

Holiday storms bring glimmer of hope for drought's end

By Ryan Sabalow and Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

A cold winter storm swept into the region on Friday and early Saturday, bringing low snow levels and slippery roads on one of the busiest holiday travel periods of the year.

While the storm made for dangerous road travel and plenty of airport delays, the wet, snowy weather, following a succession of storms to start the rainy season, was more welcome news as California concludes its fifth consecutive year of drought.

“At this point, we’re cautiously optimistic,” said Jeanine Jones, interstate resources manager for the state Department of Water Resources. “We’re in the fingers-crossed, wait-and-see mode.”

Experts like Jones aren’t ready to declare the drought over in spite of one of the more promising starts to California’s wet season in years. The reason? The state’s water-supply picture is very much a mixed bag at this point, and it’s still early in the state’s brief rainy season to point to any sort of trend. Most of the precipitation that falls in California falls in January and February.

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