



Protecting our rural environment by promoting citizen participation in sustainable land use planning since 2006

The Community Action Project (CAP) administers the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC), which is comprised of regional and local organizations, community groups, and concerned individuals who promote public participation in land use and resource planning to ensure a healthy human, natural, and economic environment now and in the future.

Learn more at www.calaverascap.com

[Don't forget to add us to your address book to keep us out of your spam folder!](#)

Donate



In this edition of the ReCAP...

1. [Next CPC Meeting](#)
2. [BOS & PC Meetings](#)
3. [Rural fire districts losing firefighters as state, feds ramp up hiring](#)
4. [CCWD updates public on drought, water conservation efforts](#)
5. [Delta variant detected in Calaveras County](#)
6. [Sierra Nevada Conservancy Funding Newsletter](#)
7. [Numbers explain how and why the West bakes, burns and dries out](#)
8. [To beat climate change in California, rural farming needs to move North](#)
9. [With drought worsening, should California have much tougher water restrictions?](#)
10. [Poem - Buying Earth](#)

Join Us!

*Get a glimpse into what CPC membership is like by attending a meeting.
There is no commitment, just show up and listen in!*

Next Calaveras Planning Coalition Meeting

August 2, 2021 3 P.M. - 5 P.M.

New Members Welcome at CPC Meetings

Organizations, groups, and individuals (known as associate members) may join the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC). Prospective members may attend two consecutive meetings before making a final decision on membership in the Coalition. The membership form is a pledge to support and advocate for the Coalition's eleven Land Use and Development Principles, which you will find on our website:

www.calaverascap.com.

There is no membership fee. However, members are encouraged to donate to the Community Action Project/Calaveras Planning Coalition. Visitors and prospective members will, by necessity, be excluded from attorney/client privileged discussions.

If you are interested in membership, please email CPC Facilitator Tom Infusino, tomi@volcano.net, to receive a membership form, agenda, and the Zoom meeting connection.

To help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our county, all CAP and CPC meetings will be held online via Zoom until restrictions are lifted by the Public Health Department.

BOS Special Meeting Tuesday, July 20, 2021

[Agenda](#)

Planning Commission Meeting July 22, 2021

Cancelled

Local News

Rural fire districts losing firefighters as state, feds ramp up hiring

Dakota Morlan / Calaveras Enterprise / July 7, 2021

Some fire districts in rural California are struggling to staff their stations as the state and federal government are hiring thousands of firefighters at better rates of pay.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) Chief Thom Porter told Reuters in May that his agency was expanding its seasonal crews by more than 1,400 compared with last year, and most are already on the job as an early wildfire season sweeps through the state. Meanwhile, President Joe Biden's administration recently announced that it is hiring more federal firefighters and immediately raising their pay, a plan that would add or convert to full-time nearly 1,000 firefighters across a multitude of agencies.

Additionally, the recent closure of eight inmate firefighter camps throughout California as part of Gov. Gavin Newsom's push to reduce the state prison population has also fueled the hiring spree.

Within the jurisdiction of the Tuolumne-Calaveras Cal Fire Unit (TCU), one inmate firefighter camp, Baseline Conservation Camp in Jamestown, was repurposed into a "fire center" for additional firefighter crews, while Vallecito Conservation Camp No. 1 in Calaveras County continues to operate as a joint venture between Cal Fire and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

This hiring season, Cal Fire TCU has added 51 new positions, according to Chief Nick Casci, and significantly increased its ranks with additional new hires.

Despite the growth, Casci says that a "seamless" partnership between Cal Fire and local fire districts is essential to public safety.

"I would 100-percent say that, regardless of what kind of emergency, we need local government support to complete the mission," he said.

Historically, local firefighters have sought jobs with state, federal and metropolitan agencies due to better pay, said Rich Dickinson, chief of Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District. The beefing up of these larger agencies in recent months has further exposed that wage disparity, making it harder to find replacements for the firefighters who have left.

"It's a constant battle. Every year, I need to go out to the colleges to pick up six to seven young men and women to keep boots on the ground," Dickinson said. "This year, it was more because the state hired more firefighters. But that's not a bad thing. We want them to be successful."

The real issue is convincing local taxpayers to sign off on more competitive wages, he said. Without this, rural fire districts will continue to struggle to staff their stations. The last time his district tried to pass a tax measure was in 2015, but it "failed miserably."

“We can’t go to the state, we can’t go to the feds. We have to directly work with our taxpayers of our respective community,” he said. “That is an arduous process. Down here, we have not been able to overcome that two-thirds vote.”

Some local fire districts have been able to secure the vote. This year, voters approved Measure A, a direct charge tax to supplement property tax revenue and maintain staffing levels at San Andreas Fire Protection District. At Ebbetts Pass Fire District, a 2018 tax measure passed at 84% to continue funding its advanced life support program.

“We are very fortunate and blessed to have community support in the way that we do,” Chief Mike Johnson said. The district also passed tax measures in 1998 and 2004, but the amounts charged did not account for inflation or the increase in 911 calls over time.

While wages provided at the district still “can’t compete” with those offered by larger agencies, Johnson said his staffing levels were somewhat spared due to the significant influx of people moving to Murphys and Arnold during the pandemic. With some of the most desirable real estate in the county, the Ebbetts Pass jurisdiction is a unique case.

“Because of that dynamic, we’re always going to be a place where people do come,” he said, though he hopes he will be able to offer a more competitive wage to his firefighters in the future.

CCWD updates public on drought, water conservation efforts

Calaveras Enterprise / July 9, 2021

The following press release was issued by the Calaveras County Water District.

SAN ANDREAS, CA., July 9, 2021 – California has experienced the driest rainy season on record, reaching 126-year lows across the state, according to the meteorological consulting firm, Golden Gate Weather Services. On July 8, Governor Newsom expanded his drought emergency declaration to include 50 of California’s 58 counties, including Calaveras County. No conservation mandates have been imposed but state officials are calling on all Californians to voluntarily reduce water consumption by 15% compared to 2020 levels.

CCWD prioritizes initiatives aimed at water conservation practices to maintain the health and sustainability of our watersheds, including major leak reduction and pipeline replacement efforts in recent years. Although no conservation mandates are being enacted at this time, CCWD encourages customers to conserve water and prepare for extended dry conditions.

CCWD is fortunate to have access to adequate water supplies and stored water, including Spicer Meadow and Hogan Reservoirs. Therefore, CCWD is confident it can ensure a reliable

water supply for its customers in 2021. However, as responsible stewards of our watersheds, it is vital to do our part to address water shortage conditions and prepare for the potential scenario of an extended, multi-year drought.

Here are some water-saving ideas you can use at home:

- Limit outdoor water use.
- Establish appropriate run-times for landscape irrigation to eliminate excessive water runoff.
- Consider installing drought tolerant landscaping.
- Avoid watering during the hottest portion of the day. Otherwise, some of the water will be lost to evaporation.
- Use a broom to clean sidewalks and pavements instead of a hose. • Fix leaky faucets, toilets, appliances, and sprinklers. Leaks vary in amount, but they can account for a lot of wasted water over time.
- Operate your clothes and dishwashers with full loads only, even if the machine has an adjustable load setting.
- Take shorter showers with high-efficiency showerheads. Each minute you cut saves 2.5 gallons.

For additional information on tips for water conservation, visit CCWD's website at ccwd.org or visit saveourwater.com. CCWD continues to track in-county water conditions using the Public Water Resources Data Packet. This data packet provides

daily info on total precipitation, reservoir and lake storage levels, and state drought conditions. You can access the data packet here: <https://ccwd.org/water-resources/public-data-packet/>. For more info regarding current water conditions and CCWD's conservation efforts, please contact Jessica Self, CCWD's External Affairs Manager, at (209) 754-3123 or via e-mail at jessicas@ccwd.org.

Delta Variant detected in Calaveras County; health officials implore residents to get vaccinated

Dakota Morlan / Calaveras Enterprise / July 13, 2021

COVID-19 infections are on the rise, once again, in Calaveras County, while daily vaccination numbers have flattened.

As of July 12, the county [ranks 39th statewide](#) in vaccination rates, just behind Tuolumne and Amador, with roughly 39% of its residents fully vaccinated.

In June, the county health department was notified by the state that the Delta variant, a strain of the virus first detected in India that is said to be more contagious than the original, had made its way to Calaveras County by at least the month of May.

County Health Officer Dr. René Ramirez says the current data reported by the state is just “the tip of the iceberg,” with the exact number of cases unknown due to several factors including a backlog in reporting at the state level.

While two additional COVID-19-related deaths occurred in June, bringing the countywide total to 58, none have yet been linked to the Delta variant.

“I remind the public that the Delta variant is about 50% more infectious (than) the Alpha variant, which is about 50% more infectious than the original strain,” Ramirez said. “Here we are talking about the Delta variant, and we have not even begun to see the Lambda variant that South America is experiencing. The advice is simple, get vaccinated. The old adage holds true, ‘if you play with fire you will get burned.’”

Ramirez’s words echo those of Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who recently spoke in favor of local vaccine mandates in places like schools and businesses, in lieu of any at the federal level.

“I do believe at the local level there should be more mandates,” Fauci said on CNN’s “State of the Union.” “We’re talking about (a) life-and-death situation. We’ve lost 600,000 Americans already, and we’re still losing more people. There’ve been 4 million deaths worldwide, so I am in favor of that.”

At the local level, particularly in California’s more rural counties, a battle wages on to vaccinate the population, though access to immunity has never been greater.

“Would anyone ever expect firefighters to stop fighting a fire that is not 100% put out or contained? That is the same analogy we are currently facing,” Ramirez said.

Residents can still get tested for COVID-19, free of charge, at weekly clinics operated by Calaveras Public Health, with testing sites listed on the department’s [website](#). Anyone age 12 and older can find a free COVID-19 vaccine by visiting myturn.ca.gov or by walking in or scheduling an appointment at most pharmacy locations.

With nine active cases currently confirmed in the county, local health officials are urging residents to get vaccinated as soon as they can.

“The greatest tool we have against COVID infection is vaccination. Unfortunately, cases will continue to rise until more people are vaccinated,” said Cori Allen, Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency director. “The number of people getting vaccinated weekly varies, but continues to be low despite the tremendous availability.”

Ramirez added, “I think it is very evident that our COVID numbers have seen an uptick recently and a flat/declining rate in vaccinations. (The) majority of all COVID related encounters and complications are due to unvaccinated individuals.”

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Funding Opportunities Newsletter for July/August



This is an electronic newsletter published every two months containing information on upcoming grant and funding opportunities for the Sierra Nevada region. The newsletter includes federal, state, and private foundation funders as well as additional resources and information related to grant funding. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy provides the Funding Opportunities Newsletter as a free resource under its Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.

[Back to Top](#)

Regional News

Numbers explain how and why the West bakes, burns and dries out

By Seth Borenstein / AP / July 14, 2021

The American West is baking, burning and drying in intertwined extreme weather. Four sets of numbers explain how bad it is now, while several others explain why it got this bad.

The West is going through “the trifecta of an epically dry year followed by incredible heat the last two months and now we have fires,” said University of California Merced climate and fire scientist John Abatzoglou. “It is a story of cascading impacts.”

And one of climate change, the data shows.

RECORD HEAT

In the past 30 days, the country has set 585 all-time heat records, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Of those, 349 are for daily high temperatures and 236 are the warmest overnight low temperatures, which are vital for people to recover from deadly heat waves.

And this doesn’t include Death Valley hitting 130 degrees (54 degrees Celsius) preliminarily. If this is confirmed, it would be the hottest temperature on Earth in decades — and several meteorologists say it would be the hottest reliable temperature recorded because many don’t trust the accuracy of two hotter records.

A different part of Death Valley likely set the world record on July 11 for hottest 24-hour period by averaging the daily high and overnight low to come up with 118.1 (47.9 degrees Celsius), according to meteorologist Maximiliano Herrera, who tracks weather extremes.

The average daily high temperature for the entire area from the Rockies and westward in June was 85.7 degrees (29.8 Celsius), which beat the old record by 1.3 degrees (0.7 Celsius), according to NOAA.

SEVERE DROUGHT

Nearly 60% of the U.S. West is considered in exceptional or extreme drought, the two highest categories, according to the University of Nebraska’s Drought Monitor. That’s the highest percentage in the 20 years the drought monitor has been keeping track. Less than 1% of the West is not in drought or considered abnormally dry, also a record.

LOW SOIL MOISTURE

How much moisture in the soil is key because normally part of the sun’s energy is used to evaporate moisture in the soil and plants. Also, when the soil and plants are dry, areas burn much more often and hotter in wildfires and the available water supply shrinks for places like California, a “true indicator of just how parched things are,” Abatzoglou said.

Both NOAA and NASA show soil moisture levels down to some of the lowest recorded levels for much of the West. Most of California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Arizona, Utah and Idaho are drier than in 99% of other years.

WILDFIRES BURNING

There are 68 active large fires burning, consuming 1,038,003 acres (420,000 hectares) of land, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. With those fires and ones in Canada, there is “one large area of smoke over much of the U.S. and Canada,” NOAA said Tuesday.

So far this year, wildfires have burned 2.2 million acres (899,000 hectares), which is less than the 10-year average for this time of year. But that may change because dry plants are at extra high risk of burning in much of the West as shown in what experts call fire's energy release component.

HOW WE GOT HERE

"The heat wave story cannot be viewed as an isolated extreme event, but rather part of a longer story of climate change with more related, widespread and varying impacts," said climate scientist Jennifer Francis of the Woodwell Climate Research Center on Cape Cod.

SUMMERS GETTING HOTTER

From 1991 to 2020, summers in the Rockies and westward have on average become 2.7 degrees (1.5 Celsius) warmer. The West is warming faster than the rest of the United States and the globe.

MORE HEAT DOMES FROM WEAKER JET STREAM

The weather phenomenon that is roasting the West now and that brought 116-degree (46.7 Celsius) temperatures to Portland, Oregon, at the end of June is often called a heat dome — where high pressure parks over an area and warm air sinks. This usually happens when the jet stream — the river of air that brings weather to places — gets stuck and doesn't move storms along.

Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann found the number of times the jet stream stalls in the Northern Hemisphere is increasing from about six times a summer in the early 1980s to about eight times a summer now.

"We've shown climate change is making these stuck summer jet stream patterns more common," Mann said.

LESS RAIN

The West on average received 13.6 inches (34.5 centimeters) of snow and rain from July 2020 to June 2021. Over the last 10 years, the region has averaged a bit more than 19 inches (48 centimeters) of precipitation a year in the middle of what scientists call a megadrought. In the 1980s and 1990s, before the megadrought started, the West averaged nearly 22 inches (56 centimeters) of rain.

A 2020 study said "global warming has pushed what would have been a moderate drought in southwestern North America into megadrought territory."

MORE WILDFIRES

From 2011 to 2020, on average 7.5 million acres (3 million hectares) burned in wildfires each year. That's more than double the average of 3.6 million acres (1.4 million hectares) a year from 1991 to 2000, according to data from the National Interagency Fire Center.

It's not just more acres burned, but more "very very large fires," said UC Merced's Abatzoglou, noting that the combination of drought and heat means plants are more likely to burn and fires to get bigger.

"The drought we've had this year and the warm temperatures has allowed the fire season to come on hard and really, really early," he said.

To beat climate change in California, rural farming needs to move North

Jeremiah Ramirez / SF Chronicle / July 11, 2021

Twenty-five years ago, at age 18, I followed my uncle to the top of Mount Lassen for a 10,000-foot view of Northern California's Fourth of July fireworks. We watched the revelry start over Reno and Lake Tahoe, and move seemingly to our feet at Lake Almanor. Then the North Valley's sky popped like a brick of firecrackers.

The thrills continued when my uncle tried to ski down the southern face of this active volcano. Back then, Lassen Peak was mostly covered in snow through midsummer, so a die-hard skiing down its face in July was hardly notable. But doing so by moonlight was — and remains — half-baked, pun emphatically intended.

Nowadays, the peak's snowpack succumbs to the summer sun much sooner, and thus is more suitable for an e-bike daredevil with a death wish. The Lassen Ski Area resort, where my professional ski-bum uncle originally took up the sport, closed in 1993, in part because of poor snowfall.

In retrospect, the fate of Lassen Ski Area was a preview of California's, and the world's, impending environmental and economic reckoning.

Water is life, the saying goes, but snow is prosperity. California's annual agricultural output is approximately \$50 billion, or just 2% of the state's GDP. Yet the state's agricultural industry uses 80% of its annual water supply. Our agricultural brethren have fed a lot of people with crops grown with that water. But this whole venture presumes water supply stability courtesy of the Cascade-Sierra snowpack.

But for how much longer? Our warmer and drier climate is reducing the snowpack's historically ample "excess" water that trickles down to streams, lakes and rivers each summer. Record low reservoir levels threaten to idle hydro-electric dams like Lake Oroville, and may contribute to rolling blackouts this summer. We've just emerged from the severe drought of 2011 to 2017 into a new one with inequitable human, environmental and economic costs we won't know for years.

Statewide policy and political actors are clinging to solutions aimed at fortifying the status quo, primarily the continued Frankensteining of the desert on the south and west sides of the Central Valley into an agricultural behemoth. The status quo also includes the perpetual expansion of the insatiably thirsty Southern California mega-region and big water conveyance infrastructure projects like Gov. Gavin Newsom's [Delta tunnel](#).

There are some new ideas. Researchers from UC Merced and UC Santa Cruz are more imaginative in a study suggesting that all 4,000 miles of canals be covered with solar panels — reducing evaporation and producing clean energy. But so far absent from the water discourse is a policy considered best practice for confronting another climate change villain, sea level rise.

That policy is managed retreat.

On the coast, managed retreat means abandoning housing and development to the sea. But more broadly, managed retreat is a risk management approach for evaluating land use of environmentally sensitive or at-risk property and infrastructure. It's the simple and prudent acknowledgment that we can't rebuild and replace everything mother nature reclaims, but we can repurpose the land for other, positive uses.

Managed retreat also needs to be on the table for the San Joaquin Valley, where the water situation ceased being sustainable some time ago. A number of local communities lack safe drinking water, and pumped-in groundwater is causing the land itself to sink, in some places up to 28 feet.

Managed retreat would make more sense than anything we're doing now. We must start encouraging and incentivizing people and farms in drought-stricken regions dependent on water transfers to migrate somewhere more hospitable to agriculture and other forms of human development.

Here's the key question our leaders are running away from: How much more profit-driven stress can the state's water supply be subjected to before the ecologies of whole regions — the California Delta, the Sacramento Valley — collapse? There's only one right answer to that question: We don't want to find out.

If we stop diverting so much water to agriculture, especially in the hot and drier southern parts of the San Joaquin Valley, then the Sacramento Valley and the Delta stand a better chance of enduring through climate change. This doesn't mean the end of agriculture. Rather, the goal is to preemptively and collaboratively adapt this thirsty industry by downsizing it to match a diminished water supply.

Migrating agriculture north to the Sacramento Valley can't be a one-to-one trade where every venture survives. The Sacramento Valley is approximately one-half the size of the San Joaquin Valley, and at most, 15% to 20% of the land could host relocated agriculture. The majority of San Joaquin agricultural businesses won't survive in their current form — but some could find new life by converting their fallowed fields into solar farms to help the state achieve its goal of fossil fuel-free electricity by 2045. Or we can allow the San Joaquin Valley to revert to the desert it was before our forefathers planted a garden in it.

Our leading export crops, almonds and pistachios, are most obvious candidates for downsizing, along with cattle ranching and the thirsty alfalfa grown for cattle feed. To ensure new water-hogging almond orchards aren't planted in the North Valley, the state can incentivize a transition to low water usage crops.

None of this is easy — it requires our elected leaders to find new wisdom, wean themselves from big agriculture campaign donations and influence, and make holistic and geographic decisions for the state's long-term health. But things will get even harder if we wait until nature gives us no more choices.

We don't want California to end up like Lassen Ski Area, defunct because it no longer had the snow upon which it relied.

Which brings me back to my uncle's harebrained moonlit ski. He lost his balance after 20 feet and slid down the peak on his side and back. He volcano body-surfed, and walked away with nothing but a minor scratch on his forearm.

I still can feel the beating summit wind, and I recall thinking that, viewed from above, fireworks resembled jellyfish. Today, I think about how that vista may not last forever. The state is so dry and fire-prone, that we don't have long before Fourth of July fireworks, like that Lassen snow, are things of the past.

With drought worsening, should California have much tougher water restrictions?

Ari Plachta / July 15, 2021 / [L.A. Times](#)

When Gov. Gavin Newsom [asked Californians to voluntarily conserve water last week](#) as he stood in front of the retreating shoreline at Lopez Lake in San Luis Obispo County, some must have had déjà vu.

It was only six years ago when former Gov. Jerry Brown stood in a field near Lake Tahoe that was bereft of normally plentiful snow and called for water restrictions amid the state's punishing years-long drought.

But by that point, Brown was done asking. In April 2015, he ordered cities and towns across the state to cut water use by 25%, the first mandatory statewide water restrictions in California history that browned lawns and shortened showers to the tune of more than [500 billion gallons](#) saved that year.

As Californians wonder when mandatory water restrictions might be coming, officials and experts including those who played roles in addressing the 2012-2016 drought say the pace and strategy of Newsom's current response sufficiently incorporates insights gained from the past.

The governor's approach, however, has also frustrated some scientists who consider his actions too little too late as record-high temperatures intensify the water shortage, particularly in northern and central parts of the state.

Newsom, who is facing a September [recall election](#), called on Californians on July 8 to [voluntarily cut their water usage](#) by 15% compared with last year and expanded his regional drought state of emergency to 50 counties, home to roughly 42% of the population.

"We're optimistic that Californians are going to step up as they have in the past," said Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot. "And if the drought persists and conditions get worse, we'll obviously have to contemplate other actions including mandatory restrictions."

Conditions already appear to be [outpacing the previous](#) drought: Scant winter rainfall led to minimal snowpack on the Sierra Nevada mountains, and spring heat evaporated much of the runoff that was expected to flow into reservoirs.

Felicia Marcus, who worked closely with Brown as chair of the state water board during California's last record-breaking drought, called Newsom's voluntary conservation a prudent start.

"You can always do more — like to save fish — or you could have done more earlier in the year. There are always coulda-shoulda-wouldas, but this is a welcome step," said Marcus, who is now a visiting fellow at Stanford University.

Marcus says she expects state officials to make a decision on mandatory restrictions by monitoring available water supplies and scouring data to see whether communities are heeding Newsom's voluntary call to conserve.

"We need to accelerate everything that we thought we had to do even five years ago in the face of climate change, because it's clearly coming harder and faster than we were expecting," Marcus said. "I think it takes a certain ... planning for the worst and not just hoping for the best."

Peter Gleick, a longtime water scientist and founder of the Pacific Institute in Oakland, is more critical of Newsom's decision making.

He said research shows a 15% voluntary cut in water use would be relatively painless for both the agricultural sector and Californians in urban areas.

"It should have been done two months ago or three months ago. It's not as though we haven't seen this drought coming," Gleick said. "I'm sorry it's not more than 15%. I'm also sorry it's not mandatory, because we are in a worse position now than we were in the third and fourth year of the previous severe drought."

The question of why Newsom hasn't declared a statewide drought emergency can be answered in large part by looking to the past at the blowback Brown received from local water districts tasked with implementing his mandatory restrictions.

"When that 25% reduction came into place there was a lot of criticism from local agencies who said, 'We don't need to reduce, we've got extra supplies' and 'You're punishing us for the work we've already done to prepare,'" said Rachel Ehlers, water policy analyst at the Legislative Analyst's Office.

Ehlers, Crowfoot and other longtime observers of water politics say that smaller water agencies that depend on a single well or groundwater source often look more kindly on state intervention during difficult drought times. But large urban districts such as the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California that heavily invested in reservoirs and recycling plants have made clear that they — and their budgets, which are dependent on supplying water to customers — preferred to be left alone.

Those stances, along with 2018 legislation that required local water districts to do more intensive water management planning, led the state to be more attuned to utilities and their unique circumstances, Ehlers said.

Southern California, for example, has been spared from Newsom's emergency order. Conditions haven't been as dry, and utility executives say water supply storage has granted them more flexibility.

"We spent a lot of effort learning from the last drought, and put in this framework where water utilities had to develop their own plans for reacting to shortages," said Brad Coffey, group manager at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. "So let's think about the wisdom of allowing those plans to come into effect, rather than stepping in and kind of nullifying those plans by deciding to do something else on a statewide scale."

Brown's pioneering mandatory restrictions are far more likely to be remembered by Californians for yellowed grass than water agency politics.

With the help of local lawn-removal incentives and social pressure, his ambitious 25% reduction goal nearly became a reality. Between June 2015 and April 2016, residential water use in California's urban

areas fell 24.5% according to UC Davis researchers.

Some conservation efforts, such as new drought-tolerant lawns, led to permanent change. Urban water use levels are currently at 15% lower per capita than those in 2013.

That means statewide conservation is crucial when considering the very real possibility of future dry years, said State Water Resources Control Board Deputy Director Erik Ekdahl.

“You’re going to have to have a really wet year next year to get us back to average, and there’s no guarantee of that. What happens if it’s dry or even below normal? God forbid another critically dry year,” Ekdahl said. “Then we’re in a really bad situation everywhere.”

Policy and political considerations aside, Newsom is simply operating on a tighter drought timeline this time, said state Sen. John Laird (D-Santa Cruz), who served as Brown’s Secretary of Natural Resources.

“The year after year of dryness came upon Gavin Newsom a little quicker,” said the Democrat, who represents Monterey and Santa Cruz counties.

“He’s following a similar path [as Brown]. But regardless of these two situations, if you’re a governor you’re limited to what’s in your toolbox. The big thing you have is the bully pulpit to tell Californians that they have to save.”

This story originally appeared in [Los Angeles Times](#).



Southern sunset- Stanislaus NF (c) yosemitenorthphotography.com

Buying Earth

By Philip Levine

Time was, when I was a boy
and a bird called down my name,
I went out to the open fields
at the edge of my town and opened
my eyes to the blazing sky
and heard in the turning earth
the great groan of the dead
as they came back to life.
I cried out the few words
I knew, my own name, and the name
of the earth, and so doing
I bought the earth forever.
It was summer. The trees greened.
The wild grasses grew to my waist,
and everywhere I turned I broke
open the hearts of seeds, and yet
there was no wounding, no crying
out against my being there
as I would later hear, for I
had not come into the shape
of a man. I loved the world
that loved me so, and I thought
then in the long twilight turning
for home that the more I lived
the more this love would grow,
and I would be a Prince of Earth
someday, tall and lean, moving
alone beneath my sky that let
the rainy winds bless my hair
or the tears of snow jewel brow
and hands. Before I was 16
those fields were gone, the trees
brought down with a cry that stopped
nothing. Pond, grove, roadless
meadows between town and town,
all gone. And I walked on
in a starless dark where nothing
spoke my name. And it was then
I became a man, heavy, broken
into earth and breaking the earth

so that all the ruined waters
and the milky froth of mills might
run back to the seas they'd fled.
Yes, I became a man that sold himself
hand by hand, hour by hour, name
by lost name until there was nothing
left to sell, nothing left to buy.

Source: Poetry (September 1979)

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=34346>



Donate

Copyright © 2021 Calaveras CAP, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).