

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

OCTOBER 3, 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 October 3, the state’s voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 143 dry wells in the past 30 days. Most are in San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys.

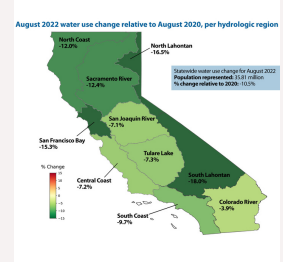
The California Drought Update is a weekly roundup of conditions, state actions and upcoming developments. It is produced by an interagency team that includes the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, the California 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 <https://drought.ca.gov>. For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit www.saveourwater.com.

Recent Events and State Actions

DWR issued flood management grants (October 4): On October 4, DWR issued a press release announcing grant awards totaling \$50 million for 18 flood management projects around the state, including the Bay Area and Los Angeles.



End-of-water-year wrap-up, latest conservation rates, other news on Water Board agenda (October 3): At a Water Board meeting on October 3, the DWR director and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation regional director discussed the 2022 water year, which ended September 30, and forecasted this winter could usher in a fourth year of drought. The Board discussed water use rates statewide and announced water use in August 2022 was 10.5% lower than in August 2020. The Water Board also will mark the 50th anniversary of enactment of the Clean Water Act and the 10th anniversary of the enactment of California's Human Right to Water law, which statutorily recognizes that "every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes." The Board will also consider a resolution to adopt the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Clean Water and Drinking Water Intended Use Plans.



Press availability on end of Water Year 2022, prospects for Water Year 2023 (October 3): The state climatologist and drought experts briefed reporters on October 3 about Water Year 2022, a third consecutive year of drought, and discussed the elevated odds of a drier-than-usual winter across most of California and the southern Colorado Basin. Experts predict a "triple dip" La Niña event, or the third consecutive year of La Niña conditions, a weather pattern that typically means cool and wetter than average temperatures in the Pacific Northwest, and warmer and drier than average weather in the Southern U.S., including California. The two previous "triple dip" La Niña years in the California record were 1976 and 2001, and both were dry. Modeling suggests California should expect a dry winter, at least in the early part of the season. Expert confidence in the forecasts fade at mid-winter, which is the peak of atmospheric river activity in Northern California.

Listening sessions on federal funding (September 30): The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation held listening sessions for tribes and other stakeholders to gather feedback on implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act. The Act includes \$4 billion in funding specifically for water management and conservation efforts in the Colorado River Basin and other areas experiencing similar levels of drought.

Water conservation press event at Google campus (September 29): The Secretary for Natural Resources, State Water Board member Sean Maguire, leaders of Valley Water, and State Senator Josh Becker gathered September 29 at Google headquarters in Mountain View to urge Californians to save water. Speakers emphasized the need for business owners and campus operators to shift from decorative grass to more water-wise, drought-friendly landscaping.



Recent Events and State Actions

DWR submits recommendations on outdoor water use efficiency (September 29): As required by 2018 legislation, DWR submitted outdoor water use efficiency recommendations to the State Water Resources Control Board. With outdoor water use accounting for 50 percent of urban resident water use on average, the recommendations outline standards that would provide urban retail water suppliers with a framework to support more efficient outdoor residential water use. The framework will also include standards for the irrigation of large commercial, industrial, and institutional landscapes in their service areas. DWR's recommendations to the State Water Board will be evaluated through a formal rulemaking process, which will include additional analysis, engagement, and opportunity for public comment.

Delta conveyance project public meeting (September 28): DWR hosted the third of three virtual public hearings to receive public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact report for the Delta conveyance project on Sept. 2. DWR announced last week that the 90-day public comment period, stretching from July 27 through Oct. 27, will be extended another 50 days to Dec. 16. The proposed project would modernize water transport infrastructure in the Delta to address the effects of sea level rise and climate change, minimize water supply disruption caused by an earthquake, protect the ability of the State Water Project to reliably deliver water to two of every three Californians, and provide operational flexibility to improve aquatic conditions in the Delta. A multitude of multi-lingual materials about the EIR and how to comment are available [here](#).

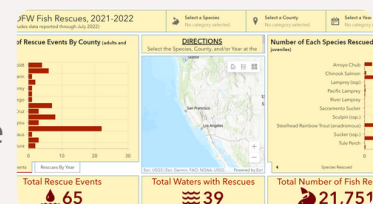


Indoor water use legislation enacted (September 28): Governor Newsom announced his enactment of Senate Bill 1157 (Hertzberg), which adopts recommendations made by DWR and the State Water Board last year to reduce indoor water use targets to 47 gallons per day by 2025 and 42 gallons by 2030. By adjusting indoor water use standards to reflect the joint recommendation of DWR and the State Water Board, the legislation will help increase water conservation and water use efficiency, ensuring a more water resilient future for California.

Turf rebates exempted from state tax exemption (September 28): The Governor announced his enactment of a [package of water-related bills](#), including Assembly Bill 2142 (Gabriel), which will exempt from state income tax calculations any grant, rebate or additional financial assistance awarded from a state or local agency for turf transition. The law will provide the exemption through tax year 2027.



Fish rescue and drought response tracker (September 26): Californians can track fish rescues and other wildlife-related drought responses on the Department of Fish and Wildlife [website](#). The fish rescue dashboard is interactive to allow searches by species, counties, and years. It will be updated monthly.



Recent Events and State Actions

Colorado River discussion continue (ongoing): Leaders of California water districts that depend upon the Colorado River continue to discuss water use cutbacks they can take in coming years to help maintain an additional 2 million acre-feet to 4 million acre-feet of storage in Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Both reservoirs – the biggest in the U.S. – are at risk of reaching levels too low to allow water deliveries and power generation. Negotiations also continue among California interests with Arizona and Nevada water users. At the same time, California continues work on an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to protect the Salton Sea, which depends upon agricultural runoff.

Curtailments adjustments (ongoing): The State Water Board continues to monitor six critical watersheds where worsening conditions may threaten water supplies. Due to recent weather events, some curtailments in the Delta watershed, and the Russian River watershed. Curtailments remain in effect in 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

DWR hosts “Drought to Flood Symposium: Building Resilience for California's Climate Extremes”: On **October 17**, DWR will host the “Drought to Flood Symposium: Building Resilience for California's Climate Extremes” at the California Natural Resources Agency headquarters in Sacramento. Experts from the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes, UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, DWR State Climatologist, and USACE will discuss the impacts of climate change extremes in California and how we need to prepare for flooding even during a drought. Registration for the event, in-person or to attend online, can be found [here](#).

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://sgma.water.ca.gov/CalGWLlive/>
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://drought.ca.gov/>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>