



November 1, 2021

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.

Current Conditions

- California and the West are in severe drought, with impacts accelerated by climate change. The water year that ended Sept. 30 was the second driest on record, and storage in key reservoirs is low.
- All of California's 58 counties are now under a drought emergency proclamation.
- Recent storms sent much-needed runoff into streams and reservoirs, but it will take much more to recover from drought conditions.
- 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 Oct. 31, the state's [voluntary household dry well reporting system](#) received reports of 153 dry wells in the past 30 days. Most of the dry wells were reported in Fresno, Madera, Mariposa and Tulare counties.
- The state is providing hauled or bottled water to eight separate small water providers experiencing supply outages in Monterey, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Tulare, Shasta, El Dorado and Los Angeles counties. The providers together serve a population of a little under 3,000 people.
- The State Water Resources Control Board is monitoring 108 water systems serving about 263,000 people that could experience water supply outages during this drought.



Recent Events and State Actions

Storm brings needed precipitation but doesn't end drought (Oct. 23-25) – An atmospheric river of the highest category of intensity delivered record-breaking amounts of precipitation to parts of California including Sacramento, but it did not end the drought. A single storm even of this magnitude is not enough to reverse two years of critically dry conditions and historically low reservoir storage. In many areas, the single-day precipitation total represented 50 percent to 80 percent of the entire previous water year's precipitation, an indication of how dry it has been. Snow accumulation ranged from two to 20 inches in the Sierra. Lake Mendocino held about 12,000 acre-feet of water before the storm and is expected to hold about 20,000 acre-feet of storage in coming days – a welcome addition but not enough

to ease supply concerns for Sonoma and Marin counties. To date the storm has added more than 100,000 acre-feet of storage to major reservoirs.

Drought relief grants solicitation (Oct. 28) – DWR released program guidelines and a proposal solicitation package to distribute \$200 million in funding available through the Urban and Multi-benefit Drought Relief Grant Program. Designed to help communities facing the loss or contamination of their water supplies due to drought, the Urban and Multi-benefit Drought Relief Grant Program will help address immediate drought impacts on human health and safety, protect fish and wildlife resources, and provide other public benefits, such as ecosystem improvements. At least \$50 million of the available funding will be set aside to support underrepresented communities and Native American Tribes. Funding is also available for public agencies, public utilities, special districts, non-profit organizations, mutual water companies, colleges, and regional water management groups. This program is in addition to a separate \$200 million in grants provided through the Small Community Drought Relief Program launched this summer.

Farm water efficiency grants (ongoing): CDFA opened the request for proposals (RFP) for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) for four months on a first-come, first-serve basis or until funds are liquidated. The 2021-22 budget includes \$50 million for SWEEP grants to implement irrigation systems that reduce greenhouse gases and save water on California agricultural operations. Eligible system components include (among others) soil moisture monitoring, drip systems, switching to low pressure irrigation systems, pump retrofits, variable frequency drives and installation of renewable energy.

Save Our Water campaign airing (ongoing): Billboards, radio and social media ads for the statewide [Save Our Water](#) program managed by DWR are running in key markets in multiple languages. The campaign has also been featured in local radio and TV public affairs programs. Save Our Water, developed in partnership with local water agencies, emphasizes the need for Californians to take steps now to reduce water use.



Curtailments adjusted (ongoing) – With rain boosting streamflow and inflow to reservoirs, the Water Board has suspended curtailments on diversions in the Russian and Sacramento-San Joaquin watersheds. When minimum flows are being met in the Shasta River watershed, curtailments are suspended for water right holders to a priority date of July 1923 through the end of December so long as the November and December flow requirement of 150 cubic feet per section is sustained. Curtailment orders have also been suspended in the Scott River watershed through November 8 so long as the minimum November flow requirement of 60 cfs is met. Orders are still in place on Mill and Deer creeks but regulations there are adaptive, and diverters can divert now when flows are above minimum flow thresholds. Curtailment orders may be reimposed as hydrology changes.

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, Yurok Tribe, Wiyot Tribe.

- **Local government:** Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Healthy Soils Program Solicitation: On **Nov. 1**, CDFA plans to release the solicitation for applications for the Healthy Soils Program (HSP). The HSP stems from the California Healthy Soils Initiative, a collaboration of state agencies and departments to promote the development of healthy soils on California's farmlands and rangelands. The HSP has two components. The HSP Incentives Program provides financial assistance for implementation of conservation management practices that improve soil health, sequester carbon, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions including providing other benefits such as increased water holding capacity. The HSP Demonstration Projects showcase California farmers and rancher's implementation of HSP practices. The HSP was allocated \$75 million for FY 2021-22 from the General Fund (\$50 million) and the California Climate Investments fund (\$25 million). The HSP will have 25 percent of funds allocated to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and a 35 percent allocation for disadvantaged communities and priority populations.

Drought update: On **Nov. 2**, the Water Board will hear drought updates from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and DWR, including information on how recent storms affected water supplies and water project operations.

Initial State Water Project allocation for next year: Lake Oroville entered Water Year 2022 with record-low storage, and San Luis Reservoir is expected to be at its second-lowest level of record. Low storage means that the SWP's initial allocation to project contractors on **Dec. 1** will be very low, and the subsequent low probability of getting an exceptionally wet winter means that the project's final allocation is also likely to be low.

Fishery closures: CDFW is preparing an emergency regulation request to the Fish and Game Commission to extend the current low-flow closure criteria dates through April 30 in the Eel River, Mad River, Mattole River, Redwood Creek, Smith River and Van Duzen River and Mendocino, Sonoma, and Marin county coastal streams. CDFW has developed a core team for this effort and is coordinating with Commission staff on presenting at the **December** meeting.

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
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://www.drought.ca.gov>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>