

## **MAY 2010 WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA INTERIOR**

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The first day of the month brought somewhat cooler than normal temperatures to the area, although this was during a transition to a warming trend that spanned the first few days of the month. A ridge of high pressure resided over the area through May 4<sup>th</sup>, then an upper-level low-pressure trough dropped through northern California into the Great Basin. Although this system was dry, it did bring some gusty winds to the region. Winds gusted to 63 mph at Inyokern on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and one gust at Mojave reached 68 mph. Behind the trough, an upper-level ridge briefly return to California before giving way to a stronger storm.

On the afternoon of the 9<sup>th</sup>, a cold front approached the area bringing scattered showers and thunderstorms over the San Joaquin Valley and foothills near the Sierra Nevada. Showers were observed as far south as Kern County, including Bakersfield where 0.12 inch fell. Isolated late afternoon thunderstorms formed over the southern half of the region, with thunder reported over Lemoore and Glennville.

Another low pressure system passed on the night of the 10<sup>th</sup>, bringing up to 8 inches of snow to the Sierra Nevada, mainly from Yosemite National Park southward to Sequoia National Park. This system also brought some strong, gusty winds to the southwest side of the valley, including near the city of Taft where a trained spotter observed wind gusts to around 60 mph. A very cold airmass lingered over the San Joaquin Valley behind the front. On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>, the area had well below temperatures, with several stations dropping into the upper 30s.

A warming trend returned to the region with weak high pressure over the area on the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>. The central and southern San Joaquin Valley saw highs reach up into the upper 80s to lower 90s in most locations on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup>. However, this warmth was relatively short-lived.

Temperatures once again cooled off by the 17<sup>th</sup> as another low pressure system moved over the area, bringing rain to many locations in the San Joaquin Valley. Both Fresno and Bakersfield recorded at least a tenth of an inch of rainfall with that system. Fresno cooled 24 degrees from its high of 89 on May 16<sup>th</sup> to a high of only 65 the next day. Bakersfield also dropped 24 degrees, from a high of 93 on the 16<sup>th</sup> to a high of 69 on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Despite the relatively high rainfall amounts for May, snowfall in the Southern Sierra Nevada for the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> generally was less than 6 inches.

Another brief warming trend occurred on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> due to a weak short-wave ridge of high pressure, but temperatures only remained near normal with highs in the lower to mid 80s in the San Joaquin Valley. The warmest area was in the Kern County deserts where temperatures reached into the lower 90s during that period.

By the 20<sup>th</sup>, temperatures began to cool again, as a series of three low pressure troughs began moving through California. These systems brought a cold airmass to the region and breezy to windy conditions to the Kern County deserts and the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. Bakersfield tied or broke its low maximum temperature records on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Fresno tied its record low maximum temperature on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

A low developed in the base of the third trough, dropping to near Point Conception during the early morning of May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Moisture rotating around this low triggered showers over the south end of the San Joaquin Valley. Bakersfield measured 0.04 inch of rain on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, one half of the record rainfall for the date.

More Pacific storms moved into California moved into northern California on May 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, and again on 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>. The heaviest showers from these storms stayed mainly north of Fresno County. The first storm brought 4-7 inches of new snow to the Southern Sierra Nevada—north of Kings Canyon—with the second storm bringing similar amounts to the same area. Only light snow fell in the Tulare County Mountains, generally less than 2 inches. One storm moving north from Ventura County even brought a light dusting of snow to Cuddy Valley at the 5900-foot elevation.

Thunderstorms developed over the central Sierra Nevada during the afternoon and evening of May 27<sup>th</sup>. One thunderstorm developed over northern Yosemite National Park, with the rest of the thunderstorms staying north of the park.

In the wake of the trough, wind gusts to around 50 mph developed over the southeastern Kern County desert during the evening of May 28<sup>th</sup>. The strongest winds were confined to an area just below the south-facing passes and canyons of the Tehachapi Mountains.

High pressure built into California toward the end of May. High temperatures in the central and southern San Joaquin Valley warmed to near 90 on May 30<sup>th</sup>, and into the lower to mid 90s on the last day of the month. Fresno had its warmest day of the month on the 31<sup>st</sup>, with a high of 92 degrees. Bakersfield tied its warmest day with a high of 93, matching the high of May 16<sup>th</sup>.

The average temperature for May at Bakersfield was 65.8 degrees. This tied with May 1961 for the 12<sup>th</sup> coldest May on record. Fresno had its 23<sup>rd</sup> coldest May on record with an average temperature of 65.1 degrees.