



Drought Update

Thursday, July 21, 2016

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS MONTH

- **Statewide Water Conservation Hits 28% in May; Urban Water Suppliers 'Stress Test' Data under Review:** On July 6, the State Water Board [announced](#) that Californians reduced water use by 28 percent in [May](#), compared with the same month in 2013. Cumulatively, local water suppliers have saved over 1.6 million acre feet in the 12 months since mandatory conservation goals began.

This past June, the State Water Board updated emergency water conservation regulations which give urban water agencies the ability to set their own conservation standards based on a "stress test" of supply reliability. Water suppliers must demonstrate that they have sufficient supplies to withstand three years of continuous drought or take additional measures that include mandatory conservation targets. For more information, visit the State Water Board's [Water Conservation Portal](#).

- **Officials Announce over 66 million Trees Dead in California:** On June 22, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) [announced](#) that an additional 26 million trees dead have been identified in California since October 2015. These trees are located in six counties across 760,000 acres in the southern Sierra Nevada region of the state, and are in addition to the 40 million trees that died statewide from 2010 to October 2015, increasing the total to at least 66 million dead trees.

In February 2016, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) awarded nearly \$2 million dollars in local [fire prevention grants](#) for local projects focused on the removal of dead and dying trees in order to reduce the wildfire threat around homes. The Tree Mortality Task Force, comprised of state and federal agencies, local governments, utilities, and various stakeholders, continues to coordinate additional assistance to help the public remove trees on their property. For more details, visit the [Tree Mortality Task Force](#) website.

- **2016 Sacramento River Temperature Management Planning:** On July 8, the State Water Board [approved](#) the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) [Sacramento River Temperature Management Plan](#) that outlines a water release schedule from Shasta into the Sacramento River. The plan is intended to preserve cool water temperatures for winter-run Chinook salmon, while meeting water deliveries for Central Valley farmers during the growing season. For more information, visit the State Water Board's [Sacramento River](#) webpage.

- **State and Federal Officials Release Integrated Plan to Help Delta Smelt:** On July 12, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), in partnership with several state and federal agencies, [released](#) the [Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy](#) that seeks to improve conditions for endangered Delta smelt, which are close to extinction after several extremely dry years. The comprehensive plan aims to generate a positive population growth trend for the species by reducing mortality and boosting the rate at which the fish grow, reproduce, and survive.
- **DWR Releases CASGEM Status Report Showing Improvements in Groundwater Monitoring Efforts:** On July 13, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [released](#) a new status [report](#) for the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program for calendar years 2012-2015. The report shows improvements in statewide groundwater monitoring efforts including increased program participation and available data.

CASGEM data is used to determine groundwater level and storage trends, the effectiveness of groundwater management measures, the impact of the ongoing drought, and to implement the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014](#). For more information, visit DWR's [CASGEM Program](#) webpage.

- **Department of Water Resources Releases Draft of Approved Changes to California Groundwater Basin Boundaries:** On July 1, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) released a draft of its approved changes to California's groundwater basin boundaries which is an essential step to implement the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act](#) (SGMA). The changes empower local agencies to bring groundwater basins into sustainable patterns of pumping and recharge. For more information, visit DWR's [Sustainable Groundwater Management - Basin Boundary Modifications](#) webpage.
- **Natural Resources Agency Releases California WaterFix Fast Facts:** On June 30, the California Natural resources Agency [released](#) a [fact sheet](#) on the California WaterFix project which summarizes the benefits and cost of the proposed project in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. California WaterFix is a proposed upgrade to 50-year-old infrastructure in the Delta and is intended to protect this major source of clean water for two-thirds of the state. For additional information, visit the [California WaterFix](#) webpage.
- **Energy Commission Announces Bioenergy Grants to Address Tree Mortality:** On July 1, the California Energy Commission (CEC) [announced](#) new funding focused on biomass energy research, development, and demonstration projects. Under its' Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) Program, CEC will provide \$5 million for research projects that use woody biomass to generate renewable energy and \$10 million to demonstrate innovative technologies, techniques and strategies that generate electricity using forest biomass from high hazard zones. For more information, visit CEC's [EPIC](#) webpage.

- **California Water Projects to Receive WaterSMART Grants for 2016:** On June 29, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) [announced](#) that approximately \$9.3 million in WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grants has been awarded to support California projects that increase water and energy conservation and efficiency, protect endangered species, or address climate-related impacts on water. For a complete list of awards, visit Reclamation's [WaterSMART](#) web portal.
- **Ocean Protection Council Awards \$7.4 Million in Prop 1 Grants:** On June 29, the California Ocean Protection Council awarded over \$7.4 million in Proposition 1 funds for competitive grants that provide multiple benefits for ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects in accordance with statewide priorities. For details about the projects, visit the [Ocean Protection Council](#) webpage.
- **PPIC Issues Report, Lessons from Victoria, Australia: Managing Water for the Environment during Drought:** On June 22, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) [released](#) a [report](#) that examines how Victoria, Australia allocates water for the environment during times of scarcity. The report identifies four key areas that could improve how California manages water for the environment during drought.
- **California's Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** On July 14, Save Our Water launched its summer 2016 public education campaign, "Water Conservation: It's for Life", which reflects the shifting approach to water conservation in California. The new messaging encourages permanent changes to save water and make conservation a part of the permanent lifestyle. The "Water Conservation: It's For Life" message has been integrated across the program along with the newly revamped and restructured [website](#), and a fully updated [toolkit](#).

As part of the new campaign, Save Our Water is planning multiple paid media efforts including radio ads kicking off mid-July and other elements starting in August. In addition, Save Our Water featured three water saving exhibits at the California State Fair in Sacramento. These exhibits feature water efficient gardens and landscapes, and promote water conservation.

For more tips and tools to help conserve water, learn about [rebates](#) on turf and toilet replacement, and keep trees healthy during the drought, please visit [SaveOurWater.com](#), or connect with the program on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought. During the July 14 meeting, the Task Force provided updates on water operations and environmental habitat, water conservation, and drought impacts and response efforts. In addition, Save Our Water introduced the 2016 summer public education campaign, as well as an overview of the new website. The website includes improved user experience and navigation to promote permanent changes in water conservation.

CURRENT DROUGHT CONDITIONS

- **Fire Activity:** Since the beginning of the year, firefighters from CAL FIRE, U.S. Forest Service and other federal agencies have responded to over 3,451 wildfires across the state, burning 123,100 acres. Fire activity across California is high resulting in 341 new wildfires over the past week.
- **CAL FIRE Burn Suspension Status:** To date, CAL FIRE has [suspended](#) all burn permits for outdoor open residential burning in Alameda, Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Eastern San Joaquin, Eastern Stanislaus, Eastern Trinity, El Dorado, Fresno, Glen, Humboldt, Inyo, Imperial, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Riverside, San Benito, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Sierra, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Siskiyou, Tehama, Tuolumne, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba counties.

This suspension bans all residential outdoor burning of landscape debris including branches and leaves. The department may issue restricted temporary burning permits if there is an essential reason due to public health and safety. For additional information on preparing for and preventing wildfires visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org.

- **Weather Outlook:** Weather conditions in will remain mostly unchanged through the end of the work week. Over the weekend, strong high pressure will bring a significant warming trend, with weekend temperatures approaching the triple digits across the interior persisting into next week.
- **Reservoir Management:** Since the last report on July 8, Central Valley reservoirs from Shasta and Trinity in the North to Isabella in the South had a total gain of zero AF and a total loss of 539,463 AF. Shasta Reservoir decreased by 85,817 AF, while San Luis Reservoir, an off-stream reservoir for the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, decreased its storage by 32,485 AF.

Shasta, Orville, and Folsom Reservoirs recorded approximately 3.7 million AF, 2.6 million AF, and 617,685 AF, respectively. The 10-day average changes were -1,839 AF, -20,550 AF, and -7,388 AF per day, respectively.

- [Reservoir Levels](#) as of July 20 have remained steady, including: Castaic Lake 78% of capacity (91% of year to date average); Don Pedro 74% of capacity (95% of average); Exchequer 54% of capacity (83% of average); Folsom Lake 58% of capacity (78% of average); Lake Oroville 72% of capacity (95% of average); Perris Lake 37% (47% of average); Millerton Lake 78% of capacity (114% of average); New Melones 25% of capacity (40% of average); Pine Flat 42% of capacity (73% of average); San Luis 12% of capacity (21% of average); Shasta Reservoir 81% of capacity (109% of average); and Trinity Lake 48% of capacity (59% of average). An update of water levels at other [smaller reservoirs](#) is available.

- **Dry Well Reports:** The winter of 2015-16 brought welcomed storms to Northern California, but the southern half of the state remains dry. For 2016, the Governor's Drought Task Force continues to monitor and identify communities and local water systems in danger of running out of water. In 2015, a cross-agency team, led by the Department of Water Resources (DWR), developed a new system that improves and streamlines data collection and reporting for [household water shortages](#) for California water systems with fewer than 15 household connections.

As of July 14, approximately 2,395 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, affecting an estimated 11,975 residents. Cal OES reported that 2,211 of the 2,395 dry wells are concentrated in the inland regions within the Central Valley. If you are experiencing a water supply shortage, please [submit a report](#) on DWR's Household Water Supply Shortage Reporting System website.

- **Vulnerable Water Systems:** The State Water Board continues to provide technical and funding assistance to several communities facing drinking water shortages, and is monitoring water systems across the state. Since January 2014, 122 out of the 176 projects approved to receive emergency funding for interim replacement drinking water have been executed. On May 19, 2015, the State Water Board adopted Guidelines for administering the latest emergency drought appropriations of \$19 million announced this past March. To date, the State Water Board has received requests for \$15.4 million of those funds.

ONGOING DROUGHT SUPPORT

- **Emergency Food Aid, Utility and Employment Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) Drought Food Assistance Program (DFAP) provides food assistance to affected communities that suffer high levels of unemployment from the drought. To date, over 1,509,263 boxes have been provided to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 1,355,659 boxes of food have been picked up by 699,330 households.

Food boxes distributions vary by county and occur 1-4 times per month. This past week, nearly 44% of the food distributions have occurred in the Tulare Basin (Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare). An estimated 14,820 boxes are scheduled for delivery to Fresno, Kern, Merced, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Sutter, and Tulare the week ending July 22.

The Labor Workforce Development Agency reported that the federally funded Drought Temporary Jobs program has enrolled 1,192 participants at 199 worksite projects in 24 counties. The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Labor's National Dislocated Worker Grant program which offers 6 months of employment on drought-related public works projects for up to 1,000 workers affected by the drought.

The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) is in the process of allocating \$400,000, under CSBG, to support the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) drought assistance program which provides assistance in employment training and placement services to individuals impacted by the drought. To date, CSD has expended a total of \$393,119 and has assisted 111 participants in employment training and placement services.

In response to California's historic drought, CSD has received \$7.5 million in General Fund to implement the Drought Emergency Assistance Program (DEAP) to provide emergency relief and support services to drought-impacted individuals and their families and households. As of June 30, approximately \$6.5 million has been issued to 4,873 households.

- **Drought Response Funding:** The \$3.7 billion in state drought funding appropriated in the 2014 and 2015 Budget Acts, as well as in March 2015 through emergency legislation, continues to advance toward meeting critical near-term needs and long-term drought resiliency and water supply needs. To date, \$997 million has been committed and an additional \$415 million is anticipated to be committed by the end of Fiscal Year 2015-16.

Of the critical near-term funds available, approximately 75 percent is now committed and an additional \$72 million is anticipated to be committed in the remaining Fiscal Year.

In addition, Governor Brown has proposed an additional \$323 million for the 2016-17 budget to continue the state's response to the drought. If approved by the Legislature, these additional funds will be available to aid in emergency drinking water for communities, emergency food assistance, enhanced fire protection, environmental and wildlife assistance, assistance to communities to help dispose of the dead and dying trees in high hazard zones for public safety issues, and the continued statewide awareness campaign.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 57 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **25 Counties:** Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Plumas, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba.

- **10 Cities:** Fort Bragg (Mendocino County), Live Oak (Sutter County), Lodi (San Joaquin County), Manteca (San Joaquin County), Montague (Siskiyou County), Porterville (Tulare County), Portola (Plumas County), Rancho Cucamonga (San Bernardino County), Ripon (San Joaquin County), and West Sacramento (Yolo County).
- **10 Tribes:** Cortina Indian Rancheria (Colusa County), Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria (Sonoma County), Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians (Madera County) Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe (Mendocino County), Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation (Del Norte County), Tule River Indian Tribe (Tulare County), Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Yolo County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt County).
- **12 Special Districts:** Carpinteria Valley Water District (Santa Barbara County), Goleta Water District (Santa Barbara County), Groveland Community Services District (Tuolumne County), Lake Don Pedro Community Services District (Mariposa Stanislaus County), Mariposa Public Utility District (Mariposa County), Meiners Oaks Water District (Ventura County), Montecito Water District (Santa Barbara County), Mountain House Community Service District (San Joaquin County), Nevada Irrigation District (Nevada County), Placer County Water Agency (Placer County), Tuolumne Utilities District (Tuolumne County), and Twain Harte Community Services District (Tuolumne County).
- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** Last year, the Association of California Water Agencies ([AWCA](#)) launched an interactive gallery to showcase the local drought response activities by ACWA members statewide. As the drought stretches into its fifth year in 2016, the [Drought Response Gallery](#) continues to highlight conservation and efficiency projects and program actions in five categories.

In June 2016, ACWA [released](#) a Water Conservation Communications Toolkit to assist water agencies in messaging to customers the transition to a new emergency conservation regulation and the importance of ongoing water conservation.

- **County and Tribal Drought Task Forces:** A total of 15 county and tribal drought task forces continue to coordinate local drought response in 2016. Inland regions counties include: Colusa, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Tulare, and Tuolumne. Coastal regions counties include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Humboldt, Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou County), San Mateo, Trinidad Tribe (Humboldt County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt and Del Norte County). Southern regions counties include: Orange, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara.

DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Drought.CA.Gov](#): California's Drought Information Clearinghouse

State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save Our Water](#)
California Natural Resources Agency, [California WaterFix](#)
Local Government, [Drought Clearinghouse and Toolkit](#)
California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought Information](#)
California Department of Water Resources, [Current Water Conditions](#)
California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)
California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
State Water Resources Control Board, Drinking Water, [SWRCB Drinking Water Program](#)
California State Water Project, [Information](#)
State of California Sustainable Buildings, [Water Usage from 2010 to 2015](#)

[U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Current Conditions throughout the Region
[U.S. Drought Portal](#), National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)
National Weather Service, [Climate Predictor Center](#)
USDA Drought Designations by County, [CA County Designations](#)
USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information, [USDA Programs](#)
U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance, [Disaster Loans](#)