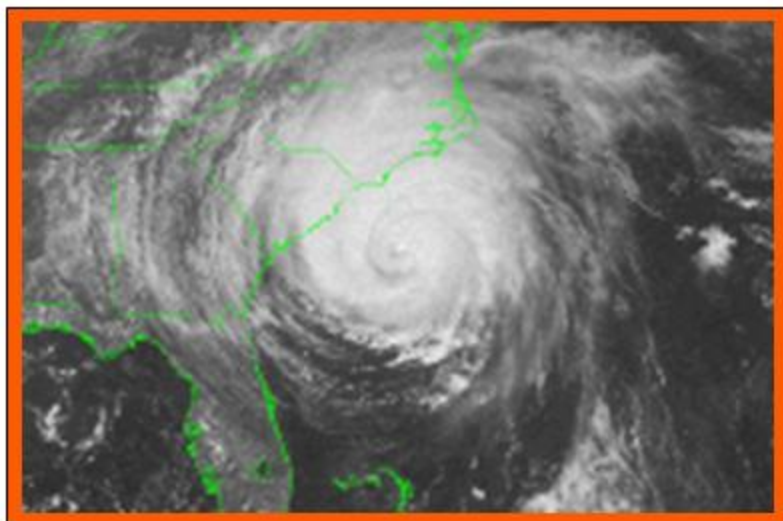




NOAA's National Climatic Data Center

<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/fran/fran.html>

North Carolina Hit By Frantastic Storm!



Hurricane Fran slammed into North Carolina's southern coast on September 5, 1996 with sustained winds of approximately 115 MPH, and gusts as high as 125 MPH. At some point, 1.7 million customers in North Carolina and 400,000 customers in Virginia lost electricity. The overall death toll was at 37, including 24 in North Carolina. Flooding was a severe problem in North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland. Fran produced rainfall amounts of over 10 inches in parts of eastern North Carolina and western Virginia.

Damages for homes and businesses in North Carolina (NC) were estimated at approximately \$2.3 billion. Damages/costs related to the public (debris removal, roads, and bridges, public buildings, utilities, etc) were estimated at about \$1.1 billion for NC. Agricultural damage (crops, livestock, buildings) in NC was estimated to be over \$700 million. Wake County (Raleigh and vicinity) alone reported over \$900 million in damage to residential and commercial property. Finally, forestry/timber losses for the state exceeded \$1 billion.

Taken collectively, total damages/costs for NC were estimated at approximately \$5 billion. With the addition of lesser damages for states to the north, the storm's total costs were in excess of \$5 billion, making Fran the third most costly hurricane in U.S. history, moving Opal (1995) into fourth place. However, it's important to note that the figures for earlier storms were not adjusted for inflation.

Just prior to landfall of Fran, a small portion of western North Carolina – in the Bat Cave, Chimney Rock, Lake Lure areas – received up 11 inches of rain in a 3 hour period. The rains were the result of nearly stationary, very heavy thunderstorms associated with an upper level low pressure system. Severe damage to property in the immediate area resulted, with about 70 homes/businesses destroyed or significantly damaged.

In 1995, Hurricanes Erin and Opal struck the same areas of the Florida panhandle, providing a one-two punch to the residents. In 1996, Hurricanes Bertha and Fran did the same for North Carolina.