

# CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

JULY 18, 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).
- A growing body of evidence is starting to show that our current drought situation is an extension of the 2012 – 2016 drought, interrupted by just a few wet years.
- As California's extreme drought continues and with next year's conditions unknown, the state is taking action to prepare for the possibility of a fourth dry year.
- 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.
- 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 July 18, the state's [voluntary household dry well reporting system](#) received reports of 222 dry wells in the past 30 days. Most are in Fresno, Madera, Butte, 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](http://www.drought.ca.gov). For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit [www.saveourwater.com](http://www.saveourwater.com).*

## Recent Events and State Actions

**State, local leaders discuss conservation with large urban water suppliers (July 15):** Water district leaders met to discuss water conservation with the Secretaries for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, chair and executive director of the State Water Board, and director of DWR. State leaders urged the general managers and board members to double down on conservation actions and assist the Water Board by reporting water usage data earlier than regulations require.



**DWR drought relief grants near half-billion-dollar mark (July 14):** A year after receiving \$500 million in the 2021-22 budget, DWR has successfully awarded more than \$440 million to date in drought relief assistance to communities to address water supply challenges. Small communities have received \$175 million for 89 projects. The funded work will, for example, connect 150 rural households with at-risk wells to the city of Orland's water supply and install a new well to bring clean drinking water to West Marin residents whose supply is threatened by saltwater intrusion. DWR's urban and multi-benefit drought-relief grant program has awarded \$268 million to 126 projects. Work funded includes reinforcing the supply line that delivers half the water used by the city of Fort Bragg and installing a new well to supply the Kern County community of Lost Hills. The budget enacted last month will replenish these grant programs with an additional \$300 million.

**Delta restoration kick-off (July 14):** DWR celebrated two tidal habitat restoration projects at an event in the Suisun Marsh in Solano County. The adjacent Bradmoor Island and Arnold Slough projects will benefit endangered Delta smelt and longfin smelt and support the long-term operation of the State Water Project. Construction at Arnold Slough was completed in the fall of 2021 and included infrastructure demolition, three levee breaches, and grading to accommodate sea level rise. Bradmoor Island's restoration work will begin in July and includes infrastructure and building demolition and five levee breaches to restore tidal flow to the site.



**Winter-run returned to McCloud River (July 11):** Endangered winter-run chinook salmon eggs were trucked to the McCloud River, where the species has not spawned since Shasta Dam construction in the 1940s. The Winnemem Wintu Tribe, CDFW, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service transported approximately 20,000 fertilized winter-run chinook salmon eggs 80 miles from a federal hatchery near Redding to the Ah-Di-Na Campground on the McCloud. The eggs were placed in specialized incubators. Another 20,000 eggs will be transferred to the incubators in early August. Both cohorts 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.





## Recent Events and State Actions

**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, Russian River watershed, and Scott River and Shasta River watersheds. Curtailments are suspended for the Mill Creek and Deer Creek watersheds (sub-watersheds of the Delta). Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change. Water right holders should closely monitor the watershed webpages and their emails for curtailment updates.



### **Save Our Water Partners with California ReLeaf (ongoing):**

Save Our Water partnered with California ReLeaf and urban forest groups across the state to bring awareness to the importance of tree care while cutting back on our outdoor water use. The partnership includes the USDA Forest Service, CAL FIRE's Urban & Community Forestry Department as well as local groups.



**Save Our Water at California State Fair (ongoing):** Save Our Water hosted an educational booth on bottom-up water-wise plants for children on Kids Day at the California State Fair. Additionally, **July 23** is Save Our Water Day at the California State Fair and fairgoers can receive water-saving tips, shower timers and water-wise seeds

**Tracking urban water use (ongoing):** The Water Board's conservation portal has dashboards and graphics and allows people to get information about water consumption within specific water agencies.

## 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, 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

**Workshop on business water efficiency practices:** DWR hosts a virtual public workshop on **July 19** to solicit input on water use efficiency practices for commercial, industrial, and institutional conservation programs. The input will help shape turf conversion programs and technical assistance.

**Delta emergency curtailment regulations:** On **July 20**, the State Water Board will consider readopting the emergency regulation to curtail unauthorized water diversions in the Delta watershed on July 20, before the current emergency regulation expires in August 2022.

**Workshop on racial equity action plan:** On **July 20**, the State Water Board holds the first of four workshops to develop a draft Racial Equity Action Plan and is soliciting input on potential actions to include. The plan will set three-year goals for the State Water Board to address racial inequities and identify metrics to measure progress.

**Water Plan focus on equity:** On **July 21**, the third convening of the California Water Plan Policy Advisory Committee will focus on equity in water resource management, with an emphasis on how the Water Plan Update 2023 can help improve equity through data, analysis, and recommendations.

## 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](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](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/>