

Save your breath—smoke from fires cause unhealthy air conditions

By Danielle A Martin

Visalia Times-Delta, Thursday, Oct. 12, 2017

Save your breath — smoke from the fires surrounding the Valley is making this fall cool down a breath of not-so-fresh air.

Currently, the air quality is moderate and worsening. A major pattern change next week could bring this area's first storm and clear up those hazy skies.

Until then, today, tomorrow and into the weekend expect air quality to continue to decrease, said Scott Borgioli, WeatherAg chief meteorologist.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has issued a health alert stating, "smoke from fires can cause serious health problems including lung disease, asthma attacks and increased risk of heart attacks and stroke."

Real-Time Outdoor Activity Risk guidelines classified Tulare County in level three due to the smoke.

Under level three, residents should follow the following guidelines:

- Recess (15 minutes) - Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.
- P.E. (one hour) - Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.
- Athletic practice and training (two-four hours) Reduce vigorous exercise to 30 minutes per hour of practice time with increased rest breaks and substitutions. Also, ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their conditions.
- Scheduled sporting events - Increase rest breaks and substitutions per CIF guidelines for extreme heat. Also, ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their conditions.

If air conditions worsen, visit www.valleyair.org/RAAN for more guidelines.

People with existing respiratory conditions, young children and elderly people are more susceptible to the harmful condition and should take caution. If anyone can smell smoke or see ash, treat the air quality conditions as unhealthy and remain indoors.

High winds, raised fire danger forecast for Kern County mountains

By Jason Kotowski

Bakersfield Californian, Friday, October 12, 2017

The National Weather Service has issued a warning of raised fire danger and winds as powerful as 55 mph for the Kern County mountains this weekend.

The warning is in effect from 11 a.m. Saturday through 6 p.m. Sunday, with the combination of very low humidity and gusty winds elevating the fire danger. Any fires burning in the area are likely to quickly spread due to the winds, according to the weather service.

With deadly fires striking Northern California, Kern County also received a taste of what can happen when fire and wind combine as wind-driven blazes in Oildale and Bakersfield on Monday destroyed homes and vehicles and killed dozens of animals.

And a warning issued by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District earlier this week said smoke from those Northern California fires could impact air quality in the Central Valley.

East to southeast winds of 20 to 30 mph with gusts to 55 mph are forecast for the Kern County mountains. Winds 15 to 25 mph with gusts to 40 mph are expected in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

The impacted areas stretch from the Lake Isabella area south to Tehachapi and down to the base of the Grapevine. Frazier Park is expected to have wind gusts of 35 mph on Saturday and 30 mph on Sunday, according to the forecast.

Blowing dust may reduce visibility and cause possible travel delays in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Visibility of less than a mile could occur in some locations.

Branches and trees could be knocked down, as well as power lines, and scattered power outages are possible, the National Weather Service said.

Meanwhile, Southern California firefighters continue to build containment lines around the remnants of a destructive wildfire that erupted amid gusty Santa Ana winds earlier this week, the Associated Press reported.

And with the return of the Santa Anas, fire weather is returning to portions of Southern California. Red Flag warnings have been issued for the mountains of Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties Friday night through Saturday morning, the AP reported. A fire weather watch has been issued for a wider area of the region.