

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

AUGUST 1, 2022

Current Conditions

- California and much of the Western U.S. is immersed in a third consecutive year of extreme drought. This is also the third statewide drought declared in California during this century (2007-2009, 2012-2016, 2020 – present).
- January, February, and March 2022 were the driest on record dating back over 100 years, with just six inches of precipitation observed across the Sierra Nevada.
- California entered the dry summer months with below-average reservoir storage and with the state's largest reservoir, Shasta Lake, at critically low levels. The Sierra snowpack is essentially gone, and runoff into the state's streams and reservoirs has largely peaked for the year.
- Hot and dry conditions are expected to continue through November indicating a late start to water year 2023, extending fire season and setting the stage for dry watersheds under any snowpack that forms in winter. The current outlook for water year 2023 is another year of drought as the third consecutive winter with La Nina conditions is expected.
- The State is taking action to prepare for the possibility of a fourth dry year.
- All of California's 58 counties are under a drought emergency proclamation. Californians are being asked to reduce their water use by 15 percent over 2020 levels to protect water reserves and help maintain critical flows for fish and wildlife wherever possible.
- As of August 1, the state's voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 186 dry wells in the past 30 days. Most are in Fresno, Madera, Tehama, and Tulare counties.

The California Drought Update is a weekly roundup of conditions, state actions and upcoming developments. It is produced by an interagency team that includes the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Public Health. For the latest on drought, please visit www.drought.ca.gov. For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit www.saveourwater.com.

Recent Events and State Actions

Water conservation discussion with Governor (July 29): Leaders of large public and private water suppliers and water industry associations reconvened with the Governor to discuss progress toward achieving a 15% reduction in water use statewide, compared to 2020, and earlier reporting of water use data to the State Water Board.

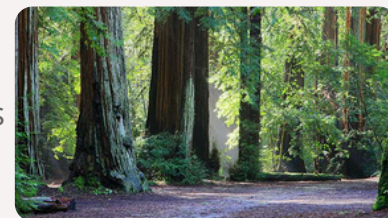


Caltrans freeway signs urge water savings (July 29): Caltrans is posting drought and water conservation messages on its freeway signs from July 29 through August 1.

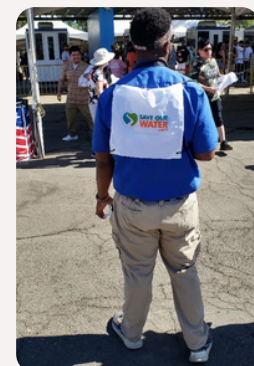


Draft EIR released on Delta Conveyance proposed project (July 27): DWR released the Draft Environment Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Delta Conveyance Project, which would improve the ability of the State Water Project to capture water from big storms for use in drier times. The project also would help safeguard diversions from threat of failure due to storm surge, sea level rise, and earthquake that could collapse levees. If the project had been operational during October and December 2021 storms, DWR could have captured and moved about 236,000 acre-feet of water, enough for about 2.5 million people for a year. The draft EIR is the next step in considering whether the state should advance the project forward following Governor Newsom's directive to downsize the project to one tunnel. The public comment period will conclude on October 27.

State campground closes for lack of water (July 25): State Parks announced the temporary closure of campground facilities at Portola Redwoods State Park in San Mateo County due to lower water flows in Peters Creek, the park's primary water source. Effective August 5, the campground facilities will be closed for the remainder of the camping season. This occurred in 2014, 2015, and 2021. State Parks staff are locating and repairing water leaks throughout parks distribution systems, installing timers on irrigation systems, cutting back on landscape irrigation, and implementing other water conservation efforts. The restrooms at Hearst Castle in San Luis Obispo County are temporarily closed due to declining water production; portable chemical toilets are available at the visitor center.



Save Our Water at the California State Fair (July 23): The Save Our Water Team was out in full force at the California State Fair. Saturday, July 23 was "Save Our Water Day," and the first 5,000 attendees received a Save Our Water drawstring backpack. Thousands of fairgoers visited the Save Our Water booth to receive water-saving tips and information. Save Our Water was also featured on KCRA 3 News and "Good Day Sacramento."



Recent Events and State Actions

Save Our Water featured at Sacramento Republic FC semi-final match (ongoing): Save Our Water partnered with the Sacramento Republic FC for the 2022 season to share the importance of tree care and water conservation during extreme drought. The semi-final match, with SaveOurWater.com featured, was nationally televised on ESPN+.



Colorado River cutback discussions continue (ongoing): Agencies dependent on the Colorado River are working to preserve enough water in Lake Powell and Lake Mead to avoid either reservoir reaching critically low elevations that forestall electricity generation and water delivery. Reservoir managers say 2 million to 3 million acre-feet of water must be conserved quickly to protect reservoir levels. California water users face cutbacks as soon as 2023.

Save Our Water partners with California ReLeaf (ongoing): The Save Our Water campaign has partnered with California ReLeaf and urban forest groups across the state to raise awareness of the importance of tree care for Californians cutting back on outdoor water use. The partnership includes the U.S. Forest Service, CAL FIRE, and local groups.

Curtailments adjustments (ongoing): The State Water Board continues to monitor six critical watersheds where worsening conditions may threaten water supplies. Curtailments remain in effect in the Delta watershed, the Russian River watershed, and the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds. Curtailments are suspended for the Mill Creek and Deer Creek watersheds (sub-watersheds of the Delta) but curtailments in the larger Delta watershed may apply. Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change. Water right holders should closely monitor their email and the watershed drought webpages for curtailment updates.



Tribal / Local Actions

- **Tribal governments:** Tribal emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Karuk Tribe, Resighini Rancheria, Tule River Indian Tribe, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, Yurok Tribe, Wiyot Tribe.
- **Local government:** Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Madera, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Water conservation press event in Riverside: On **August 1**, the Secretary for Natural Resources will hold a drought roundtable discussion with the Riverside mayor and other officials, followed by a press conference.

June conservation rates: At its meeting **August 2**, the Water Board will release urban water use figures for June 2022. Governor Newsom has asked Californians to voluntarily reduce water use by 15%.

Release of proposed readoption of Mill and Deer creeks drought emergency regulation: On **August 5**, the State Water Board will release for public comment a proposed emergency curtailment regulation for Mill and Deer Creeks that establishes updated minimum instream flow requirements to protect native fish and critical habitat during the ongoing drought. The existing regulation went into effect last September. The State Water Board is expected to consider readopting the regulation at their **August 16** meeting.

Key Data Points and Resources

- Daily Hydrological & Climate Information summary: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=DLYHYDRO>
- Statewide water conditions: http://cdec.water.ca.gov/water_cond.html
- Daily Reservoir Storage Summary: <https://cdec.water.ca.gov/reservoir.html>
- Water Year Forecast and Monthly Distribution: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=B120DIST>
- Monthly water supplier reports on water production and conservation: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/conservation_reporting.html
- Latest groundwater conditions and information: <https://sgmatest.water.ca.gov/CalGWLIVE/>
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://www.drought.ca.gov>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>