



Weekly Drought Brief Monday, August 11, 2014

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Fire Activity: CAL FIRE has responded to 3,959 wildfires across the state since January 1, burning 55,882 acres. This year's fire activity is well above the year-to-date average of 2,994 wildfires on 44,143 acres. CAL FIRE responded to over 140 new wildfires last week, including the Bald Fire in Shasta County, which has burned more than 39,900 acres and is 95% contained.

California's [drought is intensifying this year's fire season](#) with dry conditions creating more fuel to keep large wildfires roaring. Over 11,000 state, local and federal firefighters are battling California's intense wildfires. According to officials from CAL FIRE, 11 large wildfires were blazing in California as of Wednesday, August 6, charring over 145,000 combined acres so far. Fires are raging in Modoc, Siskiyou, Shasta and Mendocino counties. Fires also are ablaze in the Klamath, Lassen and Sierra national forests.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): [Reservoir Levels](#) as of August 7 remain low, including: Don Pedro 43%; Exchequer 19%; Folsom Lake 41%; Lake Oroville 34%; Millerton Lake 51%; New Melones 25%; Pine Flat 12%; San Luis 21%; Lake Shasta 33%; and Trinity Lake 34%. An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The State Water Board's Drinking Water Program is providing 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 \$8.8 million has been identified for specific emergency drinking water projects out of \$15 million appropriated in March for this purpose. Updated information can be found at the [CDPH Drinking Water Program](#) website during the three (3) month transition period. For more information regarding the transfer, please visit the [State Water Board's Drinking Water Program](#) website.

Recent Precipitation: Over the past week, rainfall has impacted California in two main areas. A significant monsoon moisture surge brought heavy rainfall to southern California and the southern Sierra late in the weekend an earlier this week. A second area of rainfall occurred across the central and northern Sierra, and northern California through the middle part of the week. Precipitation totals (in inches) from Friday, August 1 through Friday, August 8:

- **Bay Area: 0.10"** in the last week.
- **Cascade-Sierra: 0.25" - 2.50"** in the last week.
- **Folsom Dam: 0.07"** in the last week.
- **Hetch Hetchy: 0.01"** in the last week.
- **Imperial County: 0.01"** in the last week.
- **Inyo County: 0.25" - 1.00"** in the last week.
- **Los Angeles/USC: 0.04"** in the last week.
- **North Coast: 0.15"** in the last week.
- **Oroville: 0.20"** in the last week.
- **Redding Fire Station: 0.44"** in the last week.
- **Riverside County: 0.01"** in the last week.

- **Sacramento Valley: 0.10” - 3.00”** in the last week.
- **San Joaquín Valley: 0.10” - 1.00”** in the last week.
- **Shasta Dam: 0.40”** in the last week.
- **South Coast: 0.10” - 1.00”** in the last week.
- **Southeast Interior: 0.10” - 1.00”** in the last week.
- **Central Coast:** No precipitation reported.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **California Drought - Strong El Niño, which could bring Soaking Winter Storms, Fizzling Out:** A powerful El Niño that had been emerging in the Pacific Ocean is fizzling out, evaporating hopes it will deliver a knockout punch to California's three-year drought. A [new report from scientists](#) at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) decreases the probability of an El Niño -- the condition that occurs when warm Pacific Ocean water at the equator affects the jet stream -- to 65 percent starting in October, down from 82 percent in June.
- **Governor Brown Weighs in on Need for Water Bond:** Last week, Governor Brown articulated the need for a water bond to address the state's pressing water needs in many media outlets. Tuesday, the governor talked about the water bond in a five-minute [interview with Capitol Public Radio](#). Two new public opinion polls commissioned by ACWA, the California Alliance for Jobs and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) show that likely [voters favor a scaled-down water bond](#) for the November 2014 ballot.

White House Chief Science Advisor - Wildfires Are Linked to Climate Change: On the heels of California declaring a state of emergency over wildfires on Saturday, August 2, the [Obama Administration has released a video linking the blazes to climate change](#). In it, White House science advisor, John Holdren, explains how global warming brings higher temperatures and reduces moisture in the soil, thus increasing the odds wildfires will occur as well as their intensity when they do occur.

- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental and Utility Assistance:** The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 188,300 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 128,900 boxes of food have been picked up by 67,312 households. By this Friday, August 15, an additional 16,500 will be delivered to nine counties. Local food banks continue to target this food aid to residents most impacted by the 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, July 31, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$2,291,878 is committed; and \$1,410,018 in funds has been issued to 1,153 applicants in 18 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 in 10 counties that are experiencing “exceptional” drought. As of Friday, August 1, CSD has reported that a total of \$14,345 has been issued to 207 households in 4 counties.

- **Conan O’Brien Urges Californians to Save Water in New PSAs:** Comedian and television talk show host [Conan O’Brien is featured in a series of new public service announcements](#)

[\(PSAs\)](#) released on Tuesday, August 5, that call on Californians to conserve water during the state's historic drought.

- **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.
- **Open Burn Ban in Affect across the State:** Open burning continues to be prohibited on 31 million acres of land across the state due to the [burn ban that CAL FIRE](#) has directed through the coordination of its unit chiefs. This ban on open burning in state responsibility areas (outside of cities and towns) reduces wildfire danger amidst extremely dry conditions.
- **Drought Response Funding:** \$687 million in state drought funding that was appropriated in March through emergency legislation continues to advance toward meeting critical needs. Over \$61 million of this funding addresses emergency water needs, food aid and housing assistance to drought-impacted communities. Nearly \$21 million of those funds are already in communities providing assistance and additional funds are being readied as drought impacts worsen. 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 over \$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 will be awarded this fall, with the remaining \$250 million granted by mid next-year. 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 meet daily to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

Task Force Visit Update: Today (Monday, August 11), members of the Governor's Interagency Drought Task Force travel to San Francisco, Calif. to meet with the region's local government officials to hear about their latest efforts to respond to California's drought. Governments involved include the City and County of San Francisco, and the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 52 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **22 Counties:** Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Santa Barbara, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba.
 - **12 Cities:** Brooktrails Township (Mendocino County), 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 Ripon (San Joaquin County), and City of Rio Dell (Humboldt County).

- **7 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), and Cortina Indian Rancheria (Colusa County).
- **11 Special Districts:** 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).
- **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 26 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Napa.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** One tribe has established a drought task force to coordinate tribal drought response. This tribe includes: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt 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