

## **Brisk weather, but great air, for Fresno area. Another freeze warning lies ahead**

By Jim Guy

Fresno Bee, Monday, Nov. 9, 2020

A freeze warning for the Central California region was expected to expire early Monday, but the sudden cold snap that struck the region is expected to continue at least through Tuesday, according to the National Weather Service.

Monday morning, snow was on mountain highways, with chain controls on Highway 41 at the 4,000 foot level, according to the California Highway Patrol. Highway 99 was clear at the Grapevine and into Southern California.

"There is "a decent shot at more snow above 5,000 feet," according to meteorologist Kevin Durfee of the weather service.

And more cold weather, driven south from the Gulf of Alaska, is expected by the weekend, he added.

The good news for the area was the end, at least for now, of poor air quality caused by California's series of wildfires, including the Creek Fire near Shaver Lake. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District forecast good air conditions for Fresno, Madera, Tulare and Kings counties Monday.

Yosemite National Park and nearby spots in the Sierra Nevada are due for some especially cold nights, according to the weather service, with the thermometer expected to dip as low as 14 degrees Monday night and Tuesday morning. Later Tuesday, the high will stay below freezing at 30 degrees.

Fresno's high Monday is expected to be 53, with an overnight low of 35 and a high Tuesday of 56.

## **Creek Fire update: First real rain hits Fresno area. What it means for firefighters**

By Bethany Clough

Sacramento Bee and Merced Sun-Star, Saturday, Nov. 7, 2020

Fresno and the Valley awoke Saturday morning to the first significant rain since April.

Rain hit Fresno around 7 a.m. and was centered over the western side of the Valley, moving to the southeast, according to National Weather Service meteorologist David Spector.

The morning storm brought one-tenth of an inch of rain to central Fresno, but very small amounts to Clovis. More rain is expected Sunday.

A handful of minor car collisions were reported across the Fresno area by the California Highway Patrol, though it wasn't immediately clear if slippery roads caused them.

The rain was expected to end by 10 a.m., though the National Weather Service predicted a 30% chance of showers after 10 p.m. with a low of 44 degrees.

from Bakersfield to Merced. Temperatures could get as low as 28.

### **Creek Fire weather**

The weather brought good news for crews fighting the Creek Fire northeast of Fresno, with light rain and snow falling over the fire Friday night, according to the U.S. Forest Service's Saturday morning fire update.

Firefighters had feared that strong winds forecast Friday could spread the fire, but winds were not as intense as predicted. There was "relatively little fire spread," according to the forest service.

More rain and snow is forecast to fall on the fire Saturday and Sunday. Between 4 and 8 inches of snow were predicted at higher elevations, with 1/4 inch to 3/4 inch forecast for lower elevations by Sunday evening.

The precipitation, combined with lower humidity and temperatures forecast to fall below freezing at higher elevations, will all combine to "pull considerable life out of the fire," said fire behavior analyst Byron Kimball in the emailed update.

The fire has been spreading in the northeast mostly by “spotting” or casting embers that ignite and spread.

“Spotting is going to drop way off,” Kimball said. “Those fine fuels will no longer receptive to ignition.”

Wind and precipitation had cleared smoke out of surrounding communities, according to the Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program.

With the forecast weather, “fire season-ending conditions are likely,” it said in a statement Saturday.

A virtual public meeting update on the fire will air live at 7 p.m. Monday on the Sierra National Forest Facebook and the Creek Fire YouTube channel.

## **Creek Fire update: Firefighters brace for dangerous winds, heavy snowfall just hours away**

By Manuela Tobias

Modesto Bee, Friday, Nov. 6, 2020

Strong gusts of southwest winds are expected to fuel flames on the northeast portion of the Creek Fire, officials reported Friday morning.

Fire managers are worried about the winds, which could reach 50 miles per hour, because not only will they intensify flames, but could knock down trees and wires, according to Alaska Incident Management Team PIO Tim Mowry.

That poses a threat to the safety of firefighters and hundreds of contractors and state officials cleaning up the hazards the fire has left in its wake.

The wind is only expected to last a few hours, and snow will follow, which would significantly mellow the fire. Between 12 and 15 inches of snow might fall at elevations above 7,000 feet, and between 6 and 12 inches at elevations of 5,000 to 7,000 feet, according to the U.S. Forest Service report.

“We’re waiting to see what Mother Nature is going to throw at us,” Mowry said. “It’s really a double-edged sword.”

east of Pond Lily Lake and the Middle Fork of the San Joaquin River because the fire is encircled by rugged terrain.

Instead, crews have been sent to monitor Mammoth Lakes, although projections don’t show the fire will reach that far. Authorities also moved heavy trucks and equipment out of the high elevation areas in preparation for the winter storm.

The Creek Fire reached 379,716 acres on Friday morning, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

Overnight, the fire remained “moderately active,” but increased humidity helped tamp down fire behavior.

### **Firefighters brace for hazardous conditions on SQF Complex**

The SQF Complex Fire stood at 170,922 acres and 80% containment on Friday morning, according to the U.S. Forest Service. The combined Castle and Shotgun Fires were caused by lightning.

Fire managers expect significant changes today and over the weekend in the north part of the fire, where gusty winds and light snow might also create hazardous conditions, according to the daily report.

So they are moving most crews to the south part of the fire to help suppression repair. That’s where crews pull foliage back onto the firelines they built to help the forest begin returning to normalcy.

Firefighters are also patrolling Ponderosa, Camp Nelson, Belknap, Alpine Village, and Redwood Areas for smoke and interior heat.

Officials warn drivers along higher elevations to be prepared for slick and icy roads, snowy conditions, and gusty winds.

### **Snow and rain on the horizon**

The National Weather Service on Friday released a winter storm warning effective from 1 p.m. this afternoon to 10 p.m. Sunday.

They predicted the cold front would sweep through the central San Joaquin Valley on Friday, carrying gusty winds and cooler air. While dry weather is expected to return next week, the cooler temperatures are here to stay.

“High temperatures this afternoon should be around fifteen degrees cooler than yesterday,” the report says.

The air quality remains unhealthy for sensitive groups in Kern and Kings, as well as in Sequoia National Park and Forest. Woodstove burning and fireplaces restrictions are in place in Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties.

## **Check Before You Burn program begins amid wildfire season**

By Julissa Zavala

Hanford Sentinel, Friday, November 6, 2020

HANFORD — Nov. 1 marked the beginning of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District’s Check Before You Burn program, reminding Valley residents that their cooperation is essential in protecting public health and improving wintertime air quality.

As the program kicks off amid the worst wildfire season in California history and fires continue to impact Valley air quality, residents should expect curtailments to begin immediately in most Valley counties.

“It’s been a very challenging summer and fall because of wildfires all over the state, with several still burning. We’re asking San Joaquin Valley residents to continue the cooperation that made last winter the cleanest on record,” said Jaime Holt, the district’s chief communications officer.

Check Before You Burn runs from Nov. 1 through the end of February every year, protecting public health through the reduction of harmful PM 2.5 (particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller) emissions from residential wood smoke. During that time, the district releases a daily, county-by-county wood burning declaration based on the air quality forecast.

Residential wood burning is one of the Valley’s largest sources of wintertime PM 2.5 emissions and is shown to have a direct effect on neighborhood air quality. Members of all Valley communities are urged to heat their homes by means other than burning wood whenever possible and continue the trend of wintertime air quality improvement experienced in recent years.

“Unlike wildfires, we have control over how we choose to heat our homes. It is critical to public health that we do not add to the unhealthy air quality created by wildfires,” Holt continued.

Daily burn information is available by visiting [checkbeforeyouburn.org](https://www.checkbeforeyouburn.org), by calling 1-800-766-4463, or by downloading the free “Valley Air” app on your mobile device.

There are three curtailment levels:

- No burning for all;
- No burning unless registered; or
- Burning discouraged

Curtailments do not apply to natural gas devices. Residences in areas with no natural gas service or where wood burning is the sole source of heat are exempt. Areas where propane tanks are used are considered to be without natural gas service. Outdoor wood burning devices at all residences are still subject to daily restrictions, regardless of exemption status.

Residents with EPA certified wood and pellet-fueled devices may register them with the Valley Air District in order to use them on “No Burning Unless Registered” days. Find out how to register by visiting: [www.valleyair.org/CBYBregistration](https://www.valleyair.org/CBYBregistration).

Valley residents are encouraged to participate in the Burn Cleaner incentive program and receive as much as \$3,000 to upgrade from older, higher-polluting wood stoves and open-hearth fireplaces to EPA certified wood, pellet or natural gas inserts and free-standing stoves. To participate in this program please visit [www.valleyair.org/burncleaner](http://www.valleyair.org/burncleaner).

## **Winter storm rolls into Fresno area, bringing winds, reduced visibility. Rain, snow to come?**

By Joshua Tehee

Fresno Bee and Sierra Star, Friday, Nov. 6, 2020

Gusty winds blew through much of the Fresno area on Friday, the first signs of a winter storm that is expected to bring rain and snow through the weekend.

Winds surges kicked up dust and reduced visibility in the southern part of the central San Joaquin Valley, near Delano, where the National Weather Service urged those driving along the Highway 99 corridor to use caution. A wind advisory was in place through Friday afternoon.

The San Joaquin Valley Pollution Control Air District issued an air quality alert for Friday and Saturday, directing residents to remain indoors to avoid exposure to particle pollution.

The Air Quality Index reached 239 in Fresno on Friday afternoon. Anything above 150 is considered unhealthy for everyone.

### **Flooding, mudslides possible Creek Fire area**

A winter storm warning is in effect through Sunday in the higher elevations north of Yosemite National Park and Kings Canyon National Park.

This includes areas damaged by the Creek Fire, a region that may now see dangerous mudslides and flooding.

The Fresno County Sheriff's Office released a map highlighting those area most susceptible. Much like the county's Creek Fire evacuation map, residents can enter a specific address to see and find the risk level. Yellow indicates "High Risk" and red indicates "Extreme Risk."

Additionally, the map will activate to display evacuation zones if they become needed.

The map can be found at the Fresno County Sheriff's Office website, [www.fresnosheriff.org](http://www.fresnosheriff.org).

### **Snow possible over the Grapevine**

Caltrans is warning of the possibility of snow on Interstate 5 between Los Angeles and Kern counties, also known as the Grapevine. Drivers are being urged to check current conditions at [quickmap.dot.ca.gov](http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov) before heading out.

## **Valley air quality alert: Fresno residents told to stay indoors Friday to protect health**

By Monica Vaughan

Fresno Bee, Friday, Nov. 6, 2020

*Update 12:45 p.m.:* Air quality went from bad to worse in Fresno and Clovis Friday, as the air quality index moved from unhealthy in the morning to very unhealthy by noon.

The AQI in Fresno reached 239 due to high winds blowing dust and smoke. Anything above 150 is considered unhealthy for everyone.

*Original story:*

Air quality is unhealthy for everyone in Fresno and Clovis on Friday as gusts of high winds from the northwest blow dust and wildfire smoke across the San Joaquin Valley.

Because of the health risk, the Valley Air District issued an air quality alert for Friday and Saturday, directing residents to remain indoors to avoid exposure to particle pollution.

The federal air quality index Friday morning was 152 in Fresno. Anything above 150 is considered unhealthy for everyone with the potential to trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic bronchitis, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Cloth and paper masks used to reduce the spread of COVID-19 do not protect from particulate matter pollution.

The air quality elsewhere in Madera, Visalia and Tulare is unhealthy for sensitive groups, such as children, the elderly and people with lung and heart problems. Exposure to PM 2.5 or PM 10 - particles smaller than a human hair - can cause permanent damage to developing lungs in children.

PM 2.5 will continue to be a problem in the region until the SQF Complex Fire and Tulare County and Creek Fire in Madera and Fresno counties are extinguished.

### **HOW TO CHECK NEIGHBORHOOD-LEVEL AIR QUALITY**

Air quality can be different across neighborhoods in the same town because of wind patterns and proximity to agricultural operations and other sources of pollution, like freeways with heavy truck traffic.

Four different tools provide helpful information.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District' RAAN search tool provides real-time data on smog and PM 2.5 by entering an address in the search bar. You can also sign up to receive air quality alerts. The tool does not currently provide PM 10 data, which staff said may change by the end of the year.

The [airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov) interactive map provides real-time data for smog, PM 2.5 and PM 10 from local monitors across the country. It is managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For more localized neighborhood data, use the [PurpleAir.com](http://PurpleAir.com) map that compiles crowd-sourced data from private, consumer monitors. Or, use the similar [IQAir.com](http://IQAir.com) that pulls data from AirVisual consumer monitors.

### **[Bakersfield Californian Community Voices Friday, Nov. 6, 2020](#)**

#### **American ingenuity in the San Joaquin Valley**

By Assemblymember Devon J. Mathis

Ever since I was elected, I have always believed in the resourcefulness of the valley to find new ways to fight climate change. One must applaud the Central Valley business for powering a new energy choice for California, especially amid a tough economy. Calgren Dairy Fuels, located in Pixley, has found an innovative way to create jobs in the Central Valley while combating greenhouse gases, all by producing a new fuel from what many people would call waste.

Calgren captures greenhouse gas-producing manure from our dairies and turns it into renewable natural gas, or RNG. Many people would not think that manure could be made into RNG, but when organic waste, such as manure, breaks down, it produces methane. When tapping the 132,000 cows at 18 local dairies, Calgren can capture that methane and upgrade it to pipeline standards, and can sell it to fuel natural gas trucks. These trucks are 99 percent cleaner than the average diesel truck. SoCalGas, our local utility, has begun purchasing this RNG and using it in many of its fueling stations in Southern California and across the Central Valley.

Now that these resources are available, they have been replacing much of their out of state RNG with our local resources, keeping these dollars in California and providing more job opportunities here in the valley. So now, a California company is producing a 21st century fuel that helps clean the air surrounding some of our most polluted freeways, benefitting our local economy and slowing climate change. Want to talk about forward thinking and progress, no one can deny that.

With the valley being such an agricultural community, renewable natural gas now has given dairies another avenue for-profit and will eventually reach all of agriculture. This is because of a new law I co-sponsored and supported through the committee process, AB 3163, which expands the types of materials that can be converted into RNG. AB 3163 makes it possible for RNG to also be made from agricultural waste from trees (which is often burned, contributing to poor air quality).

Under AB 3163, which was signed into law, dead trees in the forest which cause many of these devastating wildfires here in California, become another source for RNG. This does not just help air quality and prevent fires, it also provides more fuel for vehicles and homes. SoCalGas intends to have RNG make up 20 percent of the gas it supplies to most customers, and more than a third of this can come from California's dead trees. According to studies by EFI Global and the Gas Technology Institute, there are enough dead trees in California to produce almost 80 billion cubic feet of RNG every year for 30 years! That is a lot of fuel!

The Central Valley is the place to break new ground and build our energy future, all because of facilities like Calgren and Mount Poso Cogeneration Plant. This is just the beginning, and a lot more is on the way. Within four years, well over 160 RNG facilities will go online in California, expanding economic opportunity in Kern, Tulare and Kings counties, and elsewhere across the state. These facilities will support farmers, provide jobs and replace 119 million gallons of diesel fuel, which is the equivalent of taking over 700,000 cars off the road. All this thanks to renewable natural gas, which is taking off now and predicted to only get bigger. Research predicts RNG could replace 90 percent of the nation's current residential gas consumption by 2040.

Innovation drives the Golden State. Calgren and SoCalGas are top examples of this innovation, fueling prosperity as we move to a greener energy economy. Remember that together we can accomplish anything. This is another great example of business working with the government to make a better tomorrow for all.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish mentions the District issued health caution for blowing dust.](#)

### **Anticipan vientos de hasta 50 millas por hora y emiten alerta por mala calidad del aire en el Valle Central**

**Hasta la tarde del sábado se mantiene una alerta por mala calidad del aire debido a los fuertes vientos que se registran en el Valle Central, los cuales podrían alcanzar hasta las 50 millas por hora en los sectores montañosos.**

Univision 21 Fresno, Friday, Nov. 6, 2020

FRESNO, California.- Polvo en suspensión y mucha tierra es lo que pronostican las autoridades del Distrito de Calidad del Aire del Valle de San Joaquín para la tarde del viernes y el sábado, ya que las fuertes ráfagas de viento podrían alcanzar hasta 50 millas por hora en las cumbres montañosas, y hasta 35 millas por hora en los sectores urbanos.

El Servicio Nacional de Meteorología emitió una alerta por tormenta invernal, y el Distrito del Aire decretó una advertencia por mala calidad del aire. Y es que los vientos que anticipan el frente de mal tiempo tendrán a la zona cubierta de fuertes ráfagas. Esto originará levantamiento de polvo y empeoramiento en la calidad del aire.

La advertencia del Distrito implica que los residentes se mantengan en lo posible en interiores y eviten la actividad física prolongada, ya que anticipan que los niveles potencialmente elevados de las micropartículas PM 2.5 y PM10 representan un problema de salud.

Se trata de una recomendación de salud, ya que el humo derivado de los incendios Creek y Sequioa Complex contiene altas concentraciones de material particulado, las cuales se propagan rápidamente hacia todo el valle de San Joaquín debido a los fuertes vientos del noroeste que azotan a la zona.

Los residentes deberían evitar la exposición a niveles nocivos de contaminación por partículas, por eso el Distrito del Aire insiste en evitar exteriores, por lo menos este fin de semana.

"La inhalación de partículas contaminantes puede desencadenar ataques de asma, agravar la bronquitis crónica y aumentar el riesgo de ataque cardíaco y accidente cerebrovascular" señala un comunicado de la agencia.

Por otro lado, puede ser que las estaciones de monitoreo del aire del distrito no detecten partículas como cenizas y polvo, ya que estas están diseñadas para detectar PM 2.5 microscópicas, mucho más pequeñas.

Ante ello, el Distrito de calidad del aire explicca que "si la persona ve u huele humo o polvo que sopla en sus inmediaciones, considere la calidad del aire como "insalubre" (Nivel RAAN 4 o superior), incluso si RAAN muestra un nivel más bajo de contaminación.