

Rain

Continued from Page A1

the National Weather Service in Monterey. "It should be improving (today). The guidance systems show high pressure building along the West Coast."

Forecasters, however, are promising nothing — regardless of computer projections — after a week of often errant forecasts.

"It's been such a rough week," Canepa said. "We're trying to deal with these systems one at a time, and sometimes it's more clear-cut. These systems have been tricky."

Over the Pacific Ocean a series of frontal bands and low-pressure troughs appear to be breaking up and giving way to a high pressure system that promises clear skies.

A similar scenario appeared to be developing last week, however, after a massive winter storm stalled off the coast. But the blue skies promised for the weekend turned stormy with thunderstorms and downpours.

A few bolts of lightning could be seen in Santa Cruz Sunday along with rumbles of thunder along the coast.

The stormy weather played havoc on area roads Saturday and Sunday with dozens of accidents, especially on Highway 17.

California Highway Patrol officers had virtually no breaks Sunday, racing from one wreck to the next. On Highway 17 alone there were 15 multicar collisions Sunday, mostly caused by people driving too fast for conditions, officers said.

Flood warnings also were posted for parts of the Napa and Russian rivers Sunday as back-to-back storms pushed through Northern California.

The National Weather Service



The Associated Press

A Santa Rosa firefighter rescues a girl from the raging Matanzas Creek. The girl and a friend were trying to cross the creek Sunday, using a garbage can as a boat.

said the Russian River at Guerneville was rising and would crest as high as 39 feet at 8 this morning. That is 7 feet above flood level.

Along the Napa River, the water pushed near the banks in St. Helena and was expected to reach flood level near the city of Napa.

"There will be minor flooding, but nothing like last year's floods," said weather service forecaster Bob Benjamin.

Benjamin said the brunt of the first storm system hit north of San Francisco — in Sonoma, Napa, and Marin counties — where 1 to 2 inches of rain fell between midnight and 8 a.m.

The rain caused several mudslides in Marin County, including one Sunday in the Santa Venetia

area that caused two of five threatened houses to be evacuated overnight. Other slides temporarily closed roads near Point Reyes, San Rafael and Kentfield, sheriff's dispatcher Lauri Weston said.

Sunday's rain led to dozens of fender-benders and spinouts on highways throughout the area. Mud, debris and standing water were reported on several routes, and high winds made driving difficult over area bridges.

The storm also was responsible for washing out the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. It was the first time since 1949 that a PGA Tour event was canceled and not rescheduled.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.