NWS FORM E-5 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE HYDROLOGIC SERVICE AREA:
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE **SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY - HANFORD, CA**

REPORT FOR:
MONTHLY REPORT OF RIVER AND
FLOOD CONDITIONS MONTH: **SEPTEMBER** YEAR: **2020**

TO: Hydrometeorological Information Center, W/OH12x1
National Weather Service/Office of Hydrology
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(In Charge of Hydrologic Service Area)

DATE: October 4, 2020

When no flooding occurs, include miscellaneous river conditions, such as significant rises, record low stages, ice conditions, snow cover, droughts and hydrologic products issued (WSOM E-41).

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¦ **X** ¦ An **X** inside this box indicates no flooding occurred for the month within this hydrologic service area.
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September, 2020 was much warmer and drier than normal throughout the central California interior. A brief northerly influx of mid-level moisture from the remnants of tropical cyclone Karina produced little more than sprinkles in the San Joaquin Valley and widely scattered showers over the Sierra from the 17th through the 18th. Rain amounts in the Sierra were rather paltry and ranged from just a couple hundredths of an inch to as much as a quarter of an inch. Otherwise, the HSA was generally devoid of precipitation during the month. The traditional water year, which runs from October 1st through September 30th, remained much drier than normal over the northern half of the state. Much of southern California finished the water year wetter than normal while northern California remained in a severe to extreme drought.

The abundance of parched fuels stoked numerous wildfires throughout the Golden State during the month. Acres of dead, beetle infested trees fueled two major wildfires in the Sierra. Several smaller fires that were ignited by thunderstorms in the Tulare County mountains in mid August merged into what was named the SQF Complex early in the month. By October 1st, this fire burned approximately 153,000 acres with a containment of 61 percent. A much larger fire (the Creek wildfire) started over the higher elevations above Shaver Lake on the evening of the 4th, grew to about 312, 000 acres by the end of the month and became the largest single wildfire in California history. The Creek fire was roughly 45 percent contained by the 1st of October. Smoke from these fires became quite pervasive over much of the HSA and produced very unhealthy air quality in the San Joaquin Valley and surrounding environs. At times, the smoke reduced visibility to less than 3 miles in parts of the San Joaquin Valley and partially or completely blocked the sun on the days when these wildfires flared up. Falling ash was reported in many areas of the San Joaquin Valley and foothills on varying days of the month as well.

Hot weather was the other highlight of the month. Labor Day weekend was a scorcher with widespread triple digit heat in the San Joaquin Valley and the Kern County desert. Thermometer readings peaked as high as 110 degrees in the hottest locations of the valley and soared to 115 degrees in a few desert locations on Labor Day. A strong upper level ridge of high pressure centered near the Four Corners region dominated the weather pattern for much of the month. On occasion this ridge would get pushed southward by upper level troughs that trekked eastward through the Pacific Northwest, but the ridge would quickly build northward again afterward.

Area reservoirs continued to lose water during the month, mostly due to irrigation needs. By October 1st, the water capacity of the dams averaged about 22 percent of normal.

NO HYDROLOGIC PRODUCTS WERE ISSUED THIS MONTH.

Percentage of Normal Precipitation for the Calendar Year and Water Year in CA