



**The California Aqueduct. (Photo: CA State Water Project)**

# **California Water and Infrastructure Report For August 8, 2024**

**(With expanded coverage of all the Western States)**

**by Patrick Ruckert**

**Published weekly since July, 2014**

**An archive of all these weekly reports can be found at both links below:**

**<http://www.californiadroughtupdate.org>**

**<https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaDroughtUpdate>**

## **A Note to Readers**

This week's **Feature** is a 41 minute video of a discussion held last Saturday broadcast by Promethean Action. The content will provide you with insight into how Presidential candidate Donald Trump's policy of making the U.S. once again an industrial superpower must begin. The link can be found on page 8.

Otherwise, this week's report begins with the current *U.S. Drought Monitor* map of California's slowly spreading and intensifying drought.

With heat waves in the state repeatedly breaking local temperatures this summer, one consequence is an

increase, especially in the Central Valley, of wells going dry.

What follows is a section titled, “*Conflict Over Water Never Ends, and Will Do So Only When the State Water Board Ends Its 'Only Conservation' Policy.*” The section begins with an article that reports on the attempt to manipulate the available water that naturally flows in the state by punishing farmers and favoring fish that the *Bureau of Reclamation* is proposing for the state and federal projects that cities and farmers depend upon.

That is followed by a section titled, “*Water Abundance in California Does Not Have to Be a Thing of the Past.*” The article describes a new, 20-page plus study, “[Achieving Water Abundance: A New Approach Based on Positive, Common Sense Ideas](#)” by Edward Ring and Steve Hilton.

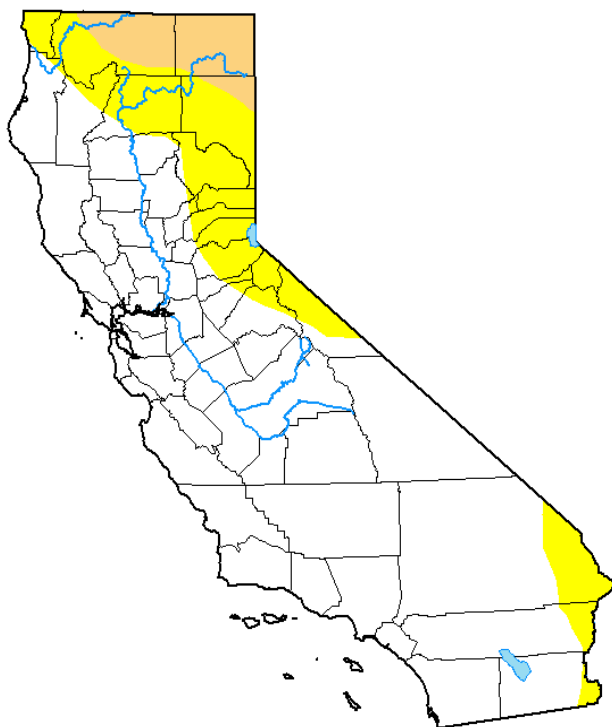
Regular readers of this report will recognize the name Edward Ring, whom I think is the best writer in the state on the topics of water and energy.

An update on the Post fire in northern California, which is now the fourth largest in the state's history concludes our news reports this week.

## The U.S. Drought Monitor for California

August 6,

### U.S. Drought Monitor California



**August 6, 2024**

(Released Thursday, Aug. 8, 2024)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
<b>Current</b>	77.26	22.74	5.32	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Last Week</b> 07-30-2024	78.78	21.22	4.44	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>3 Months Ago</b> 05-07-2024	97.32	2.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> 01-02-2024	96.65	3.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Start of Water Year</b> 09-26-2023	94.01	5.99	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>One Year Ago</b> 08-08-2023	74.55	25.45	7.28	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

David Simeral  
Western Regional Climate Center



[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

# In Repeated Heat Waves This Summer, More and More Wells Go Dry

## Extreme, prolonged heat is straining drinking water wells throughout the San Joaquin Valley

August 6, 2024

• by Jesse Vad, SJV Water

[https://sjvwater.org/extreme-prolonged-heat-is-straining-drinking-water-wells-throughout-the-san-joaquin-valley/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://sjvwater.org/extreme-prolonged-heat-is-straining-drinking-water-wells-throughout-the-san-joaquin-valley/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

Despite back-to-back good water years, domestic wells are still drying up all across the valley as record breaking heat waves pummel the region.

The state saw slightly above average runoff for the 2023-2024 water year with significant precipitation and major reservoirs largely above average levels. That's on top of an epic 2022-2023 water year. The effect was that groundwater levels rebounded in many areas.

Then this summer's brutal heat set in, drying up at-risk wells across the valley.

The nonprofit group [Self-Help Enterprises](#) has seen the influx firsthand.

Before June, staff were getting about five dry well calls a month. As temperatures escalated in June, calls skyrocketed to 15 a week. In the past three months, Self-Help has set up water tanks for about 55 households.

"We're seeing something different that we haven't seen before," said Tami McVay, director of emergency services for Self-Help. "It's later in the year with the increase of numbers."

The wells that are going dry are most likely already at-risk, said McVay, meaning they could be old or pulling water from depleted aquifers.

## Conflict Over Water Never Ends, and Will Do So Only When the State Water Board Ends Its "Only Conservation" Policy

This section begins with the attempt to manipulate the available water that naturally flows in the state by punishing farmers and favoring fish that the *Bureau of Reclamation* is proposing for the state and federal projects that cities and farmers depend upon.

That is followed by a section titled, "*Water Abundance in California Does Not Have to Be a Thing of the Past.*" [\*Achieving Water Abundance: A New Approach Based on Positive, Common Sense Ideas\*](#), By Edward Ring, Steve Hilton

### ***AG ALERT: Water operations long-term plan could limit supply***

[Ag Alert News](#)

August 7, 2024

<https://mavensnotebook.com/2024/08/07/ag-alert-water-operations-long-term-plan-could-limit-supply/>

By Christine Souza , Ag Alert



State and federal agencies face a challenge to balance the [beneficial uses](#) of water needed by farmers with needs of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ecosystem, as water officials plan for climate change impacts.

In seeking to coordinate long-term operation of the federal [Central Valley Project](#) and [State Water Project](#), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released a draft environmental impact statement, or EIS, for the public to review by Sept. 9.

The EIS seeks to influence operations for California's two primary water-delivery systems, which guide pumping of water through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, sending water south to tens of millions of people and to millions of acres of farmland.

The document was drafted in response to a 2021 executive order by President Joe Biden that called for a review of 2019 biological opinions under then-President Donald Trump related to coordinated long-term operation of the state and federal water projects.

The EIS document, released July 26, includes four proposed alternatives to the no-action alternative that establish different objectives for storage, release and diversion of water that would lead to different downstream flow, water supply and power generation impacts that change depending on water-year type and season.

For the Sacramento River Settlement Contractors, Bettner said the draft alternatives mean irrigators would see less water in critically dry years, as water is diverted for instream uses and to protect cold water resources at Shasta Reservoir.

"Really, the end result is the water yield coming out of the project is going to be dedicated to the fish and to the environment," Bettner said. "That is going to be the outcome of the new biological opinions and what the state is going to issue."

## **Water Abundance in California Does Not Have to Be a Thing of the Past**

A new report from Edward Ring and Steve Hilton presents a policy that must be adopted to ensure that California has access to enough water for its 40 million people and the agricultural powerhouse that the state is, as it produces more than 50% of the nations fruits, nuts and vegetables.

The full report is lengthy, but for those seriously interested in the state's future, it is well worth investing the time necessary to read it.

I have included below just a few of the opening paragraphs of the full report and the link to it.

[Achieving Water Abundance: A New Approach Based on Positive, Common Sense Ideas](#)

**By Edward Ring, Steve Hilton**

**Prepared by Golden Together, a Movement to Restore the California Dream**



**Lead Author, Edward Ring, California Policy Center**  
**Author Steve Hilton, Founder of Golden Together**

<https://californiapolicycenter.org/reports/achieving-water-abundance-a-new-approach-based-on-positive-common-sense-ideas/>



**The California Aqueduct. (Photo: CA State Water Project)**

## **Introduction**

While an earthquake that destroyed levees in the Delta would be a terrifying disaster, for most of the 21st century, Californians have not had enough water. Not only have we outgrown the infrastructure we rely upon to supply water to our farms and cities, but we now face a new threat. Climate change. Longer droughts. Hotter summers. Less rainfall. Extreme weather.

Between 1967 and 2000, the State Water Project delivered 100 percent of its contracted allocations to farmers in all but seven years. Since 2000, permitted allocations to California’s farmers only hit 100 percent once, in 2006, and have averaged under 50 percent more often than not. In response, farmers adopted drip irrigation, which conserves water but no longer replenishes aquifers the way flood irrigation does. To keep orchards alive and sustain row crops, California’s farmers tapped those aquifers, overdrafting many to the point of near collapse. Without State Water Project allocations, and without access to groundwater, up to a [million acres of California farmland](#) are at risk of being taken out of production.

The consequences of water scarcity have not only affected our farm economy. [According to a 2024 report](#) released by the State Water Resources Control Board, we now have almost 400 municipal water systems serving nearly a million Californians that don’t meet state requirements for safe and reliable drinking water supplies....

The policy response to water scarcity in California is invariably the same: conserve. Ration urban water consumption with flow restrictors, dual meters, and outdoor “xeriscapes.” Take millions of acres of farmland out of production. Leave higher percentages of water in the dwindling rivers as unimpaired flow. Demolish dams. Make do with less....

In short, climate change means we should be even *more* focused on making investments in water supply and storage, not less. Creating the capacity to have a perennial, reliable and affordable supply of abundant water is a hedge against climate change, not a denial of its existence. Conservation alone leaves farms, cities, and ecosystems alike all vulnerable to disruptions with fatal consequences. By contrast, designing surplus supply into our water systems will help us develop the resiliency to withstand anything that climate change, or any other serious crisis, may someday throw at us.

This principle – that we must upgrade our water system to produce abundance – is the foundational theme of this policy document. Following from this principle, our focus will be on specific projects – either completely new ones or upgrades of existing ones – that are necessary to achieve the goal of abundance. Consequently, the policies we recommend will be designed to create the legislative, legal, and financial means to realize these projects.

A three page version of the report, written by Edward Ring can be found here:

### ***Ringside: How to Achieve Water Abundance in California***

*Solving California's water supply challenges is impossible without significant reform to our state's regulatory and legal environment*

By [Edward Ring](#), August 8, 2024 7:00 am

<https://californiaglobe.com/fr/ringside-how-to-achieve-water-abundance-in-california/>

## ***The Park Fire in Northern California Becomes the Fourth Largest in State's History***

### ***Huge California wildfire chews through timber in very hot and dry weather***

Updated 8:58 AM PDT, August 8, 2024

<https://apnews.com/article/california-wildfires-park-fire-427fecc8dda10863e9fc36dbb3afb301>

CHICO, Calif. (AP) — California's [largest wildfire](#) so far this year continued to grow Thursday as it chewed through timber in very hot and dry weather.

The [Park Fire](#) has scorched more than 660 square miles (1,709 square kilometers) since erupting July 24 near the Sacramento Valley city of Chico and burning northward up the western flank of the Sierra Nevada. Containment remained at 34%, Cal Fire said.

The conflagration's early explosive growth quickly made it California's fourth-largest wildfire on record before [favorable weather](#) reduced its intensity late last week. It reawakened this week due to the heat and very low relative humidity levels.

A large portion of the burned area was in mop-up stage but spot fires were a continuing problem, officials said during Thursday morning's operational briefing.

The latest Park Fire assessments found 636 structures destroyed and 49 damaged. A local man was arrested after authorities alleged he started the fire by pushing a burning car into a gully in a wilderness park outside Chico.

## Feature

This week's feature is a 41 minute video of a discussion held last Saturday by *Promethean Action*. The content will provide you with insight into how Presidential candidate Donald Trump's policy of making the U.S. once again an industrial superpower must begin.



### **Toward a Revolution in Productivity in President Trump's Second Term**

August 4, 2027

<https://www.prometheanaction.com/toward-a-revolution-in-productivity-in-president-trumps-second-term/>

41 minutes.

#### **With Kevin Zondervan and Brian Lantz**

Joining us for this week's class will be Kevin Zondervan, a career engineer in the aerospace industry, and Brian Lantz, author and expert in physical economy. Their discussion will highlight essential and profound “nuts and bolts” that will fill out the platform of President Donald Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance.