

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena - August 2011

Location	Date/Time	Deaths & Injuries	Property & Crop Dmg	Event Type and Details
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CALIFORNIA, South Central

(CA-Z097) TULARE CTY MTNS

08/01/11 00:00 PST	0	Wildfire
08/17/11 00:00 PST	0	

The Lion wildfire occurred in Sequoia National Forest. The ignition date was July 8th at 1300 PDT. The cause was lightning. The location was 20 miles northeast of Springville in Tulare County. The size was 20,428 acres. Containment was 91% as of August 16, and being managed for resource objectives. There were no fatalities or structures Lost. The cost to reach containment was \$1,640,000.

(CA-Z096) S SIERRA MTNS

08/01/11 00:00 PST	0	Wildfire
08/31/11 23:59 PST	0	

The Avalanche wildfire occurred in Yosemite National Park. The ignition date was July 31 at 1142 PDT. The cause was lightning. The location was 7 miles Southwest of Yosemite Valley in Mariposa County. The size was 1,050 acres. There were no fatalities or lost structures and the cost to containment was \$550,000.

KERN COUNTY --- 4.2 N CENEDA [35.43, -117.92], 4.2 N RICARDO [35.44, -117.97], 9.8 NNE RICARDO [35.51, -117.92], 8.7 NNW GARLOCK [35.50, -117.87]

08/01/11 18:40 PST	25K	Flash Flood (due to Heavy Rain)
08/01/11 20:40 PST	0	Source: Law Enforcement

The California Highway Patrol reported standing water and mud in Red Rock-Randsburg Road 5 miles east of Saltdale.

August began with interior central California caught between a strong upper-level ridge over the southern United States and an upper-level trough off the Pacific Northwest coast.

A southerly flow aloft brought a push of monsoonal moisture into southern Kern County, triggering strong thunderstorms near Edwards Air Force Base during the afternoon of August 1st. As the storms spread north into the Tehachapi and El Paso Mountains, runoff from the south slopes of the El Paso Range caused flooding of the Red Rock-Randsburg Road, about 5 miles east of Saltdale.

An upper-level trough moved into northern California on the 2nd, turning the flow aloft southwesterly and pushing the monsoonal moisture east of the central California interior. With clearing skies over the region, the Kern County deserts warmed by several degrees. The trough brought breezy conditions to the deserts, and also deepened the marine layer along the coast. By the evening of August 3rd, marine air had begun spilling through the Pacheco Pass into the San Joaquin Valley.

Temperatures were mostly near normal for the first five days of August - including three days of triple-digit heat at the start of the month—then cooled only a couple of degrees as the trough began to sag into northern California. However, as the new 1981-2010 normal high for the first week of August is around 99 degrees for locations in the San Joaquin Valley, even 100 degrees was considered near normal.

(CA-Z096) S SIERRA MTNS

08/25/11 00:00 PST	0	Wildfire
08/31/11 23:59 PST	0	

The motor wildfire occurred in Sierra National Forest. The ignition date was August 25 at 1207 PDT. The cause of the fire was human - a motor home fire along Highway 140. The location was near El Portal in Mariposa County. The size was 5231 acres. Containment was reached on September 4 at 1800 PDT. There were no fatalities or lost structures and the cost to containment was \$8,385,000.

KERN COUNTY --- 3.6 WNW INYOKERN AIRPORT [35.69, -117.89]

08/27/11 16:29 PST	0	Thunderstorm Wind (MG 50 kt)
08/27/11 16:29 PST	0	Source: Mesonet

A severe thunderstorm created wind gusts of 58 mph at Inyokern.

KERN COUNTY --- 1.3 ESE GARLOCK [35.39, -117.76], 1.9 NNW GARLOCK [35.42, -117.80], 4.0 WSW SEALERS [35.46, -117.70], 2.0 ENE RAND [35.41, -117.67]

08/27/11 17:41 PST	25K	Flash Flood (due to Heavy Rain)
08/27/11 19:41 PST	0	Source: Law Enforcement

The California Highway Patrol reported flash flooding across Garlock Road just west of US Highway 395.

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A high pressure ridge expanded back into California on August 22nd. Monsoonal moisture rotating around the ridge core brought mid and high clouds to central California on the 22nd, and again the next day. The region was between the ridge and a closed low over the Pacific west of the California coast. This pattern kept a southerly flow aloft over the central California interior, bringing more monsoonal moisture into the region. Thunderstorms developed over the Southern Sierra Nevada on August 24th, producing numerous lightning strikes but little rainfall.

The upper-level ridge core began to shift westward from the Desert Southwest, bringing an increase in temperatures and moisture to move into interior central California by the 26th. Some sprinkles fell in the southern San Joaquin Valley, even from Bakersfield and northward into Hanford and Tulare. A spotter in downtown Bakersfield recorded a measurable rainfall of 0.01 inch, but most locations, including Meadows Field, received only trace amounts. On the following day, two severe thunderstorm warnings were issued for locations in the Indian Wells Valley in Kern County, mainly around Ridgecrest and Inyokern. A 58 mph wind gust was recorded at Indian Wells Canyon, or about 15 miles northwest of Ridgecrest, on the 27th. Flash flooding occurred on Garlock Road just west of U.S. Highway 395, about 20 miles south of Ridgecrest, on the same day.

By the 28th, upper-level winds shifted back to the southwest and allowed drying to commence in the region, except a few isolated thunderstorms developed along the crest of the southern Sierra Nevada. Dry weather returned by the 29th since the moisture moved to the east of the state, and slight cooling occurred throughout the region due to a weak trough over the area on the 30th and 31st.

The month of August was overall dry and slightly above average in terms of temperature throughout the region. A few thunderstorm days occurred intermittently throughout the month in the higher elevations of the Southern Sierra Nevada and the mountain and desert areas in Kern County as the upper-level ridge centered the Desert Southwest repeatedly expanded westward and then contracted in response to upper-level troughs passing through the state. Bakersfield had 9 days with triple digit heat, bringing its total for the summer, through August 31st, to 25 days. Fresno had 11 days of 100+ degree high temperatures in August, bringing its total, through the end of August, also to 25 days.