



Bi-Weekly Drought Brief Monday, January 5, 2015

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Recent Precipitation: Little precipitation has fallen recently after large storms earlier December.

Below are precipitation totals (in inches) from Monday, December 29 through Monday, January 5, and year-to-date rainfall based on the water year cycle (October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015).

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| • Bakersfield: 0.11" (2.67") | • Pacific House: 0.00" (14.40") |
| • Folsom Dam: 0.00" (11.73") | • Redding: 0.00" (21.88") |
| • Fresno: 0.00" (3.19") | • Riverside: 0.06" (2.30") |
| • Hetch Hetchy: 0.00" (8.68") | • Sacramento: 0.00" (9.30") |
| • Los Angeles: 0.19" (4.62") | • San Diego: 0.08" (4.87") |
| • Modesto: 0.00" (7.40") | • Shasta Dam: 0.00" (34.36") |
| • Oroville: 0.00" (19.20") | • Willits: 0.04" (26.44") |

December storms improved California water conditions, providing a meaningful uptick in many of the state's reservoirs. However, this precipitation is a small step in the right direction amidst the multi-year drought. California's extreme drought conditions have evolved over several years of rainfall deficits. Refilling reservoirs and rebuilding the snowpack will require a series of additional, colder storms through January, February, and March, and recharging underground aquifers will need even more precipitation and time. It is very important for Californians to continue conserving water and follow drought-related directives from water agencies.

Precipitation Forecast: A ridge of high pressure will remain over California resulting in continuing dry conditions and a slight warming trend for the period January 5th to January 12th.

Snow Survey: The most recent [snowpack survey](#), conducted on December 30, recorded California snowpack at 33% of normal. A more [recent update](#) using automated devices shows snowpack at 46% of normal as of January 2.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): Runoff generated from the recent storms has been fairly limited for the four major Sacramento Valley reservoirs: Lake Shasta, Lake Oroville, New Bullards Bar, and Folsom Lake. However, the recent storms have at least put an end to the declining reservoir storage levels. As of January 2, the four Sacramento Valley reservoirs are still far below average to date.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of January 4 remain low, including: Don Pedro 39% of capacity (59% of year to date average); Exchequer 7% of capacity (16% of average); Folsom Lake 45% of capacity (91% of average); Lake Oroville 39% of capacity (62% of average); Millerton Lake 35% of capacity (64% of average); New Melones 23% of capacity (40% of average); Pine Flat 13% of capacity (31% of average); San Luis 43% of capacity (62% of average); Lake Shasta 42% of capacity (66% of average); and Trinity Lake 34% of capacity (50% of average).

An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

In December, about two-thirds of the increase in reservoir storage from winter rains occurred north of Sacramento. The San Luis reservoir storage went up just over 300,000 acre-feet, while most Central and Southern California reservoirs experienced only small increases in storage.

Fire Activity: CAL FIRE has responded to 5,620 wildfires across the state since January 1 to December 31, 2014, burning 90,606 acres in State Responsibility Areas (SRA). The fire activity for 2014 is well above the year-to-date average of 4,681 wildfires on 88,169 acres. CAL FIRE responded to over 20 new wildfires over the past two weeks.

At the start of the new year, drought conditions continue to have a hold on California, CAL FIRE is maintaining staffing that meets the current threat. CAL FIRE continues to monitor weather conditions closely and has the ability to increase staffing should weather conditions change.

Statewide Open Burn Ban Update: The recent rains and lowered fire threat allowed CAL FIRE to lift the outdoor burn bans across much of the State. Currently, there are 50 counties where CAL FIRE has lifted the burn ban. The [burn ban](#) prohibits certain outdoor burning in the SRA. For those areas where the ban has been lifted, daily fire and weather conditions will dictate whether burning is permissible that day.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The State Water Board's [Drinking Water Program](#) 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, a total to date of over \$14.3 million has been identified for specific emergency drinking water projects out of \$15 million appropriated in March 2014 for this purpose.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **Update on Real-Time Water Operations:** The State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP) continue to manage Delta operations to reduce risk to Delta Smelt and potentially avoid more severe water supply impacts. These operations, combined with early warning resource monitoring projects by various State and federal agencies to monitor turbidity levels in the Delta and the movement of Delta smelt, are critical to address water supply needs and protection of environmental resources. Combined pumping levels for both projects are about 5,800 cubic feet per second.
- **Survey Finds More Snow in Mountains, but Water Content Is Still Far Below Average for Date:** On Tuesday, December 30, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program conducted the [first manual snow survey](#) of the Sierra snowpack this winter near Echo Summit, measuring the snow depth at 21.3". This is equivalent to 4 inches of snow water or 33 percent of normal, which is more snow than last year recorded at this time.

Statewide, 105 electronic sensors in the Sierra detected a snow water equivalent of 4.8 inches, 50 percent of the multi-year average for December 30. That compares favorably with last winter's first survey, when the snow water equivalent statewide was only 20 percent of normal, which tied with 2012 as the driest readings on record.

- **Urban Water Suppliers Show Progress In November Water Conservation Report:** On January 6, the State Water Board will release water conservation rates for the month of November as reported by large urban retail water agencies under the Emergency Conservation Regulation adopted in July 2014. The November report shows an increase from the month of October up to 9.7% from 6.7%. The State Water Board is now considering whether it should require additional conservation actions in 2015 based on information received at the December 17 conservation workshop. The State and Federal Water Project will discuss the 2015 Drought Operations Contingency Plan during their January 20 Board meeting, which will describe Project operations based on a range of possible future hydrologic scenarios.
- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental and Utility Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 425,050 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 376,500 boxes of food have been picked up by 199,769 households. By this Friday, January 9, an additional 11,280 boxes will be delivered to five 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, December 25, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$8,364,371 is committed; and \$6,963,300 in funds has been issued to 4,316 applicants in 20 counties.

The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) has created a \$600,000 program to help families pay their water bills. This program targets families through 10 agencies that are experiencing "exceptional" drought. As of Friday, December 26, CSD has reported that a total of \$479,308 has been issued to 2,590 households.

CSD has also implemented a \$400,000 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) drought assistance program, in coordination with the California Human Development (CHD), Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), Center for Employment Training (CET) and Proteus, which provides assistance in employment training and placement services to individuals impacted by the drought. As of Friday, December 26, 128 clients are enrolled in employment training programs, 21 clients have obtained employment, and 128 clients are receiving employment support services. CSD has also reported that a total of \$316,652 has been spent to assist participants in completing training employment programs.

- **Bay Delta Conservation Plan Refined to Lessen Impacts on Local Landowners:** In an effort to lessen impacts on Delta landowners and preserve sandhill crane habitat, the administration of Governor Jerry Brown and its federal partners announced several significant changes to the [water conveyance](#) portion of the proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan, including eliminating a proposal to build three new pumping plants along the Sacramento River. Under the proposed changes, gravity -- not large pumps -- would move water in certain places along the Sacramento River. The changes would reduce the need for power and cut down on operation and maintenance costs, while at the same time preserving habitat for sandhill crane.

- **Water Saving Tips Promoted Across the State:** The state's newly improved water conservation website, SaveOurWater.com, is promoting the "Don't Waste Summer" campaign. This campaign provides a new conservation tip each day for the 100 days of summer. Supporters can sign up for daily email tips, and share Save Our Water's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) feeds for this public awareness campaign.
- **Drought Response Funding:** The \$687 million in state drought funding that was appropriated last March through emergency legislation continues to advance toward meeting critical needs. Nearly \$625 million of the emergency funds appropriated in March came from sources dedicated to capital improvements to water systems. Since March, state agencies have 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. State government has also appropriated tens of millions in funding to CAL FIRE over its typical budget to enable staffing-up fire crews much earlier this fire season.
- **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 60 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **25 Counties:** Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Napa, Plumas, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yuba, and El Dorado.
 - **13 Cities:** City of Willits (Mendocino County), City of St. Helena (Napa County), City of Calistoga (Napa County), City of American Canyon (Napa County), City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County), City of Montague (Siskiyou County), City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of San Juan Bautista (San Benito County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Portola (Plumas County), City of Ripon (San Joaquin County), City of Rio Dell (Humboldt County), and City of West Sacramento (Yolo County).
 - **9 Tribes:** Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Yurok Tribe (Humboldt County), Tule River Indian Tribe (Tulare County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties), Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe (Mendocino County), Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Yolo County), Cortina Indian Rancheria (Colusa County), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria (Sonoma County), and Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians (Madera County).

- **13 Special Districts:** Brooktrails Township (Mendocino County), Lake Don Pedro Community Services District (Stanislaus County), Placer County Water Agency (Placer County), Twain Harte Community Services District (Tuolumne County), Carpinteria Valley Water District (Santa Barbara County), Meiners Oaks Water District (Ventura County), Mariposa Public Utility District (Mariposa County), Goleta Water District (Santa Barbara County), Montecito Water District (Santa Barbara County), Tuolumne Utilities District (Tuolumne County), Mountain House Community Service District (San Joaquin County), Nevada Irrigation District (Nevada County), and Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Los Angeles 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 30 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, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 3 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).

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