



CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

AUGUST 15, 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.
- 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.
- To replace and replenish the water that thirstier soils, vegetation, and the atmosphere will consume under hotter and drier conditions, Governor Newsom announced an adaptation strategy that targets capturing, recycling, de-salting, and conserving water supply.
- “California’s Water Supply Strategy, Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future” aims to expand supplies by 1.6 million acre-feet by 2030, in addition to creating capacity of more than three million acre-feet of new storage to mitigate the impacts of the anticipated 10% reduction of traditional water supplies.
- 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 15, the state’s voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 234 dry wells in the past 30 days. Most are in the Central Valley.

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

Climate change brings heightened risk of catastrophic flood (August 12): Scientists from UCLA and the National Center for Atmospheric Research published a paper, funded in part by DWR, in Science Advances that projects end-of-the-century storms will generate 200% to 400% more runoff in the Sierra Nevada Mountains due to increased precipitation and more precipitation falling as rain, not snow. In the future scenario, storms bring more rain, more intense rainfall on an hourly basis, and stronger wind. The ARkStorm research emphasizes California's need to prepare for flood events of all sizes, even during drought years.

Governor releases water supply strategy to counter increasingly arid conditions (August 11): To replace and replenish the water that thirstier soils, vegetation, and the atmosphere will consume under hotter and drier conditions, Governor Newsom announced an adaptation strategy that targets capturing, recycling, de-salting, and conserving water supply.

"California's Water Supply Strategy, Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future" aims to expand supplies by 1.6 million acre-feet by 2030, in addition to creating capacity of more than three million acre-feet of new storage to mitigate the impacts of the anticipated 10% reduction of traditional water supplies. The strategy intensifies state focus on supply actions in the 2020 Water Resilience Portfolio and also commits to working with the Legislature to help modernize regulatory processes to deliver projects faster. The Governor and state water leaders briefed journalists about the strategy at the city of Antioch's brackish desalination plant, which will supply about 30 percent of the city's needs once completed.



Governor names infrastructure advisor (August 11): Moving to harness a once-in-a-generation investment under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Governor Newsom named former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa to serve as Infrastructure Advisor, working with local, state and federal leaders to identify priority projects and maximize access to federal funding across all regions of the state.



Input on county drought planning (Aug. 10): DWR hosted the second of four meetings of the County Drought Plan Guidebook Workgroup to gather input for the SB 552 county guidebook. SB 552, enacted in 2021, outlines new requirements for small water suppliers, county governments, DWR, and the State Water Board to implement more proactive drought planning and be better prepared for future dry years.

Groundwater Projects Tool release (Aug. 9): DWR released a new web-based tool that allows people to explore thousands of groundwater projects in a database of nearly 3,000 groundwater projects initiated in California over the last decade. The mapping tool features projects that were funded by DWR and external sources. The database includes information about project benefits and effectiveness in relation to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Users can also access more than 20 project case studies and get guidance on how to measure and track benefits of projects following construction.



Recent Events and State Actions

Salmon hatching in McCloud River (ongoing): The first 20,000 winter-run chinook salmon eggs returned last month to the McCloud River have hatched and will be held and monitored in incubators for another 30 days. In July, the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, CDFW, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service transported the fertilized eggs 80 miles from a federal hatchery near Redding. The endangered species has not spawned in the McCloud since Shasta Dam blocked the Sacramento River in the 1940s. The young salmon will be released into the river as fry, collected later in rotary screw traps, then transported and released downstream of Shasta Dam to migrate to the Pacific Ocean. The relocation is an urgent response to potential extinction. Lessons learned will guide future long-term recovery and reintroduction efforts.



Preparing to use winter flows for groundwater recharge (ongoing): Under a provision in the Governor's March drought Executive Order, water users may ask DWR for suspension of CEQA for construction of groundwater recharge projects that meet certain conditions, such as state grant funding or technical assistance support. DWR has posted [a form](#) for local agencies to use to assert project eligibility. A [fact sheet](#) about the process also is available. Under the process, DWR will review and concur if the project is eligible based on the documentation in the Self-Certification Form and will notify the project proponent once concurrence is complete. A list of projects that receive DWR concurrence for the CEQA suspension will be listed on the [DWR drought website](#).

Colorado River (ongoing): Interstate discussions continue about how to cut back Colorado River water use by two to four million acre-feet in order to avoid water supply and power generation disruptions at Lake Powell and Lake Mead. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has [warned](#) the seven states that depend upon the river that it will impose a water-use reduction plan if states do not come up with a plan themselves. The Colorado River provides about a third of Southern California's water supplies. California water agencies face cutbacks as soon as 2023.

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.



Save Our Water how-to videos (ongoing): Save Our Water and DWR released a series of helpful videos showing easy ways for Californians to upgrade their yards and save water outdoors. The brief educational videos cover water-saving topics including using cardboard and wood chips to break down a lawn in time to plant drought-tolerant flowers and shrubs in the fall.



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

Safe drinking water expenditure plan: On **August 15**, the State Water Board will release a draft expenditure plan for the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund for fiscal year 2022-23. Public comment is invited at a board workshop on August 16. The fund provides up to \$130 million per year to develop and implement solutions for domestic wells and water systems that are not sustainable or have violations of drinking water standards. The plan documents past and planned expenditures and prioritizes projects for the upcoming year.

Emergency curtailment regulations in Mill and Deer creek watersheds: The State Water Board will consider readopting the emergency regulation to curtail unauthorized water diversions in the Mill and Deer Creek watersheds (subwatersheds of the Delta) on **August 16**, before the current emergency regulation expires in October 2022. This is the State Water Board's fourth and final readoption of an emergency curtailment regulation this year, following those for the Russian River, Scott-Shasta and Delta watersheds, which were approved over the past three months.

Applications due for regional water management grants: On **August 19**, applications are due for DWR's Integrated Regional Water Management program grants. A second deadline is scheduled for February 1, 2023. The funding available for award across both Round 2 submission deadlines is approximately \$193 million for 12 IRWM funding areas, which includes at least \$25 million for disadvantaged communities and Tribes. IRWM crosses jurisdictional, watershed, and political boundaries and attempts to address the issues and differing perspectives of all the entities involved through mutually beneficial solutions.

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/>