



National Weather Service

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



April 2003

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons Killed	Number of Persons Injured	Estimated Damage Property	Estimated Damage Crops	Character of Storm
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CALIFORNIA, South Central

Fresno County

Fresno	01 30	0000PST 2359PST			0	0	7.8M		Heavy Rain
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Kings County

Hanford	01 30	0000PST 2359PST			0	0	8.9M		Heavy Rain
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Madera County

Madera	01 30	0000PST 2359PST			0	0	13.2M		Heavy Rain
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April and the first half of May 2003 in the Central and Southern San Joaquin Valley was marked by unusual and persistent cool, wet weather. Normally summer agricultural operations are in full swing by the 1st week in April. Despite a relatively dry November through March period for the area, the month of April was the 7th wettest with 2.84" of rain (2.08" above normal) since records began in Fresno in 1888 and the wettest since 1978 when 2.85" fell. The average temperature of 58.6F in Fresno for April was the coldest since 57.2F in 1976. Other sites in the San Joaquin Valley were similarly affected leading to the crop damage assessments. Cherries were the hardest hit in Fresno County; cotton planting was hurt the most in Madera County; and, alfalfa the worst in Kings County.

Fresno County

Shaver Lake	01 11	0000PST 0400PST			0	0			Heavy Rain
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Measured rainfall was 4.51" at Shaver Lake northeast of Fresno at the 5000 foot elevation from the 1st of the month until early on the 11th. More rainfall and snow occurred in the mountain areas through the 15th accumulating water for what would otherwise be a relatively dry year.

CAZ095-098>099

Kern Cty Mtns - Indian Wells Vly - Se Kern Cty Desert

01	1000PST			0	0	3K			Strong Wind
02	1521PST								

Strong, gusty south wind consistently pushed gusts well over 40 MPH from the morning of the 1st and well into the 2nd of April with a lone incident of 61 MPH at Government Peak in the Kern Deserts during the afternoon of the 1st.

Tulare County

Visalia	02	1500PST 1545PST			0	0	50K		Heavy Rain
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Poor visibilities in a short-lived driving rain led to indirect damage of \$50K as cars collided on a Visalia freeway. It was reported 17 vehicles were involved as 0.35" of rain fell in a very short period of time in and around the city

Fresno County

5 NW Fresno	04	0400PST 1700PST			0	0	1K		Heavy Rain
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CAZ096

S Sierra Mtns

04	0610PST 1600PST			0	0				Heavy Snow
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A fast-moving cold front swept over Southern Sierra Nevada during the day on the 4th. While snow amounts did not meet Winter Storm thresholds, significant snow amounts of 7-13 inches did fall at mid-altitudes on the range. Typical of locally heavy rain events on the San Joaquin Valley floor on this day, Northwest Fresno received almost 1 inch of rain that led to flooded street.

CAZ095-098>099

Kern Cty Mtns - Indian Wells Vly - Se Kern Cty Desert

04	1130PST 2200PST			0	0	3K			Strong Wind
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Madera County

3 NW Madera Muni Arp 20 SE Madera Muni Arp	04	1420PST 1445PST			0	0	50K		Hail(0.63)
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CALIFORNIA, South Central

Hail varying from pea-size to 5/8" fell on Highway 99 from northwest of Madera southeastward into the Fresno metropolitan area. Traffic was brought to a standstill due to the heavy rain and small hail due to this cell. Several traffic accidents were attributed to the event.

CAZ096>097	S Sierra Mtns - Tulare Cty Mtns								
	12	1500PST			0	0			Winter Storm
	14	1500PST							

CAZ095	Kern Cty Mtns								
	14	2100PST			0	0			Heavy Snow
	15	0800PST							

Significant snow fell in the mid and high elevations of the Southern Sierra Nevada for a 48-hour period from the 12th through the 14th. Snow amounts, estimated, varied from 52" at Ostrander Lake and 48" at Chilkoot Meadow near Yosemite, to 23" at Huntington Lake in Fresno County. Lessor amounts of 4-6" fell in the Tehachapi Mountains of Kern County as the event passed to the southeast through the warning area. Some 5-day water equivalent totals ending by the 15th from frontal passages prior to the convective activity on the 17th varied from 4.5 inches at Agnew Pass (San Joaquin River Basin) and Farewell Gap (Kaweah River); 3.7" at Tamarack Flat (San Joaquin River); and 3.4" at Blackcap Basin (Kings River).

Fresno County									
Firebaugh	14	1730PST			0	0	5K		Hail(0.50)
		1745PST							

Fresno County									
1.5 SE (Fat) Air Terminal	14	1745PST			0	0	5K		Hail(0.50)
3.5 SSE (Fat) Air Terminal		1800PST							

Fresno County									
Reedley	14	1800PST			0	0	5K		Hail(0.50)
		1815PST							

Reports of small hail (around 1/2" diameter) at several Fresno County locations were received. While not meeting severe thresholds for hail, small amounts of damage did occur to local crops at this critical time of year.

Tulare County									
Visalia	17	1500PST			0	0			Heavy Rain
		2300PST							

Fresno County									
(Fat) Air Terminal	17	1807PST			0	0			Heavy Rain
		1900PST							

A thunderstorm occurring at the Fresno Air Terminal dumped 0.41" of rain within a 25-minute period on the 17th. Numerous thunderstorm rain events produced urban street flooding in several Central and Southern San Joaquin Valley communities.

Kern County									
11 W Tehachapi	21	1500PST			0	0	1K		Heavy Rain
		1700PST							

Merced County									
3 NW Merced	21	1530PST			0	0	7.5K		Heavy Rain
		1600PST							

CAZ090									
E Central S.J. Valley									
	21	1600PST			0	0	5K		Strong Wind
		1630PST							

Kings County									
Hanford	21	1700PST			0	0	1K		Heavy Rain
		1730PST							

Locally heavy rain accompanied by strong wind and small hail occurred in the Central and Southern San Joaquin Valley during the late afternoon hours of the 21st. Hail size was less than 1/2-inch but, in conjunction with, locally heavy rain led to local highway problems just northwest of Merced on State Highway 99. Snow level in the adjacent Southern Sierra Nevada dropped to 3500 feet mean sea level. Gusty wind late in the afternoon around Fresno resulted in some downed power lines and loss of power to 771 utility



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CALIFORNIA, South Central

customers in North-Central Fresno. Unofficial rainfall amounts from convective showers were as high as 0.63" in Northeast Fresno with reports of pea-size hail and lightning. Official rain totals for the day were 0.20" at Fresno, 0.15" at Madera, and 0.13" at Visalia. In the Tehachapi Mountains at Bear Valley over 1.00 inch of rain fell due to the showers on the 21st.

CAZ095-099

Kern Cty Mtns - Se Kern Cty Desert

22	0840PST 1500PST				0	0	2K		Strong Wind
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Strong west wind again brought wind speeds consistently above 40 MPH in the Kern County Mountains and the Southeast Desert portions of the county. Several gusts reached about 50 MPH with an isolated gust to 67 MPH at Jawbone Canyon in the mountains.

CAZ096

S Sierra Mtns

24	1400PST 2000PST				0	0			Heavy Snow
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Another in a series of fast-moving and unseasonable frontal systems deposited up to 10 inches of snow in a relatively short period of time in the mid and high elevations of the Southern Sierra Nevada on the 24th.

CAZ096

S Sierra Mtns

28	0600PST 1200PST				0	0			Heavy Snow
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Another cold front on the 28th similarly contributed to the late snowpack in the Southern Sierra Nevada with new snow amounts ranging from 5 to 8 inches.