

Monthly Report

To: David Dickson, General Manager
From: Cathleen Brennan, Water Resources Analyst
Agenda: May 13, 2008
Subject: Water Shortage and Drought Contingency Plan

This report is provided as an update on the implementation of the Water Shortage and Drought Contingency Plan – Stage 1 (Advisory Stage). The Advisory Stage was implemented in June of 2007.

Coastside County Water District is not requiring mandatory water rationing this summer, but staff recommends continuing with Stage I – Advisory Stage of the Water Shortage and Drought Contingency Plan. Water supply conditions are similar to last year when the Water Shortage and Drought Contingency Plan was implemented.

- √ The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) has determined that there is sufficient precipitation in the form of snow, so mandatory rationing is not required this year. The SFPUC is confident that their reservoirs will fill from the snow melt runoff.

The SFPUC is urging its wholesale customers to continue conservation efforts regionally, since the San Francisco Bay Area experienced less than average precipitation for a second consecutive year. The District will continue to cooperate in regional and state-wide water conservation efforts.

The Water Saving Hero Water Conservation Campaign will be extended through this year. The participating agencies have committed to spend one million dollars of their own money and will receive matching funds through a grant from the State. The campaign will have a slightly modified message and will concentrate outreach efforts with banners, posters, billboards, internet, and radio. The participating agencies are; Santa Clara Valley Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Zone 7, Solano County Water District, Contra Costa County Water District, and Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency.

- √ Local precipitation is less than normal. If we look at the water year (October to September) we are at about 74% of normal to date and about 70% of normal for the water year. Although precipitation amounts locally were better than last year, current totals are less than average for the year with little expectation of significant precipitation forecast for the rest of the year. The lack of local precipitation will

impact our local surface and groundwater resources. The most impacted source will be the Denniston Project for both groundwater and surface water.

Precipitation for Half Moon Bay													
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Totals
Historic Average	1.3	3.4	3.7	5.5	4.8	3.9	1.6	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.3	25.4
	2007			2008									
Water Year 2008	1.83	0.93	3.16	8.75	2.73	.31	.16						17.87

√ DWR RELEASES 2008 URBAN DROUGHT GUIDEBOOK
 To help local water agencies and communities prepare for the possibility of another dry year or water supply interruptions, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has published an updated version of its Urban Drought Guidebook. Over several months last year DWR staff, in cooperation with the California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC) and the US Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), held drought workshops throughout the State for water suppliers and solicited input on the updated guidebook. The final version of this updated guidebook, now available at the website below, provides a step-by-step approach for preparing Water Shortage Contingency Plans. A copy of the Guidebook has been posted on the DWR website at www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/UrbanDroughtGuide.pdf and will soon be posted to CUWCC's website at www.cuwcc.org.



√ The Governor's recently announced target of a 20 percent reduction in per-capita water use statewide by 2020, presents a challenge for water suppliers and California residents.

Attached to this report are two items from the California Department of Water Resources. One is the latest snow survey results and the second is the updated drought preparedness statement.

√ California Water Awareness Campaign



The California Water Awareness Campaign has launched a new theme with the slogan "Nice Save!" More information is on the campaign's website at www.wateraware.org.





News for Immediate Release

May 1, 2008

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DWR May Snow Survey Shows Low Water Content

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) final snow survey of 2008 indicates snow water content is just 67 percent of normal for the date, statewide. Snow depth and water content have declined since April, when statewide snowpack water content figures were just under 100 percent of normal, despite a dry March.

“Today’s conditions further underscore the need for immediate action to solve California’s water supply and delivery problems,” said DWR Director Lester Snow. “We must take immediate steps to protect the Delta ecosystem, conserve more water and develop additional groundwater and surface storage facilities to meet our future needs.”

Governor Schwarzenegger has outlined those steps through a comprehensive plan that includes water conservation, more surface and groundwater storage, new investments in the state’s aging water infrastructure, and improved water conveyance through or around the Delta to protect the environment and provide a reliable water supply.

Much of the water content is being absorbed by parched soil as a result of last year’s extremely dry weather. March and April 2008 combined are the driest in the northern Sierra since 1921, the first year that records were kept. Water runoff into streams and reservoirs is only 55 to 65 percent of normal.

Electronic sensor readings show northern Sierra snow water equivalents at 88 percent of normal for this date, central Sierra at 61 percent, and southern Sierra at 60 percent. The sensor readings are posted at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/snow/DLYSWEQ>.

Storage in California’s major reservoirs is also low because of last year’s dry conditions. Lake Oroville, the principal storage reservoir for the State Water Project (SWP), is at 48 percent of capacity, and 58 percent of average storage for this time of year.

Continuing dry conditions and court-ordered restrictions on Delta water exports are limiting water deliveries to farms and urban areas. DWR estimates that it will only be able to deliver 35 percent of requested SWP water this year to the Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast and Southern California.

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In December 2007, U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Wanger imposed restrictions on water deliveries from the Delta to protect the threatened Delta smelt. This has significantly decreased deliveries to homes, farms, cities and industry by both the State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project. In June 2008, Judge Wanger will begin hearings to discuss the possibility of further reducing pumping from the Delta – the hub of California’s water system – to help protect Chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead

May 1, 2008 DWR manual survey results

Location	Elevation	Snow Depth	Water Content	% of Long Term Average
Alpha	7,600 feet	31 inches	16.5 inches	63
Phillips Station	6,800 feet	3.29 inches	1.7 inches	11
Lyons Creek	6,700 feet	28.9 inches	14.3 inches	63
Tamarack Flat	6,500 feet	26.3 inches	13.8 inches	75

Importance of Snow Surveying

Snow water content is important in determining the coming year's water supply. The measurements help hydrologists prepare water supply forecasts as well as provide others, such as hydroelectric power companies and the recreation industry, with much needed data.

Monitoring is coordinated by the Department of Water Resources as part of the multi-agency California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program. Surveyors from more than 50 agencies and utilities visit hundreds of snow measurement courses in California’s mountains each month to gauge the amount of water in the snowpack.

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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.

Contact the [DWR Public Affairs Office](#) for more information about DWR's water activities.

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94236-0001**Drought Preparedness**

Water year 2007 was a dry year statewide, and especially in Central and Southern California. Much of Southern California had one of the driest precipitation years of record, surpassing the prior records set in 2001-02. In Northern and Central California, unimpaired runoff from Sierra Nevada watersheds was below average. The Colorado River Basin, an important source of water supply for Southern California, continued in drought conditions, having experienced below average runoff in seven of the last eight years.

With the spring rainfall season now essentially wrapping up, water year 2008 in California is also turning out to be dry, but not as dry as 2007. Although statewide precipitation for the water year to date is only about 10 percent below average, the depletion in soil moisture from a dry 2007 will result in reduced runoff. Runoff indices for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River systems -- the source of much of California's developed water supply -- are forecasted to be classified as "dry" at the 50 percent exceedance level. The combined impact of a dry 2007 and dry 2008 is also seen in reduced storage in the state's major reservoirs. See the link at left for a map with current reservoir storage conditions. Water supplies for customers of the State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project will be affected by court-imposed restrictions on diversions from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to protect the Delta smelt, as described [here](#). The Department currently expects that 2008 State Water Project deliveries will be 35 percent of the amounts requested by Project contractors. Water year runoff in the Colorado River Basin is forecasted to be slightly above average, with contractors for Colorado River water expected to receive their normal deliveries. Total reservoir storage in the Colorado River system remains at roughly half of capacity, reflecting the preceding eight-year drought period.

Defining when a drought begins is a function of the impacts of dry conditions on water users. California's extensive system of water supply infrastructure -- its reservoirs, managed groundwater basins, and inter-regional conveyance facilities -- mitigates the effect of short-term dry periods. Hydrologic conditions constituting a drought for water users in one location may not constitute a drought for water users for water users in a different part of the state or with a different water supply. Individual water suppliers may use criteria such as rainfall/runoff, amount of water in storage, decline in groundwater levels, or expected supply from a water wholesaler to define their water supply conditions.

California's last major statewide drought was 1987-92. At a regional level, parts of Southern California experienced a series of consecutive dry years in the late 1990s/early 2000s. Other significant droughts occurred during 1928-34 and 1976-77. 1977 has the distinction of being the single driest year of California's measured hydrologic record.

[DWR](#)[My CA](#)**Related Links**

- [Current Reservoir Conditions](#)
- [Preparing for California's Next Drought](#)
- [Critical Water Shortage Contingency Plan](#)
- [Drought Preparedness Plan](#)
- [National Drought Mitigation Center](#)
- [Colorado River Basin Climate Report](#)
- [California Hydroclimatic Reconstructions](#)
- [National Research Council report -- Colorado River Basin Water Management & Hydroclimatic Variability](#)

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