

## California Department of Water Resources



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### DWR Providing Drought Relief in Klamath Basin

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Northern District, in cooperation with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and Tule Lake Irrigation District (TID), is currently drilling 14 wells in the Upper Klamath River Basin in Siskiyou (four wells) and Modoc (10 wells) counties to provide water for topsoil-saving cover crops on about 20,000 acres. This week one well was completed and the sixth of 14 started.

For details on each week's progress on well drilling see the web page of the Northern District of DWR at <http://www.dpla.water.ca.gov/nd/KlamathDrought/index.html>.

### Background

With Governor Gray Davis declaring "extreme economic peril," estimated at \$73 million, within three weeks groundwater specialists at the Department of Water Resources began coordinating the drilling of wells amidst the worst drought in the Tulelake basin since 1907.

In addition to the historic drought, enforcement of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to protect Coho salmon and sucker fish in the federal Klamath Reclamation Project, cut water to 90 percent of 210,000 acres and cut total water deliveries 85 percent from 500,000 to 70,000 acre-feet.

The DWR wells will irrigate cover crops on 10-20 percent of the 41,000 acres in the Tulelake Basin to protect

against soil erosion during the drought.

The water shortage also reduces flows to 12,000 acres of seasonal marshes in the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge serves three out of four birds on the Pacific Flyway – about 10 million birds. It has a large winter population of threatened Bald Eagles. The remaining water will serve only 6 percent of the 1.8 million waterfowl with habitat in the Refuge.

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*The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.*

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