



Drought Update Monday, May 18, 2015

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Fire Activity: Since the beginning of the year, CAL FIRE has responded to over 1,406 wildfires across the state, burning 6,009 acres in the State Responsibility Area. This fire activity is above the five year average for the same time period with 854 fires and 5,475 acres burned. CAL FIRE will continue to augment resources throughout the state in preparation for peak fire season.

Open Burn Bans: Burn bans were lifted throughout the State during the winter, while restrictions on burning remained in place in many areas. As the state transitions to the dry season, open burn bans are once again being implemented in certain counties. Recently, [burn bans were instituted](#) in Fresno, King, Monterey, San Benito, Tulare County and Marin County.

Dry Well Reports: As California enters the fourth consecutive summer of drought, Cal OES continues to monitor and identify communities and local water systems in danger of running out of water. Approximately 1,909 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, which affects an estimated 6,500 residents. As of May 12, Cal OES has reported that 1,678 of the 1,909 dry wells are concentrated in the inland regions within the Central Valley.

Recent Precipitation: Over the last week, most areas statewide received minimal rainfall. Many areas in the Shasta, Central Valley, Coastal, and Southern California received up to one and a half inches of precipitation.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The State Water Board [Division of Drinking Water Programs](#) continues to provide technical and funding assistance to several communities facing drinking water shortages, and is monitoring water systems across the state. The initial \$15 million, appropriated in March 2014, for specific emergency drinking water projects has been fully committed. As of this week, the latest emergency drought appropriations of \$19 million announced this past March has committed an additional \$1.1 million for requested emergency projects. To date, 54 public water systems have received emergency funding for interim replacement drinking water since January 2014.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): Since May 8, Central Valley reservoirs from Shasta and Trinity in the North to Isabella in the South had a net loss in storage of 226,643 acre-feet, with total gains being 16,791 acre-feet and total losses being 243,434 acre-feet. Shasta Reservoir decreased by 61,758 acre-feet, while San Luis Reservoir, an off-stream reservoir for the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, decreased its storage by 43,639 acre-feet.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of May 17 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 33% of capacity (37% of year to date average); Don Pedro 41% of capacity (55% of average); Exchequer 11% of capacity (18% of average); Folsom Lake 57% of capacity (72% of average); Lake Oroville 46% of capacity (56% of average); Lake Perris 39% (47% of average); Millerton Lake 35% of capacity (48% of average); New Melones 19% of capacity (31% of average); Pine Flat 24% of capacity (35% of average); San Luis 57% of capacity (68% of average); Lake Shasta 55% of capacity (65% of average); and Trinity Lake 44% of capacity (52% of average). An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Precipitation Forecast: A new low pressure system is expected to bring more scattered precipitation, especially along the southern California coast. Another system is expected to bring precipitation along the California-Oregon border.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **Governor's Revised Budget Seeks \$2.2 Billion for Emergency Drought Response:** On May 14, the Governor's Office [released a May Revision of its January budget proposal](#) that calls for \$2.2 billion in additional spending in 2015-16 for drought response. The [proposed drought funding](#) would be targeted at water conservation programs, local water supply protection and expansion, and emergency response. Governor Brown stated that the spending is designed to accelerate key actions outlined in his California Water Action Plan.
- **Emergency Drought Barrier is Under Construction:** On May 6, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) started in-water work to construct the 2015 Emergency Drought Barrier Project. DWR anticipates that the rock barrier will be completed in early June. The barrier will be removed no later than November 15, 2015. For more information on the construction of the Barrier Project, view the [DWR news release](#).
- **Bureau and Water Users Reach Agreement to Provide CVP Water to Friant Area:** On May 14, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau), in partnership with water users in the Central Valley, [announced](#) that they have developed an agreement that will provide about 60,000 acre-feet of Central Valley Project (CVP) water to growers in the CVP's Friant Division this summer.
- **New Coalition Releases Framework for Agreement to Restore Salmon to Sierra:** On May 12, the [Yuba Salmon Partnership Initiative](#) (YSPI) comprised of the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW), in coordination with several agencies and conservation groups, drafted the initial framework agreement for the first-ever "collect and transport" program which would restore spring-run Chinook salmon and possibly steelhead to more than 30 miles of habitat in the North Yuba River. Through this initiative, partners are committing to a pioneering, long-term endeavor to reintroduce salmon to the North Yuba.
- **Energy Commission Funds Energy and Water Saving Research:** On May 13, the California Energy Commission [approved more than \\$16 million in grants](#) to demonstrate water and energy saving technologies that promise to make the water, industrial, and agricultural sectors more efficient. The Energy Commission approved five [Electric Program Investment Charge](#) (EPIC) grants which lay a foundation for the [Water Energy Technology](#) (WET) program which is one of the four Energy Commission responsibilities under Governor Brown's April Executive Order.
- **DWR Recommends \$246 Million in Funding for Seven Central Valley Urban Flood Protection Projects:** On May 13, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [proposed funding recommendations for projects](#) that will lower flood risk for thousands of Central Valley residents and also improve wildlife habitat. The seven Central Valley urban flood protection projects will be funded from the \$246 million of Proposition 1E funding, appropriated as part of the \$1 billion March legislative package for drought relief.

The seven projects recommended for funding collectively cover nearly 20 miles of levee repairs, which are important to protect water supplies from extreme weather events. DWR also announced plans to release \$104 million in funds previously authorized for improvements in the City of West Sacramento. DWR is accepting public comment on its [funding recommendations](#) until May 29.

- **Capitol Hearing Examines Drought, Long-Term Water Planning:** On May 12, state water leaders, including the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Board, testified during a [legislative hearing](#) at the state Capitol that examined the severity of California's drought and Governor Brown's Administration's responses. The hearing was held jointly by the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee and the Senate Budget Subcommittee 2 on Water Resources.
- **Governor's Office to Host Water Webinars:** On May 21 and May 26, the Governor's Office will host [webinars](#) highlighting new conservation programs and the state's emergency regulations and restrictions for water usage. These webinars are co-hosted with the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the League of Cities.
- **DWR Offering SGMA Assistance for Local Public Agencies:** On May 13, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [announced](#) they are now offering [facilitation support services](#) to local public agencies that need assistance with Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirements. The services offered include strategic planning, stakeholder assessments, meeting facilitation, mediation, governance assessment and public outreach.
- **State Water Board to Host Drought Workshop:** On May 20, the State Water Board will host a [workshop](#) to receive public input regarding the State Water Board's drought related activities in the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta watershed. This will be an informational workshop only and no formal State Water Board action will be taken.
- **State Water Board to Host Meetings on Funds for Groundwater Projects:** On May 14, the State Water Board [announced](#) three [meetings](#) throughout the state to provide information on pending funds through Proposition 1 and the Site Cleanup Subaccount Program to address groundwater sustainability and cleanup projects. The meetings will allow stakeholders to provide input on the scope and process the State Water Board will use to select projects eligible for funding.
- **CDFW to Host Public Meetings to Initiate Partnership with Sonoma County Landowners:** On May 14, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) held a [public meeting](#) in Sonoma County to discuss the impacts of the drought on endangered Coho salmon and other aquatic life. CDFW is working closely with several other agencies and organizations, including water interests, to develop strategies to keep enough water in the creeks to support Coho salmon throughout the summer. CDFW is urging landowners to commit to voluntary water conservation measures in critical watersheds as a necessary means to save the fish. An additional meeting will be held in Sonoma County on May 2=

- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental, and Utility Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 643,800 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 588,450 boxes of food have been picked up by 307,199 households. By May 22, an additional 12,000 boxes will be delivered to Fresno, Kern, Tulare, and Riverside counties.

The non-profit group La Cooperativa continues to distribute the \$10 million state-funded emergency rental assistance to impacted families and individuals across counties most impacted by the drought. As of May 7, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$8,748,670 have been issued to 5,909 applicants in 21 counties, with \$8,330 remaining in assistance funds.

The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) allocated an additional \$600,000, under the federally-funded Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), to continue the [Drought Water Assistance Program \(DWAP\)](#) pilot project which provides financial assistance to help low-income families pay their water bills. As of May 14, CSD has reported that a total of \$50,456 has been issued to 278 households.

CSD is in the process of allocating \$400,000, under CSBG, to continue the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) drought assistance program, which provides assistance in employment training and placement services to individuals impacted by the drought. This program provides employment training and placement services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers suffering job loss or reduced employment due to the drought. CSD is finalizing contract terms with these organizations and anticipates services to begin June 1, 2015.

- **California's Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** The Save Our Water public education campaign launched a second phase of "Keep Saving CA" radio ads that include a series of endorsement spots read by local on-air talent expressing the benefits of a "shower song" that lasts five minutes or less. These ads will run through the end of the month. This week's Association of California Water Agencies conference in Sacramento featured Save Our Water prominently, with more local water districts recruited to join the Keep Saving CA campaign. Thus far more than 15 agencies have committed financially to the campaign in their area.

The Keep Saving CA campaign pats Californians on the back for their efforts thus far to save water – and urges them to conserve even more. It will run through the end of June and includes billboards, outdoor media, traditional and digital radio, digital and social media, and on-the-street efforts that will be seen and heard throughout the state. The campaign includes a robust new website loaded with easy-to-use water-saving tips at saveourwater.com. Save Our Water connects with Californians on its [Facebook](#) page, [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

- **Drought Response Funding:** The \$687 million in state drought funding that was appropriated last March through emergency legislation, as well as \$142 million provided in the 2014 Budget Act, continues to advance toward meeting critical needs. To date, \$468 million has been committed, and nearly \$625 million of the emergency funds appropriated in March came from sources dedicated to capital improvements to water systems. Since March, the Department of Water Resources has expedited grant approvals, getting \$21 million immediately allocated to grantees that were pre-approved for certain projects.

As planned in March, the next \$200 million of expedited capital funding was awarded in October, and the remaining \$250 million will be granted by fall 2015. The 2014 Budget Act appropriated an additional \$53.8 million to CAL FIRE over its typical budget to enhance firefighter surge capacity and retain seasonal firefighters beyond the typical fire season.

As a result of continuing drought conditions, emergency legislation was enacted in March 2015 that appropriated over \$1 billion of additional funds for drought-related projects and activities. The Administration's May Revision proposal includes an additional \$2.2 billion for programs that protect and expand local water supplies, improve water conservation, and provide immediate relief to impacted communities.

- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 56 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **26 Counties:** El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Plumas, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba.
 - **10 Cities:** City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Manteca (San Joaquin County), City of Montague (Siskiyou County), City of Portola (Plumas County), City of Ripon (San Joaquin County), City of San Juan Bautista (San Benito County), City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County), and City of West Sacramento (Yolo County), and City of Willits (Mendocino County).
 - **9 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), 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:** The Association of California Water Agencies (AWCA) [has identified](#) several hundred local water agencies that have implemented water conservation actions. These water agencies [are responding to the drought](#) by implementing conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water usage and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.

- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 31 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Glenn, Humboldt, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 4 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians (Sonoma County), Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt and Del Norte County).

DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save our Water](#)
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](#)

California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)

State Water Resources Control Board, Drinking Water, [SWRCB Drinking Water Program](#)

California State Water Project, [Information](#)

[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 Office: www.sba.gov/disaster