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Sloshy days not much of a drought-buster

cbowman@sacbee.com

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With all that rain and snow Sunday, and lots more forecast throughout this week, are the prognosticators of severe drought all wet? No, the weather experts say.

State climatologists counted on such generous precipitation coming at this tail end of winter when they forecast on Friday only a 10 percent chance of the Sierra Nevada snowpack returning to "normal" conditions this season.

Sunday's storm raised the amount of total rainfall in Sacramento so far this February to 4.31 inches, compared with a 3.77-inch historic average for the period, said Johnnie Powell, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Sacramento.

Still, Powell said, "we are so far behind the curve" for the rainy season, November through April – 75 percent of normal for Sacramento in this third consecutive year of drought – and so little of winter left to make up for dry ground.

"The river levels are going up, and we're happy to see it," Powell said. "But there's plenty of room in the reservoirs and at the river banks."

The rain is good for the reservoirs but not necessarily for the Sierra snowpack because the rain is melting snow at lower elevations, weather service meteorologist Robert Baruffaldi said.

The weather service predicts a 100 percent chance of rain today in the southern Sacramento Valley and foothills, an 80 percent chance for Tuesday, and 40 percent Wednesday through Friday.

The storm that moved in overnight Saturday brought gusts of 30 to 35 mph in the Valley on Sunday.

As of 8 p.m. Sunday, 0.79 of an inch of rain had fallen in the Sacramento area.

Kirkwood ski resort reported 2 to 4 inches of snow overnight. Baruffaldi said snowfall during this storm likely will occur at elevations 7,000 feet and higher.