

Quick Look at the Storm Forecast to Impact California This Weekend

Updated: 10 April 2026

A cutoff low and mid-level shortwave are forecast to bring rainfall, potentially heavy snowfall and cooler temperatures to California between Friday 10 April and Monday 13 April.

Forecast Highlights:

- A mid-level cutoff low off the northern California coast is forecast to bring precipitation and potential thunderstorms to northern and central California today.
- The NWS Storm Prediction Center (SPC) has identified a marginal risk of severe thunderstorms over the Sacramento Valley and northern San Joaquin Valley between early Friday 10 April and early Saturday 11 April.
- A trough originating over the Gulf of Alaska is forecast to deepen along the US West Coast, reaching the northern California coast on Saturday 11 April and phasing with the weakening cutoff low.
- This trough is forecast to bring cooler temperatures to the US West Coast and provide dynamical forcing for moderate-to-heavy rainfall and thunderstorms along the coast and snowfall over the Sierra Nevada.
- The NWS Weather Prediction Center (WPC) is forecasting 3–5 inches of precipitation over the Sierra Nevada and 1.5–3 inches over coastal California and the Oregon Cascades for the 72-hour period ending 5 AM PT Mon 13 April.
- There is large ensemble spread in the precipitation forecasts for watersheds in the Sierra Nevada and across northern California. The majority of EPS members are forecasting precipitation accumulations greater than the GEFS mean and >5% of normal annual precipitation through 5 AM PT Mon 13 April in the Russian and Upper Yuba watersheds.
- Freezing levels over the Sierra Nevada are forecast to fall from ~9,000–10,000 feet to ~5,000–6,000 feet by Sunday 12 April, leading to the potential for heavy snowfall.
- The NWS is forecasting 12 to 24 inches of snowfall across the Sierra Nevada with the potential for >36 inches over the highest peaks through 5 AM PT Mon 13 April. Moderate to major winter storm impacts are expected across the Sierra Nevada during this period.
- While stream rises are expected in California with the precipitation from this event, the California-Nevada River Forecast Center (CNRFC) is currently forecasting only two gauges along the Cosumnes River to reach action stage over the next 5 days .
- The precipitation and potential snowfall are likely to be quite beneficial for California following several months of below normal precipitation.

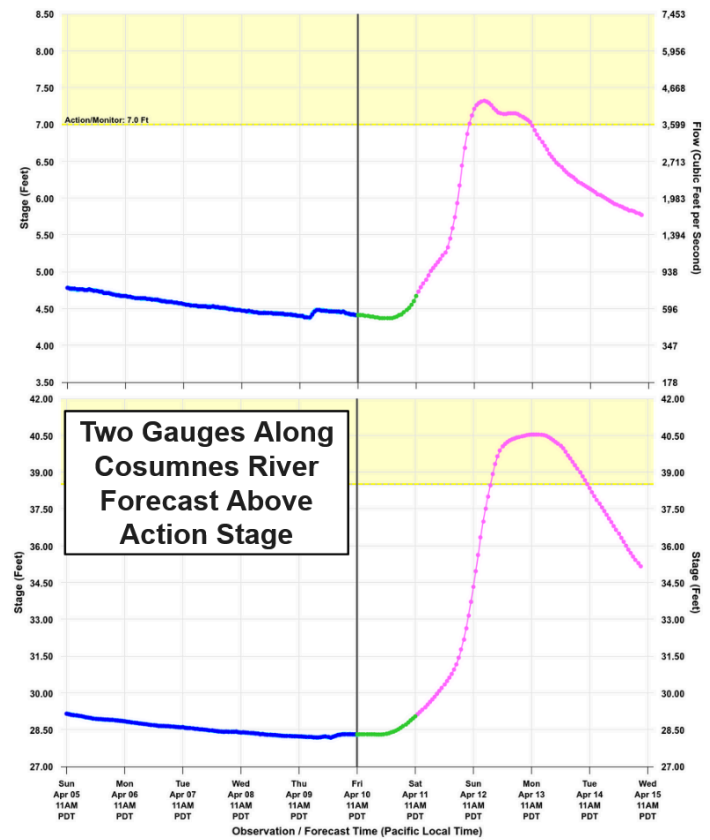
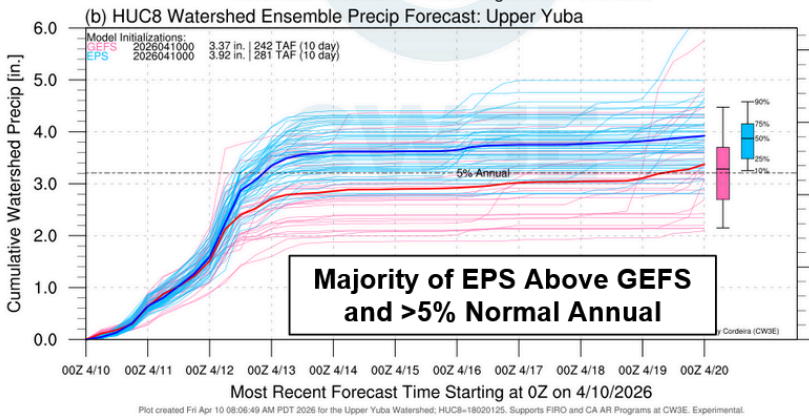
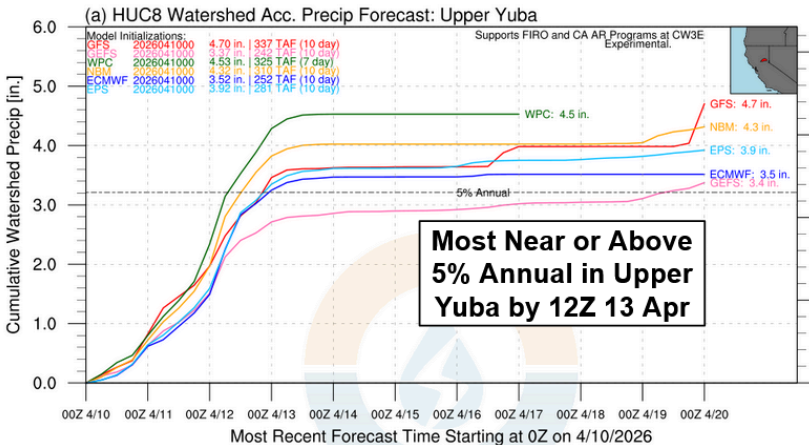
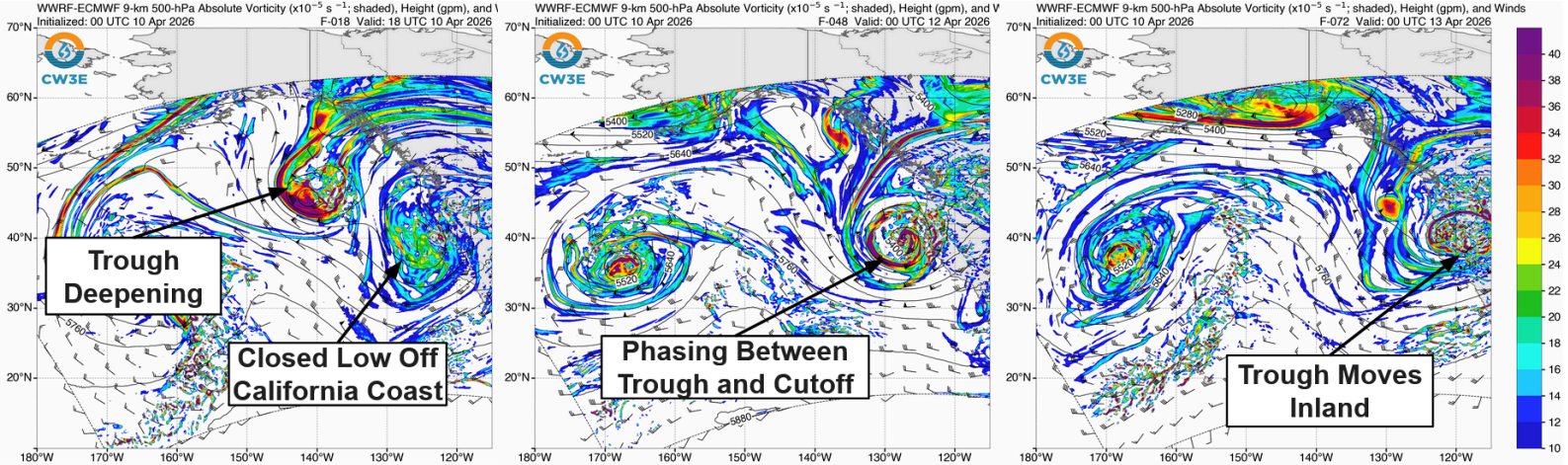
Stay alert to official NWS forecasts, watches, and warnings at [weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov)

WWRF ECMWF 500 hPa Heights and Vorticity

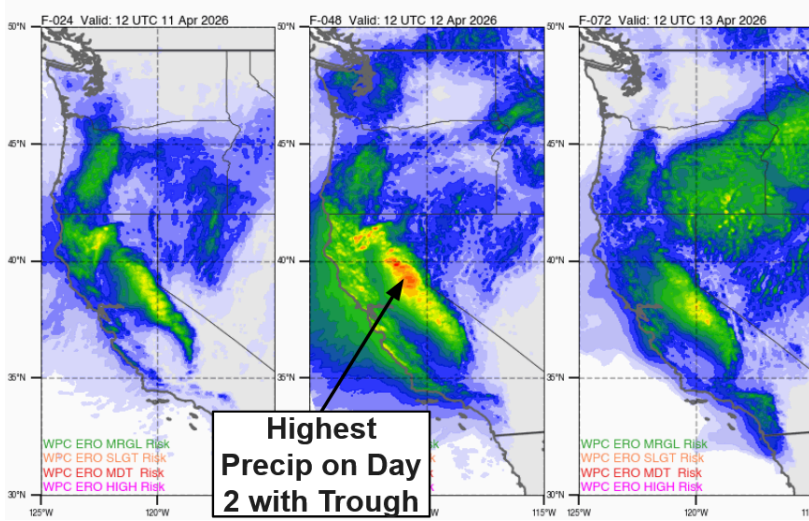
Valid: 11 AM PDT Fri 10 Apr

Valid: 5 PM PDT Sat 11 Apr

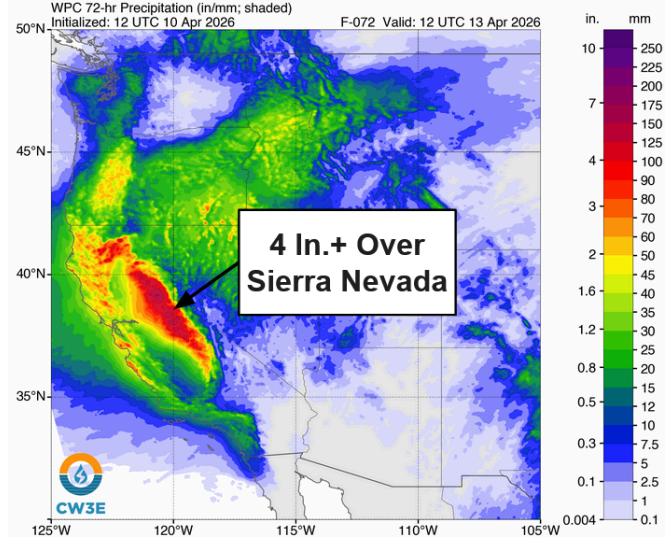
Valid: 5 PM PDT Sun 12 Apr



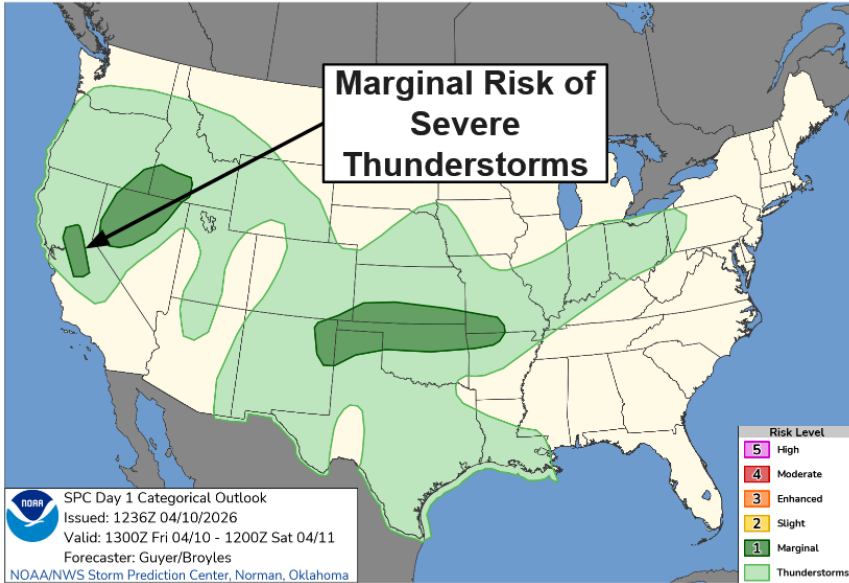
WPC Days 1-3 QPF: Periods Ending 5 AM PT 11-13 Apr



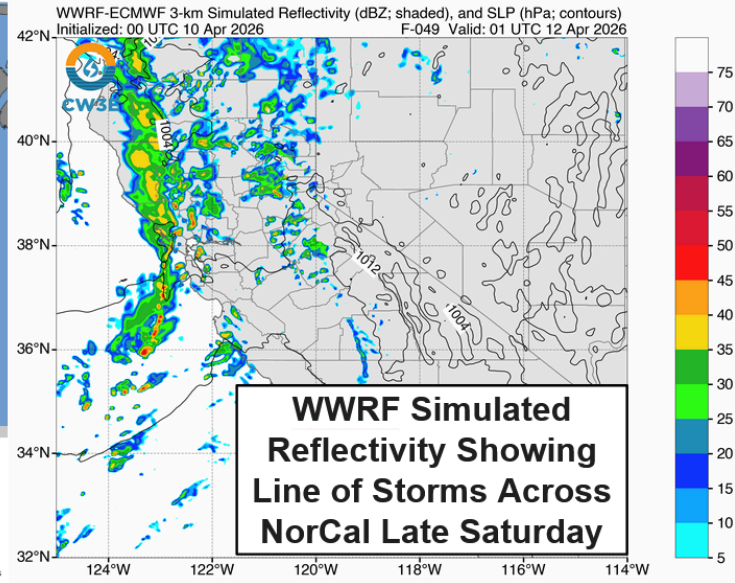
WPC 72 Hour QPF: Period Ending 5 AM PT Mon 13 Apr

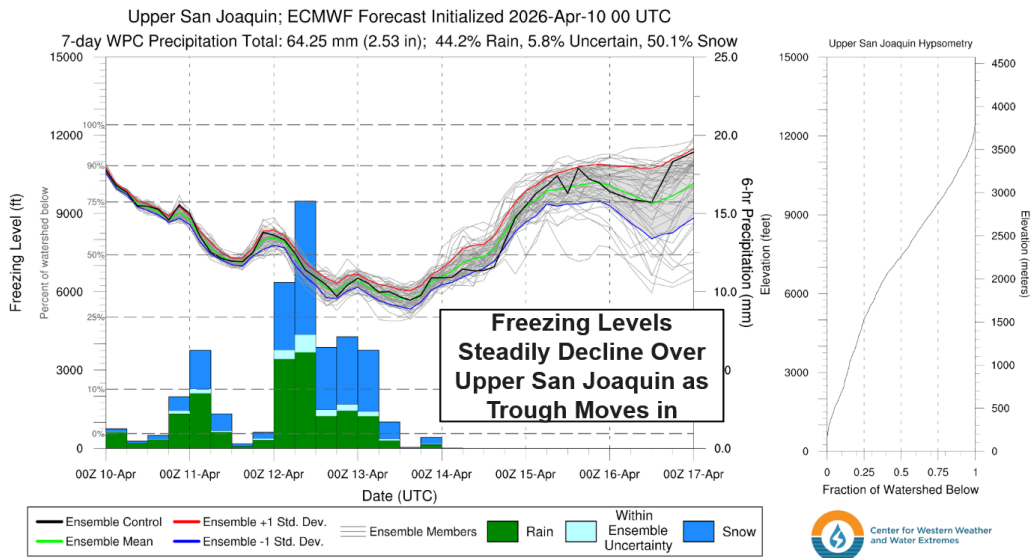
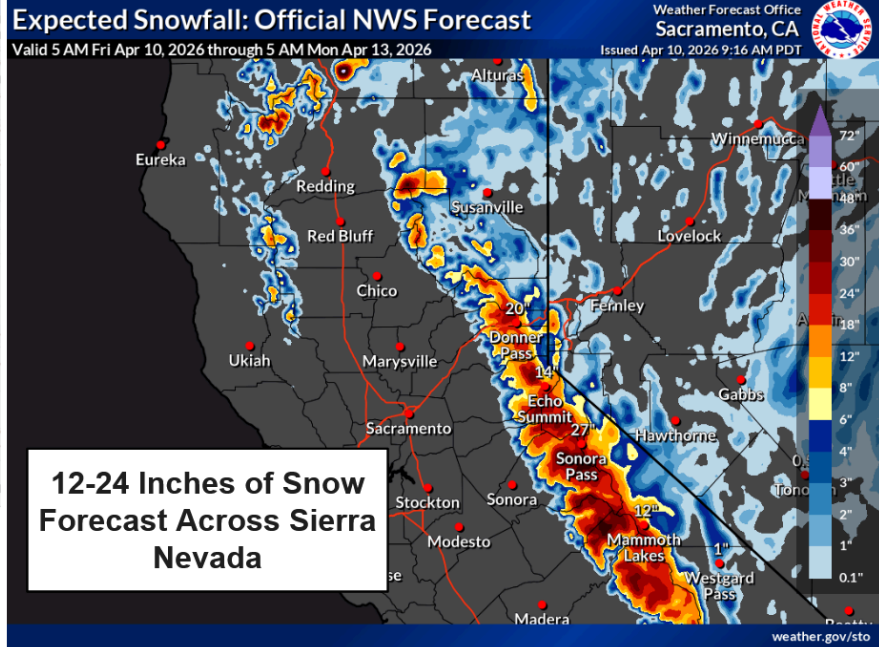
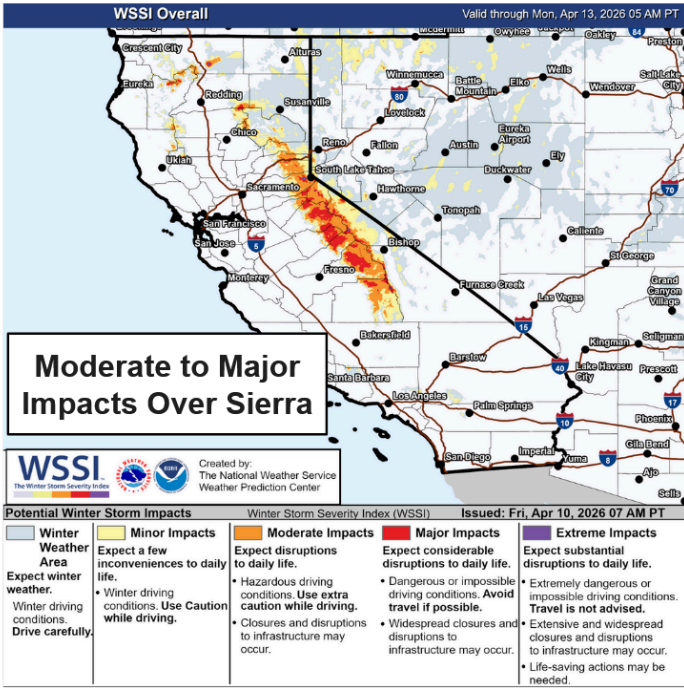


SPC Day 1 Categorical Outlook



WRF ECMWF Simulated Reflectivity





Additional Considerations:

Visit <https://www.weather.gov/cnrfc/> for specific river and stream forecasts and <https://www.weather.gov/> for point specific forecasts.

In-depth AR forecasts products can be found here: <http://cw3e.ucsd.edu/iwv-and-ivt-forecasts/>

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