Rainy day, Scant and Shriveling Snowpack

Today's rainfall is very welcome. With well-below normal precipitation this winter/spring, any little bit helps. Water numbers this season are very low for snowpack (29%), not great on precipitation (75%), low for runoff (35-67%), but fine on groundwater reservoir storage (~100%).

The 8 Station and Feather River basins are likely to pick up 3/4" of rain through tomorrow, with the snow level dropping to 4,500' north, 5,500' central. Odd combination of winter weather conditions north
state, to red flag warnings for southeastern California.

Yesterday's snow survey along Highway 80 near Echo Summit showed a snow depth of 9.3" at Alpha (el. 7,600'), bare ground at Philips Station (6,800'), 20.7" at Lyons Creek (6,700') and 78.1" at Tamarack Flat (6,500'). The water content for the American River Basin averages out to 23% of normal for this time of year, according to preliminary data from course measurements for May 1. Statewide sensor measurements put the state's average snow water equivalent at 25% of normal. Final May 1 survey results will be available in a week. Snotel summary prior to today's storm puts the Truckee River basin and Tahoe area snow water equivalents at 37% and 19%, respectively. Tough season for ski resorts.

Central and Southern California rainfall for this season has been dismal;

Bakersfield	50%
Fresno	56%
Los Angeles	22%
San Diego	37%

It is still the driest rain season to date in downtown Los Angeles.
During the month of April, 0.74" of rain fell, just below the normal of 0.83". This doesn't make up for much, however, as the season total is 3.21", only 22% of the normal 14.77". The standing seasonal record (through June 30) is 4.42" for 2001-2002. It is also the driest season on record at the LA Airport, and at the Long Beach Airport.

A few May 1 reservoir storage levels; Shasta 98% of normal for this time of year; Folsom 101%; Oroville 105%.

An upper low is moving into the Pacific Northwest this afternoon, with the initial cold front already through locally, and cooler temps filtering in on its heels. Isolated thunderstorm activity is a possibility, especially in the San Joaquin Valley, Motherlode,

and Sierra this afternoon/evening. Another shortwave is developing south of the Aleutians. It crosses California Thursday night into Friday, with another one to two tenths inches of rain across the Feather River Basin, and far Northern California. Valley rain is possible early Friday morning, but it remains to be seen whether the energy associated with this system will be enough to create thunderstorm potential. Timing may be a bit off. Warm, sunny weather returns statewide Saturday, and should persist well into next week.

This cool, rainy midweek weather follows on the heals of record-setting warmth last weekend. On Saturday, April 28, record highs were set in Fresno (98), Bakersfield (97), Stockton (95), Modesto (95), and Sacramento Executive Airport (90).

Jan Null's Golden Gate Weather Services' climate report concludes that April had generally cooler than normal readings near the coast and warmer than temperatures normal inland. Coastal maxima were generally 2 degrees below normal while the interior saw readings of about 2 degrees above normal.

(EL)

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