

## Flood update

■ The Red Cross has declared Central California's flooding a "level-5" disaster. That is the relief group's highest rating for disasters. The group expects to spend \$11 million. For Red Cross information, call (800) 733-2767.

■ To report flood damage or economic loss to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, call (800) 462-9029. The TDD registration line for the speech- and hearing-impaired is (800) 462-7585.

■ The Madera County Health Department is offering free counseling. Residents of Wildwood Mobile Home Park are encouraged to contact either Madera County Health Administration at 675-7925, or the Madera Counseling Center at 673-3508.

## Road closures

■ Highway 145 closed at Skaggs Bridge over the San Joaquin River.

■ Highway 41 closed at Yosemite National Park south gate.

■ Highway 120 closed at Yosemite National Park north gate.

■ Highway 140 closed at El Portal.

■ Highway 59 closed in Merced County from Bellevue to the Snelling Bridge.

■ Road 206 bridge at Friant.

**Road conditions:** (800) 427-7623.

— Bee news services

# Valley rain watchers cautiously optimistic

■ Flood-relief officials say it doesn't look like a problem yet.

**By Tom Kertscher**  
The Fresno Bee

Overnight rains Tuesday and into Wednesday caused a few flood-relief officials to twitch, but no flooding danger appears at hand.

"At this point in time, with guarded optimism, we don't think it's going to happen," said Guy Wharton, executive director of the Fresno-Madera American Red Cross, which is helping about 100 families in the two counties recover from this month's flooding.

Weather-watchers back him up.

Between two-tenths and one-half inch of rain fell overnight Tuesday and early Wednesday in the central and southern San Joaquin Valley, said Dan Gudgel, warning coordination meteorologist at the National Weather Service's San Joaquin Valley office in Hanford.

## No immediate threat

Precipitation in the mountains, however, fell as snow, Gudgel said.

There are no signs of heavy melting that would create runoff

*'It is not an immediate threat to any kind of flooding.'*

**Dan Gudgel,**  
warning coordination meteorologist

mixing with rain to create floods, he said.

"It is not an immediate threat to any kind of flooding," Gudgel said late Wednesday afternoon.

Bill Draper, spokesman for the state Department of Water Resources, agreed.

The rains had a "marginal effect, at most" on river and reservoir levels, he said.

## Good news

With rivers and reservoirs as high as they are, flooding will remain a risk, Draper said.

But the precipitation so far, and what is forecast, doesn't appear dangerous, he said.

"That's the good news," Draper said.

"Cautious, but good."

Gudgel said no rain is expected today or through the weekend.

That could change Monday, but it is too early to tell.

"As far as I'm concerned, I'm pleased," Gudgel said.