

## **Yosemite National Park closed as high winds cause power outages, critical fire threat**

By Joshua Tehee

Sierra Star, Fresno Bee and other papers, Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021

Strong, damaging winds are blowing through the foothills and higher elevations of the Sierra, toppling trees and power lines and causing the closure of Yosemite National Park.

The national park closed on Tuesday due to downed trees and power lines, according to the Mariposa County Sheriff's Office, which reported power lines down across the county.

"Trees and debris are across most roadways. If you must be on the road this morning please drive with extreme caution," the office wrote on its Facebook page Tuesday morning.

There was also reported damage to Yosemite park facilities.

### **Gusts up to 110 mph Monday night**

The National Weather Service on Sunday issued a high wind warning for areas including those ravaged by the Creek Fire last fall. That warning remains in place until 7 p.m. Tuesday, as automated gauges in the Madera County foothills have been reporting wind gusts up to 55 mph.

A gauge at Cascadel Heights was reporting winds up to 110 mph Monday night, according to the weather service.

The winds, combined with recent dry conditions, has created a critical fire weather for the central and southern coastal ranges. Multiple vegetation fires have been reported, including the Mill Fire, which started burning Monday night near the Douglas Ranger Station south of North Fork in Madera County.

A second fire, The Manzanita Fire, was reported at the old North Fork Mill. CalFire is currently reporting that fire at 20 acres with zero containment.

### **PG&E customers without power**

PG&E has been monitoring the wind events since Saturday and the company's Emergency Operations Center has been managing response, including a Public Safety Power Shutoff for the driest portions of service area to "reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire."

On Monday, PG&E, said some 5,465 customers in portions of Fresno, Kern, Madera, Mariposa and Tulare counties were set to be "de-energized" in shutoff.

Some of those shutoff are already in place according to PG&E's outage map. More are expected through Tuesday.

Power is expected to be restored to those areas by 3 p.m. Wednesday.

### **Schools call emergency day**

At least one area school district has canceled classes because of the weather warning.

In a post on its Facebook page, Mariposa County Unified School District announced an Emergency Day, "in collaboration with the County Sheriff's Department and County Public Works Department."

"All classes are canceled across the district.

Please stay safe and we hope to see you all tomorrow."

Messages to Sierra Unified, Pine Ridge Unified and Yosemite Unified schools were not immediately returned.

### **Air quality affected**

The winds will also have an affect on the Valley floor.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued a Health Caution, saying high winds and blowing dust have the potential to cause elevated PM10 levels. Residents should protect themselves from

exposure to wind-blown dust and refrain from using wood burning devices, which only add to the unhealthy air quality.

The winds are expected to diminish by late Tuesday night, according to the National Weather Service.

## **Valley Air District Issues Health Caution Due to Strong Winds and Dust**

By CR Staff

Clovis Roundup, Monday, Jan. 18, 2021

The San Joaquin Valley Air District is issuing a health concern for Valley residents of high concentrations of PM10 emissions due to strong winds and blowing dust.

The winds and dust are expected to impact most of the Central Valley from Monday, Jan. 8 through Tuesday, Jan. 19.

Winds in areas where soil is dry often produce high concentrations of PM10 emissions. Exposure can trigger serious health problems such as asthma, bronchitis, heart or lung disease, and other serious respiratory infections.

Valley Air District officials are urging residents to avoid any residential wood burning. With strong winds and dust, residential wood burning devices will only add additional pollutants to the unhealthy air.

Officials are advising residents to remain indoors if possible or limit outdoor activity to avoid exposure to the unhealthy air quality.

For more information, visit [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org) or call (559-230-6000).

## **Air quality district urges San Joaquin Valley residents to protect their health while outdoors**

By Kristan Obeng

Visalia Times-Delta, Monday, Jan 18, 2021

Strong winds and blowing dust may affect the health of San Joaquin Valley residents in the coming days.

Air pollution can cause a range of health problems, such as aggravating lung disease, triggering asthma attacks and bronchitis, and increasing the risk of respiratory infections.

The San Joaquin Valley Air District is warning residents in the northern and western parts of the Valley, which includes Tulare County, that they may be impacted by poor air quality until Tuesday. Those in Kern County could be affected until Wednesday, according to the air district.

"Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure," the district advised.

"Older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure or heavy exertion, depending on their local conditions," the district added.

### **What to expect in the San Joaquin Valley**

Windy conditions may contribute to high concentrations of particulate matter flying through the air.

Residents must protect themselves from exposure to wind-blown dust, according to the air district.

The San Joaquin Valley Air District expects particulate matter to be 10 microns and smaller. Areas with "exceptionally dry" soil tend to have this PM10 matter, the district added.

### **"Check Before You Burn"**

Additional pollutants may also be in the air, including smoke from residential wood-burning devices.

The air district urged residents to refrain from using wood-burning devices, which could further compound "the unhealthy air quality produced during these high-wind events."

Residents should adhere to the "Check Before You Burn" program on the district's website.

The "Check Before You Burn" program runs from Nov. 1 through the end of February every year, reducing PM 2.5 emissions from residential wood smoke.

Wood burning 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.

Daily burn information is available by visiting [checkbeforeyouburn.org](http://checkbeforeyouburn.org), by calling 1-800-SMOG INFO (766-4463), or by downloading the free "Valley Air" app on a smartphone.

### **Strong winds, blowing dust in Kern raise health concerns**

The Bakersfield Californian, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021

Residents of the valley portion of Kern County can expect strong winds and blowing dust from late Monday through early Wednesday, according to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

The northern and western parts of the Valley (counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno and Kings) will see similar weather Monday and Tuesday.

The likelihood of strong winds and blowing dust is prompting the air district to warn residents that there could be high concentrations of PM10 (particulate matter 10 microns and smaller), and people should protect themselves from the wind, according to an air district news release. Smoke from residential wood burning can add more pollutants to the air; residents are urged to not use wood burning devices.

### **GET to offer free rides Sunday**

The Bakersfield Californian, Saturday, Jan. 16, 2021

Golden Empire Transit District will provide free rides Sunday because of an Air Quality Index of 152.

The free rides are available on GET fixed routes and GET-A-Lift all day.

GET encourages resident to download the free San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District app to monitor air quality. It is available for free on the App Store (Valley Air District) and Google Play (Valley Air).

Funding for the free rides comes from a Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant.