



Blowing dust
NWS forecast

Air Quality Program

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Dust in the Valley

A couple of dust storms at the end of February raised hourly concentrations on the 22nd and 25th. The photograph on the right was taken from Swall Meadows around 2:00PM on the 25th and clearly shows a dust cloud, possibly originating from the Tungsten Hills. PM-10 (a measure of dust) concentrations on the Bishop Reservation reached 183 micrograms per cubic meter between 1:00 and 2:00PM, while winds gusted to 40mph from the northwest. Even higher concentrations were measured on February 22nd, reaching 337 micrograms per cubic meter between 10:00 and 11:00AM, when winds gusted to 36mph from the east-southeast.



Smokey Nights

Dust is not the only pollutant in the Owens Valley, on cold, calm evenings, smoke from home heating can also be a factor. Smoke is measured by PM-2.5. This winter, the highest concentrations were reached on January 9th between 8:00 and 9:00PM, when concentrations reached 62 micrograms per cubic meter. Over 20 micrograms per cubic meter, the US EPA recommends that sensitive people limit prolonged outdoor activity. On January 9, there were 7 hours where the concentrations were about 20 micrograms per cubic meter. This is the yellow area on the graph. The night of January 9, the low temperature was in the 30's and there was very little wind.

