

Recent rains clear air, views

By Marina Gaytan

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Now that a badly needed rain storm has cleared the air, Valley residents are being reminded once more of the beautiful Sierra Nevada, a sight that will be gone once the next storm arrives and the fog sets in, according to meteorologists.

Scott Borgioli, a meteorologist with *WeatherAg.com*, said the recent rain and associated winds have settled down the particulate matter causing clear air.

"It's kind of blown everything out of the Valley," Borgioli said. "The rain has sat the soils so we don't have the dust that we typically see because the water is holding that down."

Suzanne Bianco, tourism marketing manager with the Visalia Convention and Visitors Bureau said the view is an invitation to explore Sequoia National Park at a different time of year than when most people are seeing it in the summer.

"I think the view of the mountains makes you realize why people settle in this area in the first place," she said.

Enjoy air quality while it lasts

Air quality has been in the "Good" category recently compared to prior to the storm, which was in the "Moderate" zone and forecasters are expecting it to remain that way for a little while.

"We're probably not going to be seeing bad air quality for the rest of the week," he said.

Steve Mendenhall, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Hanford, said pollution will gradually build up over the next few days, at least until the next rains show up.

"The more people are driving around, especially on the weekends, pollution gets added to the air," he said.

Ana Reyes Stone, outreach and community representative with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, said the kind of pollution the Valley experiences in the winter is particulate matter 2.5, which is a very fine particulate often found in things like wood smoke or vehicle soot.

Aside from the weak to moderate storm system building for the weekend, forecasters expect a dry stretch through Christmas Day.

There is a chance of showers Friday more toward the north but Borgioli said that should be the last of the rain.

Temperatures are going to vary between the low 50s to near 60s during the day.

"That's how it's looking right now," Borgioli said. "We're not expecting any extreme temperatures or any warm highs."