



Water Conditions Update

The Drought Is Not Over

Thanks to better winter precipitation, 2016 is California's wettest year since the drought began in 2012. However, the drought has not ended. California is a big state, and an average winter in Northern California does not compensate for four prior years of statewide drought. Ending a drought means having enough precipitation and runoff throughout the state to ease drought effects, and this year will not get us there.

- Parts of Northern California remain at below-average precipitation, including parts of the Sierra Nevada.
- Although storage has recovered in most of the large Sacramento Valley reservoirs, this is not the case in the San Joaquin Valley (see map).
- Southern California precipitation is well below average (see map).
- Roughly one-third of Southern California's urban water supply is delivered from northern rivers through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The key reservoir that holds water conveyed from the Delta is less than half full.
- Groundwater levels throughout the state dropped to historic lows during the past four years, and as much as 100 feet below previous historical lows in parts of the San Joaquin Valley. One winter season will not recover this storage.
- Forecasted water year runoff in the Colorado River Basin, an important supply for Southern California, is only 78 percent of average, continuing more than a decade and a half of prolonged drought conditions in this basin.

Shortages Remain

Large parts of California continue to suffer water shortages.

- The State Water Project—which supplies 25 million Californians—will deliver 60 percent of requested supplies to its water district customers this year. That's up from 20 percent in 2015 and five percent in 2014. The state's other major water project, the federal Central Valley Project, delivers water to nearly two million acres of farmland. Its irrigation district customers got no allocations in 2014 and 2015; its allocation for districts this year on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley is five percent.
- State officials are responding to ongoing water shortage emergencies with small water systems and private well

owners, especially in the San Joaquin Valley. The Department of Water Resources is constructing a project to connect East Porterville residents with failed private wells to a public water system. Many of these small system and private well shortage problems will continue until groundwater storage recovers.

- Many water users in the San Joaquin Valley pumped groundwater heavily through the drought to compensate for shortages in rivers and reservoirs. In some areas, the heavy pumping accelerated the sinking of land overlying aquifers. Parts of the valley subsided more than a foot in both 2014 and 2015, increasing risks of damage to critical water infrastructure. Accelerated rates of sinking land surface will continue until surface water allocations improve.

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Conservation As A Way of Life

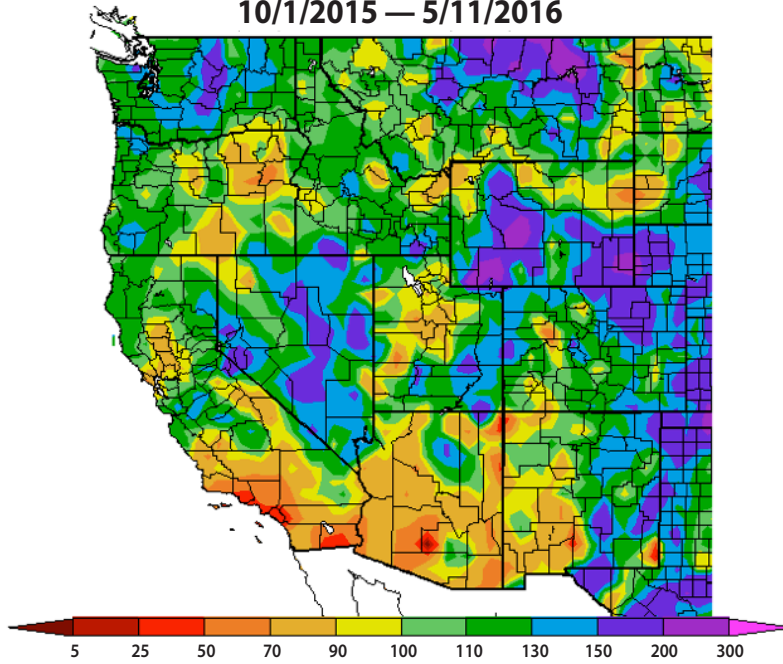
Droughts are inevitable in California. The Governor's Water Action Plan—a five-year roadmap to water resource resilience, reliability and ecosystem restoration—includes the pillars of making conservation a way of life and preparing for dry periods. To that end, the Governor in May issued an Executive Order that builds on temporary

statewide emergency water restrictions to establish longer-term water conservation measures, including permanent monthly water use reporting, new permanent water use standards in California communities and bans on clearly wasteful practices such as hosing off sidewalks and washing vehicles without using a shutoff hose nozzle.

What Will 2017 Bring?

California has been experiencing prolonged dry conditions. Seven of the nine years since 2007 have been dry. California also experienced record warmth during this time, heightening impacts to mountain snowpack and cold-water fisheries. Last year and 2014 were, respectively, the warmest and second-warmest years in 121 years of statewide average temperature records. Accurately predicting whether water year 2017 will be wet, dry, or average is beyond climate forecasters' present skill. We must be prepared for the possibility of a dry (and perhaps warm) 2017, and the incremental harm of another dry year on the state's already stressed water resources and water users.

Percentage of Average Precipitation (%) 10/1/2015 — 5/11/2016



Generated 5/12/2016 at WRCC using provisional data. NOAA Regional Climate Centers

Current Reservoir Conditions Ending at Midnight—June 7, 2016

