

CF Weather RD 2/20/92 p.1

# 'Fabulous February' brings rain totals to near normal

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Between 1 inch and 3 inches of rain soaked the already-soaked Central Coast yesterday and last night, with a high of 3.30 inches in Eureka Canyon and a low of 1 inch in Aromas.

Watsonville received just over 1 inch, bringing its total to 14.05 inches for the season. More than half of that rainfall has been in the last two weeks.

Based on a 100-year average

ending in 1975, the normal for Watsonville as of today is 14.90 inches.

Forecasters said there will be a respite from the storms tonight and tomorrow morning, with a chance of more rain by tomorrow afternoon.

Watsonville and much of the Pajaro Valley and the Midcounty get virtually all of their water from underground aquifers, so it's impossible to tell how much of the

rain is soaking in to help bring up the water levels.

But in Santa Cruz, 90 percent of the water consumed comes from surface water sources.

Bill Kocher, director of the Santa Cruz water department, said the "fabulous February" rains have brought the season total in the city's watershed area to 31.28 inches. That's pretty close to the norm for the end of February, which is 39.20 inches.

Coming so close together, the

storms have saturated the ground, which increases run-off into the reservoir, he said.

The city's reservoir, which is used as a back-up source, has gained 11 feet, Kocher said.

"That's terrific," Kocher said. If it could gain another 11 feet, he'd be comfortable calling off conservation programs, he said.

"People want to hear the good news, but it's dangerous to think that near-normal rainfall is going

to break the back of a six-year drought," Kocher said.

A spokeswoman for Santa Cruz County's Public Works Department said the week's trouble spots were still closed — Harkins Slough Road, Murphys Crossing, Lee Road, Highland Way and Highway 9. The end of Ocean Street Extension in Santa Cruz has been opened, she said, but today the juncture of Paulsen and Whiting roads near College Lake was closed.

## RAINFALL

	Last 24 hrs	Season Total	Last Year
Felton.....	2.54	34.21	7.68
Santa Cruz★.....	1.56	N/A	N/A
Soquel.....	1.62	15.44	6.42
Aptos.....	1.50	21.32	5.56
Freedom.....	1.25	14.97	4.80
Corralitos.....	1.63	18.72	5.26
Eureka Canyon.	3.30	29.85	6.59
Watsonville.....	1.05	14.05	3.27
Aromas.....	1.00	15.60	4.35
Pinto Lake.....	1.80	21.05	6.80
Prunedale★.....	0.87	N/A	N/A
Castroville★.....	0.47	N/A	N/A

Readings taken at midnight