

3 inches of rain falls Monday in 24 hours

By Nick Baptista – The Valley Springs News – Wednesday, February 22, 2017

The Valley Springs area received 3.01 inches of rain in a 24-hour period Monday, and more is on the way.

The deluge caused flooding along Cosgrove Creek.

“At 5 p.m. we were living in the creek,” said Sharon Hackbarth, who resides on St. Andrews Road beside the creek. “It was a little scary.”

Flood waters surrounded her house and entered her garage. The Hackbarths have become accustomed to their yard constantly flooding this wet winter season. Many of their neighbors on St. Andrews Road also experienced flooding with Monday’s heavy rainfall.

The Hackbarths used 200 sandbags to keep the floodwaters away and it wasn’t enough.

Over the Presidents’ Day weekend, at least two sites in the Valley Springs area were without sand and sand bags for those wishing to prepare for the flooding. Calaveras County District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli and District 5 Supervisor Clyde Clapp alerted the public works department on Monday morning that the sandbag sites on Vista Del Lago West and Mangili Road were without bags and sand. Crews made deliveries in the early afternoon.

The rains also caused collateral damage along west Calaveras roadways. The CHP issued advisories about wires down early Tuesday morning on the 8300 block of Hautly Lane and a mud slide blocking one lane of traffic at Gillam and Paloma roads.

Nearly 500 homes were without power when a tree came down on Heney Lane, said Calaveras Consolidated Fire Chief Jason Robitaille.

Operators of the New Hogan Dam the past week have been releasing large quantities of water down the Calaveras River as the rains have persisted.

Rainfall has been recorded in 17 out of the first 21 days in February.

The lake reached a high of 250,183 acre-feet in storage for the month on Feb. 11 and operators had it down to 212,612 AF by Sunday.

However, Monday’s rain increased inflow into the reservoir to 12,062 cubic feet per second while the outflow was decreased from 4,292 cfs the day before to 2,699 cfs on Monday. Lake storage was at 231,176 on Monday and capacity is 317,000.

In all, the area received 3.79 inches of precipitation between last Wednesday and Monday. Rain also hit the area early Tuesday morning including a brief torrential downpour near 9 a.m.

Ponds at the Valley Springs Public Utility District wastewater treatment facility off State Route 12 “are up quite a bit,” said VSPUD General Manager Mike Fischer, “but are still in fair shape.”

The facility was the site of major flooding in 2006, but improvements have been made.

Fischer was looking forward to some dry weather so the district could use its spray field and “limp our way through this.”

Still, the treatment facility has some issues that need to be addressed in the near future, Fischer said.

Rains are expected to diminish Wednesday.

The National Weather Service out of Sacramento predicted a 20 percent chance of showers after 10 a.m. Wednesday.

A mostly sunny Thursday with a high near 53 was in the forecast, with nearly the same for Friday. However, showers were expected to return for the weekend.