

WCF Weather R.P. FEB 7 1994

Dry spell ends as storm drops upward of 3 inches on county

STAFF and WIRE REPORTS

Santa Cruz County received upward of 3 inches of rain from the first wave of a storm that rolled across the Monterey Bay area yesterday and early this morning.

The sun was poking through scattered clouds over the Pajaro Valley this morning between rain showers, but the National Weather Service today said another storm front should hit the area by tonight.

The weather service said there is a 70 percent chance of measurable precipitation in the Monterey Bay area tonight, dropping to a 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms tomorrow.

"It's moving through in waves,"

Jeff Kopps, a forecaster for the National Weather Service, said as the rain fell yesterday. "This is the frontal system. A second wave is coming and by this time Tuesday, we're going to see quite a bit of precipitation out of it."

Rain yesterday triggered a rock and mud slide and caused numerous traffic accidents around the San Francisco Bay Area, including a fatal crash on the San Francisco Bay Bridge.

In Santa Cruz County, however, there were no major injury accidents over the weekend and the Santa Cruz County Public Works Department this morning said the only road closure was Harkins Slough Road at Lee Road.

"Road flooded" signs have been posted but it's still possible to drive slowly through the flooded area with caution.

Monterey County Public Works Department maintenance manager Don Collins this morning said there were no reports of storm problems on any of the county roads in Monterey County.

"We haven't had that much rain yet," he said, adding that Greenfield had only 0.47 inches from the storm.

This series of storms, the weather service spokesman said, signals the end of a monthlong stretch of meager precipitation for most of Northern and Central California — a dry spell that left much of the

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greater San Francisco Bay Area at 40 percent to 60 percent of normal rainfall to date.

With yesterday's eight-tenths of an inch, Watsonville's rainfall now stands at 7.7 inches for the rain year which runs from July 1 to June 30. The city average, measured over the last 114 years, is 12.26 inches through the end of January.

January, typically the wettest month of the year, had only one three-day period of rain.

"So this is a welcome storm, actually, and it has the potential to get our seasonal totals up, too," Kopps said.

The weather service also issued a winter storm warning for the Sierra Nevada. Kopps said the series of storms could dump 2 feet to 3 feet of new snow on the mountains over the next couple of days.

Snow levels fell last night to as low as 4,000 feet in the Mt. Shasta area and 5,000 feet near Lake Tahoe.

Meanwhile, bursts of rain triggered a rock and mud slide yesterday that blocked Highway 1 for about an hour in Stinson Beach, and the California Highway Patrol said there were numerous accidents on the region's wet road-

ways.

On the Bay Bridge, a 21-year-old Palo Alto woman who stopped to help a stranded driver was killed when she was struck by another van. The woman was identified as Amber Hendry.

CHP officer Meg Planka said Hendry was traveling westbound on the bridge about 5:15 a.m. yesterday when she witnessed an accident and stopped to help the other motorist. As she got out of her car to help the accident victim, an approaching van went out of control, slammed into the bridge railing and then bounced off and struck Hendry as she stood next to the disabled vehicle.

The CHP said the driver of the van that struck Hendry apparently lost control because of the rain and slippery roadway.

RAINFALL

	Last 48 hrs	Season Total	Last Year
Watsonville	0.80	7.70	15.24
Aptos	1.60	11.32	21.10
Aromas	0.70	8.10	19.35
Castroville★	0.16	N.A.	N.A.
Corralitos	1.30	11.51	27.82
Eureka Canyon	1.61	13.99	37.82
Felton	3.26	14.74	37.51
Freedom	0.90	8.58	18.46
Grn. Val. Rd.★	0.45	N.A.	N.A.
La Selva Bch.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Pinto Lake	1.50	11.10	28.8
Prunedale★	0.28	N.A.	N.A.
Santa Cruz★	1.14	N.A.	N.A.
Soquel	2.00	10.37	N.A.

★ Readings taken at midnight