

Tornado reported near Watsonville

Hail, lightning also sighted

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WATSONVILLE — The mixing of cold and warm air created some unusual weather phenomena in the Watsonville area Wednesday, including funnel clouds, tornadoes, and hail.

National Weather Service Lead Forecaster Duane Dykema said the service received several reports of funnel clouds and a couple of tornadoes.

"When a funnel cloud touches the ground it becomes a tornado," said Dykema. "One tornado touched down north of Hollister and destroyed a greenhouse. Another tornado was reported just east of Watsonville."

Dykema said funnel clouds and tornadoes are created when a strong updraft of warm air from the earth's surface meets a layer of

colder air higher up.

"This time of the year the sun is heating the surface of the earth quickly," said Dykema. "If you get any sort of rotation it creates funnels."

Dykema also said the service received numerous reports of hail throughout the area. He said the same updrafts are responsible for that phenomena.

"Small ice crystals that form in clouds are caught up in the updraft and pulled up to collect more moisture until they're too heavy for the updraft to support them," he said.

Dykema said rain was expected Friday as a cold storm system approaches from the northeast.

"Rain is expected towards the morning and throughout tomorrow," said Dykema. "By Saturday, most of the rain will have moved through the area but it will be cool and breezy through the weekend."