



NEWS



News Headlines 1/09/2018

- Strong Pacific storm expected to drench Inland freeways, bring snow to local ski resorts
- Cajon Pass: Semi fire prompts lane closures on SB I-15

Strong Pacific storm expected to drench Inland freeways, bring snow to local ski resorts

Staff report, Daily Bulletin

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Winter weather has finally arrived – and with it, all of the potential havoc for a typically arid region getting unaccustomed rain.

The morning and evening commutes could be a nightmare Tuesday, Jan. 9, as a quick-hitting storm pummels the rain-deprived Southland.

Most of San Bernardino, Riverside and Los Angeles counties will likely receive more than an inch of rain, including about two inches along the coasts, forecasters say.

And the mountains could receive their first snow of the season that, on the calendar anyway, starts in October but has been notably replaced by dry weather and out-of-control wildfires.

“It’s a healthy amount of rain,” said Dan Gregoria, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service. “There will be dangerous conditions on the road, especially in the mountains.”

Expect shoe-soaking puddles, leaving your car’s windshield wipers on hyper-speed, and fighting to keep your umbrella straight amid gusts pushing 30 to 40 miles per hour.

And expect the possibility of flash floods and mudslides on the edges of development – particularly in the scorched areas of recent blazes, such as where the Creek, La Tuna, Skirball, and Canyon fires raged.

“There’s no vegetation there, so the soil can’t soak up the rain, and with the high rainfall rates, there’s a high risk of flash floods and mudslides,” Gregoria said. “The mudslides can be really fast and hard to get out of the way of. They can be treacherous.”

While the 260 acres consumed by December’s Little Mountain fire in San Bernardino could see rain run-off and mudslides, Eric Sherwin, a **San Bernardino County Fire** spokesman said the 1,000-plus acres lost in June’s Mart Fire near Highland is especially vulnerable to flash flooding.

San Bernardino County residents can sign up for emergency alerts at sbcfire.org under the Ready! Set! Go! Flood Preparedness tab. In the event a mudslide or flash flooding creates a life hazard, call 911.

In Corona, the National Weather Service issued a flash-flood watch, which means one is possible there: Corona police and fire departments announced a voluntary evacuation, for about 150 homes on or near slopes scarred by the Canyon fire in September, south of the 91 freeway near Green River Road.

An evacuation center will be established by the Red Cross should a need arise.

Jody Hagemann, a Riverside County Fire spokeswoman, said Monday recent wildfires in that county – the 6,300-plus-acre Manzanita fire south of Beaumont and Banning and the Wildomar fire – burned in lowly-populated areas, sparing residential neighborhoods of burn scars and any resulting flood damage.

The Los Angeles Emergency Management Department advised residents of fire-affected areas to take precautions. The County of Santa Barbara issued voluntary and some mandatory evacuations in areas affected by the Thomas fire and other smaller wildfires.

Early Monday afternoon, 300 residences in unincorporated communities near or in the Angeles National Forest were given mandatory evacuation orders – more akin to an urging, because officials can't make you abandon your property – as officials worried about possible mud and debris flows.

Sandbags are available at Riverside and **San Bernardino county fire** stations. Both departments are active on social media and will post information on imminent flooding and flooded areas.

“We’re monitoring the weather like everyone else,” said Jody Hagemann, a Riverside County Fire spokeswoman. “We’re fully staffed and ready to go in the event of an emergency.”

In Redlands, officials reported no major rain-related incidents but urged residents to take extra steps to protect themselves and their property. City spokesman Carl Baker said the city continues working to mitigate the potential for flooding on local roadways by repairing storm drains and trimming trees.

Residents may pick up 10 empty sandbags to fill with sand and shovels at the City Yard, 1270 W. Park Ave. Sandbags will be available at the city’s fire stations and the Fire Department’s administrative office at 35 Cajon St., Suite 12.

Gregoria expects the eye of Tuesday’s storm to hit the Inland Empire during the morning rush hour. “It’s a good Pacific storm that we saw several times last year,” he said. “This year, though, it’s standing out because we’ve just been so dry.”

More than five inches of snow is expected to fall in the mountains by Wednesday morning, the sort of snowfall ski resort officials spent November and December waiting for.

Mountain High in Wrightwood announced Monday it was closed for the day to let the storm pass. Conditions permitting, the resort will reopen Tuesday. Snow Valley Mountain Resort in Running Springs suspended operations for Monday and Tuesday to prepare for a reopening Wednesday.

“We are getting ready for what looks like the biggest snowfall of the 2017-18 season,” Kevin Somes, Snow Valley vice president and general manager, said in a release. “... We are so excited to have conditions fitting the celebration of Snow Valley’s 80th season.”

For the first time this season, resorts should be able to trade machine-created faux-snow for real powder. “The timing is just right,” said Somes, adding that families and snow-sports enthusiasts are expected to flock to the mountains for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend.

But Gregoria, the meteorologist, warned the fun should wait until Wednesday after the worst of the storm. There’s winter-storm and high-wind warnings for the mountains: Those driving up to the slopes should be cautious – especially those in top-heavy vehicles prone to getting pushed around by strong gusts.

Riverside and San Bernardino county fire departments also urged residents to clear their gutters, storm drains and other water runoff pathways to reduce the risk of residential flooding. On streets and highways, department officials encourage drivers to beware standing and swiftly moving water. Turn Around Don’t Drown, they say, parroting a National Weather Service initiative promoting flood safety whilst behind the wheel.

“Twelve inches of rushing water can lift a small car,” said Sherwin. “Two feet of moving water can carry away most vehicles. When flood waters have retreated in the past, we’ve lost entire intersections, bridges.

“Neighborhoods well-known to residents can act different under moving water.”

Both fire departments have personnel trained in swift water rescue, officials said. Of course, “The safest rescue we can make is the one we never have to,” Sherwin said.

Riverside police warned drivers to avoid streets that typically flood in heavy rains, and to never try driving through pools of water.

“Even if you think you can, just don’t,” said Ryan Railsback, a Riverside police spokesman.

Caltrans workers spent the past several months clearing storm drains on highways and service streets, said Terri Kasinga, an agency spokeswoman. Electronic message signs throughout Southern California are warning drivers of the imminent storm. Caltrans too is sharing information on social media.

Officials urge drivers to check their windshield wipers and fill their gas tanks before embarking on their commute. Leave home early, they suggest. On the road, grant yourself and the car ahead of you plenty of time to stop.

“Rear-end accidents are prevalent during storms,” Kasinga said. “You don’t want to become that person who causes an accident.”

By Thursday, the clouds will be gone, the streets dry and the weather warmer.

Temperatures are forecast to be in the 70s for most of Southern California the rest of the week, with inland areas even pushing into the 80s over the weekend, Gregoria said.

Staff reporters Alma Fausto, Brenda Gazzar, Alicia Robinson and Brian Whitehead contributed to this report.

<https://www.dailybulletin.com/2018/01/08/strong-pacific-storm-expected-to-drench-inland-freeways-bring-snow-to-local-ski-resorts/>

Cajon Pass: Semi fire prompts lane closures on SB I-15

VVNG Staff, VVNG

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CAJON PASS, Calif. (VVNG.com) – A tractor-trailer fire prompted officials to close several lanes of the southbound I-15 freeway Monday night.

At about 9:47 pm, dispatch received multiple reports of a semi with its brakes on fire, north of Highway 138 in the Cajon Pass.

San Bernardino County Firefighters responded and located a big rig tractor-trailer with the cab fully engulfed with exposures to the trailer, scanner traffic reported. The trailer was fully loaded with building materials and firefighters kept the fire from extending to the trailer.

According to the California Highway Patrol incident logs, the no. 3 and no. 4 lanes remain closed for several while firefighters and emergency responders continue to work on the incident.

Approximately 80 gallons of fuel will need to be unloaded from the semi before it can be towed. The tops of the saddle tanks were burned off, according to scanner reports.

No injuries have been reported and the cause of the fire remains under investigation. Information will be updated as it becomes available.

<https://www.vvng.com/cajon-pass-semi-fire-prompts-lane-closures-sb-15/>