



Policy Priorities for California's Water

Responding to the Changing Climate

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Pivoting Today's Pain into Tomorrow's Gain



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In the volatile realm of California's water, some changes are causing immediate challenges

- Most important issues
 - Adapting to more intense droughts
 - Updating infrastructure
 - Securing groundwater sustainability
 - Managing headwater forests to protect water supply
 - Funding unmet needs
- Addressing them requires an innovative, integrated portfolio of solutions



Oroville Spillway damage in 2017
Source: DWR



Groundwater management is an essential hedge against our increasingly drought-prone climate

- Priorities for managing groundwater
 - Address the negative impacts of increased pumping
 - Pick up the pace of demand management
 - Accelerate actions to improve water storage



Partnerships can help ease the transition to groundwater sustainability by delocalizing the investment in new water infrastructure



Many small systems are at risk of both water quality and supply shortfalls

- Priorities for providing safe and affordable drinking water to all
 - Identify systems at risk of shortages and take rapid action
 - Expand water rate assistance programs
 - Find state and federal funding to speed up climate resilience upgrades

DRY WELL FORECASTS FOR THE CENTRAL VALLEY

Wells impacted in the Central Valley by fall 2021



Wells impacted in the Central Valley by fall 2022 if drought persists

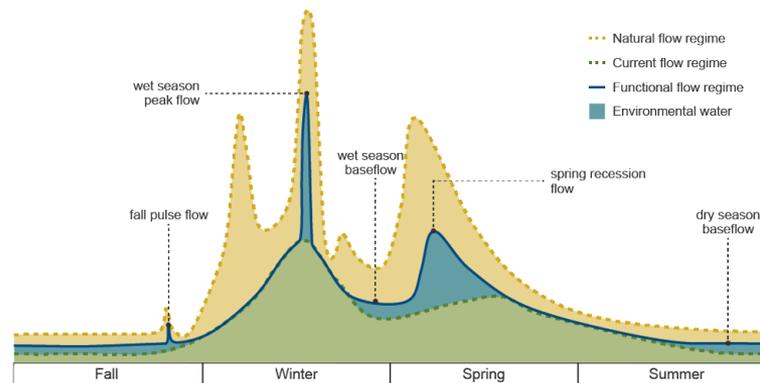


Source: How better data can help California avoid a drinking water crisis (Escriva-Bou and Pauloo, 2021)



Droughts—and the ways we manage water—have taken an increasingly heavy toll on freshwater ecosystems

- Priorities for freshwater ecosystems
 - Improve planning for environmental water needs during droughts
 - Rethink how water is stored and released to build ecosystem resilience
 - Focus on key watersheds
 - Improve permitting to enable restoration to scale up faster



Source: Making the Most of Water for the Environment: a Functional Flows Approach for California's Rivers (Mount et al, 2020)



Increasing dry and warm conditions have hastened a major decline in the health of CA's headwater forests

- Policy priorities for managing headwater forests and fires
 - Improve preparedness of at-risk communities
 - Find new ways to pay for long-term forest stewardship
 - Promote partnerships to increase the pace of forest treatment
 - Document forest management progress and gaps



Mechanical thinning. Photo: Michael De Lasaux



What will it take to become climate-ready?

- Improve water storage and conveyance
- Promote technological innovation
- Upgrade aging infrastructure
- Manage demand
- Find the money



Farms in Paso Robles
Source: DWR

Thank you



Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.



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