

DISCOVER-AQ OUTLOOK -- January 18, 2013

We continue to have similar conditions day after day as the ridge remains in place just off the Pacific coast. We expect very little change in wind or moisture conditions in the SJV. Today, there was fog at Hanford (and in fact a rather narrow strip down the center of the valley). Visibility dropped to 0.25 mi and was less than 1 mile from 5 – 8 AM. IFR conditions persisted from 1 AM to 9 AM at Hanford. At Visalia a min visibility of 1.25 mi was reached at 7:15 to 8 AM, while IFR conditions lasted from 1 AM to 11 AM. MOS forecasts of 7AM RH at Hanford and Fresno are slightly higher on Sun. and Mon. than on Sat, while RH probably will not reach levels for fog at Bakersfield. The NWS at Hanford expects fog to form a bit earlier and dissipate a bit later as we progress through the weekend. The other issue we are watching is the cirrus off the Pacific Coast of California. Moisture from the tropics is moving up from the south on the west side of the ridge, but begins to dissipate as it hits dryer air on the east side of the ridge. Another batch of cirrus may exist to our South over the weekend, but both the GEOS-5 and GFS move these clouds directly east over Baja and into southern AZ.

Today's air quality is expected to reach Code Orange levels in both Fresno and Kern Counties with borderline Yellow-Orange in Kings and Tulare Counties. Similar conditions expected tomorrow and Sunday. Stagnation continues with PM2.5 buildup possible, but traffic emissions decrease over the weekend. Although wood burning will be prohibited in Code Orange forecast areas, these emissions may increase over the weekend. Stronger surface heating over the next few days may also raise the mixing depth a bit.

Recommendation: Conditions should be fine for flying any of Sat., Sun. or Mon. However, the chance of morning fog will likely increase each day through the period.