



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DWR ANNOUNCES SCIENCE SERVICE AWARDS

Three NASA Scientists Honored for Subsidence Mapping Work

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) presented its Remote Sensing and Drought Science Service awards at today’s Water Operations Briefing in Sacramento sponsored by DWR and the Water Education Foundation. The purpose of the awards is to recognize ongoing assistance provided by researchers who have been working closely with DWR on drought or climate science projects.

DWR Director Mark Cowin said: “DWR is pleased to recognize the work these scientists have performed in developing new methodologies for monitoring land subsidence in response to our multi-year drought. We appreciate the time they have invested in developing the productive working relationship that has allowed us to collaborate in applying remote sensing to monitor land subsidence that can impact critical water infrastructure.”

The award recipients, all with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s (NASA) Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, are Dr. Thomas Farr, Dr. Cathleen Jones and Dr. Zhen Liu.

The researchers used satellite and aircraft-based interferometric synthetic aperture radar data to map land subsidence due to groundwater extraction in the San Joaquin Valley, where drought-related surface water shortages have led to increased groundwater pumping and record low groundwater levels.

Their work found that some parts of the valley subsided more than a foot during the 2014 irrigation season alone. “We were impressed by the ability to see the monthly progression of summer land surface deformation in response to irrigation water demands”, said DWR Interstate Resources Manager Jeanine Jones.

Use of innovative high-resolution aircraft-based monitoring was also able to detect this rapid increase in subsidence directly along DWR's California Aqueduct. NASA is currently processing 2015 land subsidence data for DWR.

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While the winter rain and snowpack are promising, this may yet prove to be a fifth consecutive year of drought in California. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit Drought.CA.gov. Every Californian should take steps to conserve water; find out how at SaveOurWater.com.

