



Drought Update Monday, April 20, 2015

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Recent Precipitation: During the past week, light precipitation brought as much as 1.3 inches in the north coast, on Smith River, and tapered to as little as 0.01 inch along the coastline near Mendocino and along the Oregon border. Precipitation along the northern Sierra ranged from 0.14 to 0.05 inches. The remaining areas of California did not receive traceable precipitation.

Below are precipitations totals (in inches) from Monday, April 13, through Monday, April 20, and year-to-date rainfall based on the water year cycle (October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015).

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| • Bakersfield: 0.00" (4.59") | • Pacific House: 0.00" (25.88") |
| • Folsom Dam: 0.00" (23.91") | • Redding: 0.00" (30.92") |
| • Fresno: 0.00" (5.16") | • Riverside: 0.00" (3.91") |
| • Hetch Hetchy: 0.00" (15.89") | • Sacramento: 0.00" (12.63") |
| • Los Angeles: 0.00" (7.46") | • San Diego: 0.00" (6.51") |
| • Modesto: 0.00" (9.77") | • Shasta Dam: 0.00" (48.92") |
| • Oroville: 0.00" (24.64") | • Willits: 0.00" (37.36") |

Precipitation Forecast: Light precipitation is expected to spread today and tomorrow (Monday and Tuesday) throughout the Sierra mountain range, interior north coast, and central coast. Wednesday is forecasted to have greater rainfall coverage across the Sierra mountain range in northern California.

Snow Survey: The latest [manual snow surveys](#), conducted on April 1, recorded California snowpack at 5 percent of the historic April 1 average. As of April 17, the [automated snow sensors](#) captured the statewide average snowpack conditions at just 4 percent of the long term average. Regionally, the Northern Sierra Nevada and the Southern Sierra Nevada are at 3 percent of average while the Central Sierra Nevada is at 5 percent of average.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): Since the last report on April 10, Central Valley reservoirs from Shasta and Trinity in the North to Isabella in the South had a net loss in storage of 1,200 acre-feet. Shasta Reservoir increased by 11,800 acre-feet, while San Luis Reservoir, an off-stream reservoir for the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, decreased its storage by 13,000 acre-feet.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of April 16 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 30% of capacity (33% of year to date average); Don Pedro 42% of capacity (58% of average); Exchequer 9% of capacity (16% of average); Folsom Lake 59% of capacity (84% of average); Lake Oroville 51% of capacity (65% of average); Lake Perris 39% (46% of average); Millerton Lake 38% of capacity (55% of average); New Melones 22% of capacity (34% of average); Pine Flat 20% of capacity (33% of average); San Luis 65% of capacity (72% of average); Lake Shasta 60% of capacity (71% of average); and Trinity Lake 49% of capacity (61% of average). An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Fire Activity: Since the beginning of the year, CAL FIRE has responded to over 780 wildfires across the state, burning 3,436 acres in the State Responsibility Area. This fire activity is above the five year average for the same time period with 479 fires and 1,239 acres burned. CAL FIRE has hired additional seasonal firefighters and trained in preparation for the peak fire season and continues to augment resources throughout the state as needed.

Statewide Open Burn Ban Update: Although burn bans have been lifted throughout the State during the winter, restrictions on burning remain in place in many areas. Some jurisdictions still require homeowners to obtain a burn permit. Daily fire and weather conditions will dictate whether burning is permissible that day.

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 to determine if new support is needed. As of this week, approximately \$14.9 million has been committed for specific emergency drinking water projects out of \$15 million appropriated in March 2014 for this purpose, while more funding for this emergency program has been provided by the recent emergency drought appropriation in March.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **Drought Triggers Need for Emergency Salinity Barrier in Delta:** On April 15, DWR [reported](#) that plans are moving ahead to build a temporary rock barrier in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The barrier would help deter saltwater from the San Francisco Bay from moving up into the Delta where it could mix with freshwater and threaten drinking water supplies. The emergency barrier would also help mitigate a worst-case circumstance this summer in which upstream reservoirs lack sufficient water to meet the minimum outflow requirements to limit Delta salinity intrusion.
- **State, Federal Agencies and Water Users Agree on Framework for Water Operations:** Federal and state agencies, along with Sacramento River Settlement Contractors, [agreed this week](#) on an integrated framework of actions for operations of the federal Central Valley Project and the State Water Project for mid-April through November. The actions will flexibly manage and operate the system to serve multiple beneficial purposes that include water for cities and rural communities, farms, fish and wildlife and their habitats in the Sacramento Valley. A [fact sheet](#) released by the agencies summarizes this agreement.
- **Fish and Game Commission Approves Emergency Fishing Closure on Part of Upper Sacramento River:** On April 17, the state Fish and Game Commission approved the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (DFWs) recommendation to provide [dual areas of protection](#) for Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon, which closes all fishing on the 5.5 mile stretch of the Upper Sacramento River near the City of Redding. The closure will protect critical spawning habitat and eliminate any incidental stress or hooking mortality of winter-run salmon by anglers.

In addition, DFW, in consultation with representatives of California's sport and commercial salmon fishing industries, recommended additional strategic protective measures for winter-run Chinook salmon to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) which reduce the allowable ocean harvest rate on winter-run salmon and change the timing and location of ocean fisheries south of San Francisco. This proposal for additional ocean fishing restrictions was accepted and will help the winter-run population to avoid losses.

- **State Water Board Issues Curtailment Orders:** On April 17, the State Water Board issued a curtailment order for Deer Creek, a tributary to the Sacramento River, which follows a similar order of April 3 for Antelope Creek. Both of these orders are intended to protect salmon and steelhead. Further curtailment orders for the Scott River post-1914 and surplus water rights, and San Joaquin River post-1914 water rights are expected between April 20 and April 24. The Water Board requires water rights holders to curtail their diversion of surface water supplies when rivers and streams reach critically low levels. These curtailments often translate to significant cuts to agricultural irrigation.
- **Draft Regulations Released for Water Use Reduction:** On April 18, the State Water Board released [draft regulations](#) to achieve a 25% statewide reduction in water use across California cities and towns. These draft regulations for local urban water agencies were developed from feedback that the Water Board received after it released a draft framework for the regulations earlier this month. A [fact sheet](#) summarizes the draft regulations. Water agencies are asked to comment on these regulations by April 22, which will inform the final draft of regulations that will be considered by the Water Board in early May. More information on this process can be found on the [Water Board's website](#).

In addition, the State Water Board will complete and notice the emergency regulations to achieve the Executive Order mandate for statewide 25% reduction in potable urban water usage on April 28.

- **DWR's Groundwater Update Report Support Implementation of New Groundwater Sustainability Act:** On April 16, DWR [announced](#) their completion of the Groundwater Update to the California Water Plan. The Update expands and enhances baseline groundwater information on a regional scale, identifies challenges associated with sustainable groundwater management and helps guide implementation of diverse resource management strategies. Statewide and regional findings, data gaps and recommendations to improve groundwater management are also included.
- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental, and Utility Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 598,850 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 543,050 boxes of food have been picked up by 284,742 households. By Friday, April 24, an additional 9,600 boxes will be delivered to four counties. Local food banks continue to target food aid to residents most impacted by drought.

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 Thursday, April 9, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$8,678,648 is committed; and \$7,502,890 in funds has been issued to 4,555 applicants in 21 counties.

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.

This program targets low-income families in 10 counties identified as experiencing a high unemployment rate, high share of agricultural workers and designated to have “exceptional” drought conditions according to the U.S. Drought Monitor Classification System. These counties are Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, Stanislaus and Tulare. CSD is finalizing the contract terms and anticipates funding to begin May 1, 2015.

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 has been provided in coordination with the California Human Development (CHD), Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), and Center for Employment Training (CET) and Proteus, which 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 Kicks off New Campaign:** A day after Governor Jerry Brown’s historic drought executive order including mandatory water conservation, Save Our Water [launched](#) “Keep Saving CA,” a statewide public education campaign that gives Californians a pat on the back for their water-saving efforts to date – and asks them to do more. Save Our Water is a partnership between the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) and the Department of Water Resources. The Keep Saving CA campaign 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.
- **LAO Says Actual Statewide Economic Impacts of Drought Are Limited:** This report suggested that even a substantial decline in agriculture’s share of the economy due to the drought will probably have limited impacts on the overall statewide economic activities this year. On April 15, the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) [reported](#) that agriculture generates only about 2% of the state’s gross domestic product and contributes to only 3% of the state’s related businesses and jobs.
- **Policy Summit to Explore Impacts of Illegal Marijuana Grows:** On, April 29, a [special policy summit](#) at the State Capitol will explore the environmental impacts and public safety challenges arising from illegal marijuana cultivation in California. State agencies will be participating in this summit.
- **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, \$236 million has been expended, 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. In the event drought conditions continue through next year, the proposed 2015-16 Governor's Budget includes an additional \$115 million to continue critical drought response efforts.

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

Local Government

- **MWD Board Approves Plan to Cut Deliveries to Member Agencies by 15% beginning July 1:** On April 14, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Board approved an allocation plan that will [cut imported water deliveries](#) to its member agencies by 15% starting July 1. The board also passed a resolution endorsing Governor Brown's April 1 Executive Order which calls for a mandatory 25% reduction in urban water use.
- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 54 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **24 Counties:** El Dorado, 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.
 - **9 Cities:** City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of Lodi (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 29 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, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, 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), Yurok Tribe (Humboldt Counties) and Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino County), and Kashia Band of Pomo Indians (Sonoma 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