



CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

AUGUST 22, 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 22, the state’s voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 217 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

Federal, state leaders discuss drought impacts, investments in water resilience (August 17 and 18):

State officials including Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot, Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross, DWR Director Karla Nemeth and State Water Board Chair Joaquin Esquivel joined U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, USBR Commissioner Camille Touton, and other elected officials for round table discussions in the Central Valley and Southern California to discuss drought impacts and opportunities to invest in resilience.



Federal action to conserve Colorado River supplies (August 16):

Given the 23-year ongoing historic drought and low runoff conditions in the Colorado River Basin, downstream releases from Glen Canyon and Hoover Dams – which created Lakes Powell and Mead – will be reduced again in 2023 due to declining reservoir levels, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced. In the Lower Basin, the reductions represent the second year of additional shortage declarations. Reclamation set the annual operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead in 2023 with no cutbacks to California in 2023 and varying cutbacks to Lower Basin water users with less senior water rights than California, pursuant to the 2019 Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan developed by the Department of the Interior and the seven Colorado River Basin states. In addition, Reclamation announced a series of administrative actions to further protect the storage in Lakes Mead and Powell and urged Colorado River-dependent states to work out reductions voluntarily. The water users and Reclamation seek to avoid the reservoirs dropping so low that water cannot be delivered, and power cannot be generated. Depending on future snowpack and runoff, a range of actions will be needed to stabilize reservoir elevations over the next four years. The Colorado River supplies about a third of Southern California's water supplies.



Federal water investments (August 16): President Biden signed the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act, which 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. In addition, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law enacted last November makes a historic \$8.3 billion investment to address water and drought challenges and invest in our nation's western water and power infrastructure.

Emergency curtailment regulations in Mill and Deer creek watersheds (August 16): The State Water Board readopted the emergency regulation to curtail unauthorized water diversions in the Mill and Deer Creek watersheds (sub-watersheds of the Delta).

Recent Events and State Actions

Safe drinking water expenditure plan (August 15): The State Water Board released a draft expenditure plan for the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund for fiscal year 2022-23 and invited public comment. 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.

Fish rescues in Russian River watershed (ongoing): CDFW has conducted more than a dozen separate fish rescues in Russian River tributaries including Green Valley Creek, relocating more than 4,000 coho and more than 800 steelhead. Some have been retained for the captive broodstock program and others are rearing at Warm Springs Hatchery in Geyserville until stream conditions improve.



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 on the road (ongoing): Save Our Water and DWR spread the water conservation message August 18 at the Roseville Home and Garden show and will be at the Butte County Fair August 24 through 28.



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

Drought-response grants for small communities: DWR is expected to announce an eighth round of grant funding to assist small communities facing water supply challenges due to drought, tentatively scheduled for **August 23**. The first seven phases of funding totaled \$176 million for 89 projects in 31 counties.

Water supply strategy briefing: The DWR director and CNRA deputy secretary for water brief the board of the California Urban Water Agencies on **August 26** about the Governor's new water supply strategy. The strategy aims to replace and replenish the water that thirstier soils, vegetation, and the atmosphere will consume under hotter and drier conditions.

Drought briefing for urban water districts: State water leaders brief urban water district representatives **September 1** on drought conditions and activities.

July conservation rates to be announced: The final water usage data for urban water suppliers for July 2022 compared to July 2020 will be discussed by the State Water Board when it meets **September 7**. Early reporting from some suppliers shows a water use reduction of approximately 9.8 percent.

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/>