SUMMARY OF THE MARCH 1981 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General: March turned in a record of mild temperatures and much-above-normal rainfall with only a few days of fog and light winds for the most part.

Temperature: March continued this wet season’s trend of warmer-than-normal temperatures with a 53.4°F vs a 30-year normal of 53.0°F. However, the days averaged 0.5°F cooler than the expected 61.7°F while the nights were warmer than the 44.3°F normal by 1.4°F. The behavior of both the maxima and minima are readily explained by the many cloudy, rainy days in March – reducing the usual heating by day and cooling by night. High for the month, 71°F, occurred on 9 and 24 March while the absolute minimum, a mild 41°F, was registered early day on 13 and 17 March. The 50°F minimum on the morning of 25 March is the highest minimum for the date, beating 49°F in 1968 and 1969. The last date of a reading of 34°F or lower was 3 Feb 79, and before that a 32°F temperature on 3 March 1976. Such a continuous record of mild winters is unparalleled in the 30 years of National Weather Service Climatological Station records on the Peninsula.

Precipitation: March’s rainfall, 3.98” (1.24” above the March normal) went a long way toward this season’s rainfall approaching the 30-year normal. There were 14 days with measurable amounts of rain compared to a normal of five such days. At month’s end the season’s total (July 1 to date) stands at 15.49” compared to the 16.09” expectation. Should the remainder of the rain year (through 30 Jun) be normal, 2.36” would be added to the total. Light amounts of hail were observed on 26 March, for the only unusual rainfall event.

Wind: In spite of the apparent shift to spring-like weather patterns the last week of March, winds continued on the light side. The March 1981 Airport average of 5.3 miles per hour (mph) compares to the recent five-year March average of 8.2 mph. The maximum wind gust at the National Weather Service Station, measuring 38 mph, occurred on 27 March. Only four days in March produced gusts exceeding 30 mph.

Fog: March, along with January, is typically the least foggy month on the Peninsula. March 81 proved to be a good example of these statistics, with only 3 days of some fog – the least foggy month since March of last year.