

## **MAY 2008 WEATHER SUMMARY**

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A dry cold front moved into California on April 29<sup>th</sup>, plunging San Joaquin Valley high temperatures as much as 17 degrees from the previous day. Bakersfield's high of 79 degrees, while 14 degrees cooler than the 93 on the 28<sup>th</sup>, matched the normal high temperature at Meadows Field for the day. These cold temperatures continued into May 1<sup>st</sup>, for a cool start for the month.

Weak high pressure warmed the region beginning May 2<sup>nd</sup>, then another dry cold front moved into central California on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Ahead of this front, temperatures warmed several degrees, with Fresno warming from 81 on May 5<sup>th</sup> to 88 on the 6<sup>th</sup>, then cooling to only 79 on the 7<sup>th</sup>. This pattern was repeated as weak high pressure again moved into the state. By May 11<sup>th</sup>, the high temperature at Bakersfield had warmed to 87 degrees, only to fall 10 degrees the next day as yet another dry system moved through.

The middle of May saw a significant pattern change as strong high pressure aloft moved over California, and remained in place for several days. By the 14<sup>th</sup>, temperatures across the region had warmed back above normal, and 90s were widespread in the central and southern San Joaquin Valley the next day with Coalinga and Delano reporting the first 100-degree readings of the year. Triple-digit temperatures were common in the Valley on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, and both high temperature and high minimum temperature records fell at Fresno through May 19<sup>th</sup>; Bakersfield also set high minimum temperature records on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.

A low-pressure system moving into the Pacific Northwest weakened the high pressure over California, allowing a stronger system to bring cold and windy conditions to the state. Temperatures in the central and southern San Joaquin Valley dropped from the 90s on May 20<sup>th</sup> to the mid 70s to lower 80s on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Winds gusted to 45 mph in parts of the San Joaquin Valley both days, with gusts of 65-70 mph in the Kern County mountains and deserts.

The cold, unstable airmass that settled into central California on May 22<sup>nd</sup> brought showers to the Southern Sierra Nevada and Tehachapi Mountains, with measurable snow falling below 5000 feet in the Tehachapis, and down to 6500 feet in the Southern Sierra Nevada. During the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, showers drifted north from the Tehachapi Mountains into the south end of the San Joaquin Valley. By midday, these showers had moved as far north as Bakersfield, where a record-breaking 0.08 inch of rain fell at Meadows Field. This was the first measurable rain to fall in Bakersfield since February 24<sup>th</sup>, ending an 87-day period without measurable rain. The next day, Fresno recorded its first measurable rain since March 15, ending a 69-day period with no measurable rain. The storm brought the only measurable rains for the month to Bakersfield (storm total: 0.08 inch) and Fresno (0.30 inch). The rain did keep Bakersfield from solely having the

driest March-May period on record; the 0.08 inch for the period tied March-May 1992 for the driest “spring.”

The cold airmass brought near-record low maximum temperatures to the central and southern San Joaquin Valley on May 25<sup>th</sup>. Bakersfield did set a record low maximum with a high of only 58 degrees; the old record was 67 degrees, set in 1917. At Fresno, the high was slightly warmer at 61 degrees. This was 2 degrees warmer than the record low maximum temperature for May 25<sup>th</sup> of 59 degrees, set in 1906.

Temperatures slowly recovered through the end of the month, but remained below normal. The last day of the month saw another upper-level trough approach the California coast. The coastal marine layer deepened to over 3500 feet in response to the approaching trough, and marine air spilled through the Pacheco Pass into the San Joaquin Valley near Los Banos. Gusty winds developed over the San Luis Reservoir, with sustained wind speeds of 23-26 mph, and gusts to 36 mph. This prompted the issuance of a Lake Wind Advisory due to the danger to boaters from swells and chop.