

## Severe wind storm causes widespread damage in Bird's Creek



**By Nate Smelle**

Residents of Bird's Creek were forced to take cover on the afternoon of April 29 as a powerful windstorm swept through the area. The storm, believed to have been either a downburst or a tornado, caused widespread damage and left many in shock.

Lydia Kent, a resident of Wilberforce, recounted her frightening experience while driving home along South Baptiste Lake Road when the storm hit.

"As soon as I turned onto South Baptiste the sky turned dark and the wind started to pick up," Kent told Bancroft This Week. "Within a few minutes I had to pull over because I couldn't even see the road in front of me. I was terrified."

While Kent didn't see a funnel cloud, the intensity of the storm left a lasting impression.

"It was by far the most powerful storm I've ever experienced," she said. "Usually I love to watch thunderstorms but this one was different. I didn't know whether I should keep driving or stay in my car. There was no visibility so I just stayed where I was and put my head down."

The storm brought down hundreds of trees—some completely uprooted, others snapped in half—causing extensive property damage. Power was knocked out across Bird's Creek and the surrounding areas for more than 24 hours. Bird's Creek Public School was closed the following day until electricity was restored.

On the morning of April 30, Bancroft This Week visited Bird's Creek to assess the aftermath. Tim Galle, an arborist involved in the cleanup efforts, described the scale of the damage.

"There are trees down everywhere you look," said Galle, pointing to the pile of freshly cut logs they had stacked by the roadside. "We've already run half a dozen or so through the chipper, and we'll be working until it gets dark. It did a ton of damage."

Galle and his team were helping a local resident whose property was severely affected, including a large white pine that crashed through the roof of their home and another that landed on their truck and trailer. Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

With the increasing frequency of extreme weather events attributed to the climate crisis, residents are urged to be prepared for emergencies. The Ontario government recommends all households develop an emergency plan, assemble an emergency kit, and ensure they stay informed during critical events.

For more information on how to protect yourself and your family during severe weather, visit  
[www.ontario.ca/page/be-prepared-emergency](http://www.ontario.ca/page/be-prepared-emergency)