



## WATER & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWS

# April 2022

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## Events and Meetings

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### **Tuesday, April 12, 2022 - 10:30 am** **Request for Rate Authorization**

The Rate Study returns to the board in its final form and allows the GSA staff to begin noticing of the affected parcels.

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### **Friday, April 15, 2022 - 10:00 am** **Drought Workgroup**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89233429167?pwd=VEZESHBMSEFN3d0d0L2xrd2l2M25JQT09>

Meeting ID: 892 3342 9167

Passcode: 632203  
Or Call: 1-669-900-9128

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## Officials eyeing 2024 to break ground on the Sites Reservoir

by Kelly DeLeon KRCR

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*The Sacramento River in Shasta County, CA, on the morning of November 3, 2021. (KRCR)*

CHICO, Calif. — The [Sites Reservoir](#), a project that has been in the making for decades, is currently on track to break ground in 2024, although for some the project could not come soon enough.

When full it could hold enough water to supply 3-million households for one year, helping offer relief during dry periods like we're experiencing now. "Anything you do to add to the water supply is going to relieve the

pressure on the supply we already have," said Congressman LaMalfa discussing the proposed reservoir. As a lawmaker and farmer, LaMalfa is a proponent of the project.

The Sites Reservoir, also known as Sites, would capture and store water during extremely rainy seasons for use during dry seasons. "The water that's being captured and stored is water that flows into the Sacramento River downstream of the Keswick Dam and the Shasta Dam. The intakes for the project are on the Sacramento River, so all the water that is flowing into the river downstream of those locations, is the water that we're seeking to pick up. But, only at times when those flows are very high, and in excess of meeting all the other water user and environmental needs that exists on the river system," explained Jerry Brown, the executive director of the Site Reservoir Project. "It's kind of an insurance policy for the dry years, something we're seeing right now that we badly need," he added.

With water allocations being cut for farmers throughout northern and central California this project could help them sustain their crops during really dry seasons. "If agriculture is killed off in California, the whole country suffers because many crops grown in our state supplying 90% or more of the fruit crops, nut crops and vegetable crops that the whole country uses," said LaMalfa. Opponents of the project argue Sites will further threaten salmon and other fish species, but Brown said that is a concern of their board as well and an issue they are addressing. "When this project becomes part of the river system, it will be incumbent upon them and everyone else that has an interest in the river to ensure that that populations of salmon and other aquatic species are protected. We've done a lot of work and made a lot of adjustments to the project operations to make the conditions under which we draw water out of the river more restrictive, exactly for those reasons to protect the salmon. On top of that all of the locations where we're diverting water are screen facilities, which means there's a physical barrier that prevents fish from being drawn into with the water that we're conveying to the reservoir."

Brown hopes construction will begin in late 2024. They are currently moving forward with a water rights process and securing critical permits. "I wish we could start sooner, but getting started at all, at least is something and five to

seven years will be maybe benefiting by the end from storing water and having that available for supply for everyone," said LaMalfa. The project comes with a \$4-billion price tag. The passage of Prop 1 by California voters will allow the state to fund part of the project. Other funding sources will come from the federal government and the local agencies participating as potential beneficiaries of the project.

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

## SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT OFFICE

901 P Street, Room 313-B | Sacramento, CA 95814 | P.O. Box 942836 | Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

### **Helicopter to make low-level flights over the Pleasant Valley, Westside, Kings, Madera, Chowchilla, Merced, Turlock, Modesto, and Delta-Mendota groundwater subbasins in the San Joaquin Valley**

You are receiving this letter because airborne geophysical surveys are scheduled to be conducted in your area. The surveys will be conducted in groundwater basins within portions of Kings, Tulare, Fresno, Madera, Merced, and Stanislaus counties over a four-week period starting in March 2022.

This survey is a part of the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) project to conduct airborne electromagnetic (AEM) geophysical surveys throughout the state. The surveys are being conducted to improve the understanding of groundwater resources and support the local and state goal of improved groundwater management and the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The surveys are funded through voter-approved Proposition 68 and there is no additional cost to locals. DWR's video provides more information about AEM surveys: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMSZdzz0rUE>.



AEM data are collected from a large hoop towed beneath a helicopter (shown, left). The method is safe, and surveys have already successfully been conducted in several locations throughout California. Surveys will only be conducted during daylight hours and the helicopter will not fly over business, homes, other inhabitable structures, or confined animal feeding operations. The helicopter operator follows all established Federal Aviation Administration rules and regulations, and their highest priority is public safety.

For more information about the surveys, visit DWR's AEM project website, [www.water.ca.gov/programs/SGMA/AEM](http://www.water.ca.gov/programs/SGMA/AEM). For questions, please email [AEM@water.ca.gov](mailto:AEM@water.ca.gov).

DWR encourages the public to get involved in their groundwater management activities through their local groundwater sustainability agency: <https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/gsa/all>.

**Note:** the survey start date and the flight period provided in this notification may be extended or delayed by several weeks due to weather, wildfires, or equipment issues. Please check the AEM Survey Schedule webpage for up-to-date information on flight days: <https://gis.water.ca.gov/app/AEM-schedule>.

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# Causes and Consequences of Epic Western US Drought

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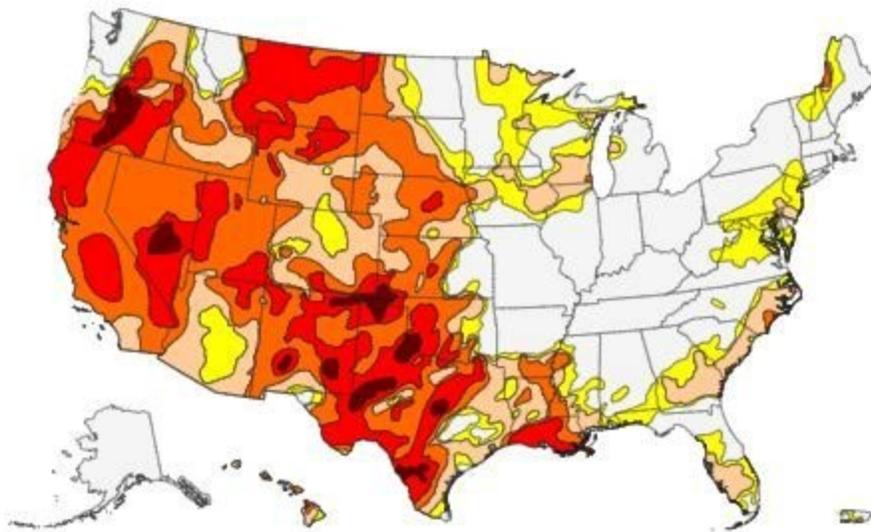
Drought is back in California. Samuel Sandoval Solis, an associate professor at UC Davis and UC Cooperative Extension specialist, is an expert in water resources management who aims to create better strategies for coping with droughts. Here, he answers some common questions and clarifies some myths about droughts.

Click here to read: [Droughts, Explained](#)

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## Current Drought   Change in Drought



The U.S. Drought Monitor is updated each Thursday to show the location and intensity of drought across the country, which uses a five-category system, from Abnormally Dry (D0) conditions to Exceptional Drought (D4).

The U.S. Drought Monitor is a joint effort of the National Drought Mitigation Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. [Learn more.](#)

### **U.S. Drought Monitor Categories**

- D0 - Abnormally Dry
- D1 - Moderate Drought
- D2 - Severe Drought
- D3 - Extreme Drought
- D4 - Exceptional Drought

Source(s): [NDMC](#), [NOAA](#), [USDA](#)

Last Updated - 03/29/22

# California drought: Newsom orders tighter water conservation rules

As drought worsens, Californians face most far-reaching water conservation rules since 2016.

The move is the most far-reaching statewide water restriction since 2016, during California's last drought. "While we have made historic investments to protect our communities, economy and ecosystems from the worsening drought across the West, it is clear we need to do more," Newsom said. "Today, I am calling on local water agencies to implement more aggressive water conservation measures."

Read more - [Here - California Drought](#)

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[To read Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-7-22 click here.](#)

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**Do you need bottled water?**

We provide an interim solution for clean drinking water for domestic well owners working toward a permanent and sustainable solution to their drinking water needs.

**Call Bottled Water**  
**559-802-1284**  
[bottledwater.selfhelpenterprises.org](http://bottledwater.selfhelpenterprises.org)

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Do you think your well is failing?**

We will inspect the quality of your well and measure the depth of the well and the depth to water. We will help you determine if your well is in good operating condition.

**Call Water Wells**  
**559-802-1289**  
[waterwells.selfhelpenterprises.org](http://waterwells.selfhelpenterprises.org)

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## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO WELL OWNERS IN MADERA COUNTY

Has your well gone dry? Are you worried about your well going dry?

Most resources are available for free.

Residents of Madera County and the Central Valley who have been affected by the impacts of the drought have immediate resources available to help maintain their access to drinking water. These funds come from the State Water

Resources Control Board and most are free to you.

If you are concerned about your well or out of water for your home, visit [www.mywellwentdry.org](http://www.mywellwentdry.org) for a list of resources by county or call [Self-Help](mailto:Self-Help Enterprise)

[Enterprise](mailto:Self-Help Enterprise) for:

Bottled Water: 559-802-1284

Water Wells: 559-802-1289

Water Quality: 559-802-1285

Drought Support: 559-802-1685.

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## PARTNER ORGANIZATION JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Interested in working on issues related to resource management here are links to Partner Organizations who currently have positions open. Ideal candidates have experience/knowledge with key land management strategies, water issues, agriculture, and/or understand topics on wildfire resilience, landscape restoration, and collaboration.

[American Forests](#)

[Careers – California Association of Resource Conservation Districts \(carcd.org\)](#)

[Coarsegold Resource Conservation District](#)

[Natural Resource Conservation Service - USA Jobs](#)

[Public Policy Institute of California \(PPIC\)](#)

[Self Help Enterprises](#)

[Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council](#)

[Yosemite National Park](#)

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## **If You Need Us**

**The Water & Natural Resources office is located on the third floor of the County Government Center. Water and Natural Resource staff can be reached at 559-662-8015 or you can visit us on-line at**

**- [maderacountywater.com](http://maderacountywater.com).**

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### **Upcoming Events and/or Meetings**

**Please check the website through the links below for meeting announcements and schedules or for telephone numbers to call and check on meeting times and locations with the agencies.**

[Chowchilla Subbasin](#)

[Chowchilla Water District GSA](#)

[Clayton Water District](#)

[Coarsegold Resource Conservation District](#)

[Delta-Mendota Subbasin](#)

[Gravelly Ford GSA](#)

[Madera Ag Water Association](#)

[Madera/Chowchilla Resource Conservation District](#)

[Madera Irrigation District GSA](#)

[Madera Regional Water Management Group](#)

[Madera Subbasin](#)

[Madera Subbasin](#)

[Madera Water District GSA](#)

[Merced County GSA](#)

[Merced Subbasin GSA](#)

[Root Creek GSA](#)

[Triangle T GSA](#)

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*Madera County Water & Natural Resources, 200 West 4th Street, Suite 3100, Madera, CA 93637  
Phone: 559-662-8015.*

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