

Mother Nature about to unleash wet storm

By Kathryn Reed

Soggy could be the word to be used for much of Northern California and Northern Nevada as winter blows out and spring arrives Sunday. The Lake Tahoe Basin isn't expected to see sun until at least the middle of next week.

The National Weather Service in Reno has bumped up the winter storm warning to noon Friday, ending 8am Saturday. Three inches of snow could come down per hour, the agency says.

One to 2 feet above 7,000 feet is being called for, with 8 to 14 inches at lake level. Winds will be from the south to southwest at 15 to 25 mph, with gusts up to 35 mph. Sierra ridge gusts may hit 90 mph.



Standing water
March 17 at
the corner of
Modesto and
Harrison
avenues in
South Tahoe.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

The high winds on Lake Tahoe forced the M.S. Dixie noon cruise

to be canceled.

The Weather Service is also cautioning that creeks and rivers are prone to flooding. Ponding on highways and local road surfaces will make driving precarious.

Sump pumps throughout the South Shore have been running almost nonstop at residences in low-lying areas. Standing water became increasingly prevalent this week in the Lake Tahoe Basin with rain, snow and thawing.

South Lake Tahoe crews this week were working behind the Super 8 motel off Highway 50 to clear culverts for better drainage. That area is notorious for flooding.

Caltrans earlier this week had to close Highway 50 between Placerville and South Lake Tahoe four hours to clear a wall of snow. Highway 89 around Emerald Bay remains closed.

The transportation department expects a section of Highway 1 to be closed for a month in Monterey County after a 100-foot section of asphalt fell into the ocean. However, the California State Parks is notifying hundreds of campers headed for the Big Sur area that all State Park campgrounds will remain open with all reservations honored.

Gov. Jerry Brown has issued emergency proclamations for Del Norte, Humboldt, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo and Mendocino counties because of damage from the tsunami that resulted from the 9.0 earthquake in Japan a week ago.

The crazy weather had the NWS calling for a tornado warning this morning in San Mateo County.

Gates at the Orville Dam spillway were opened today for the first time in five years. Other reservoirs in California have also been releasing water in anticipation of needing more storage space for the series of storms headed to the state.