Overview of the CA Drought

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Earth Week, April 2015
2014: Gov. Brown declares drought emergency
Snow pack in 2013 – close to normal
Snowpack in 2014 – near record low
USDA drought index for CA

California’s drought level at first week of January

- Abnormally Dry
- Moderate Drought
- Severe Drought
- Extreme Drought
- Exceptional Drought

Source: U.S. Drought Monitor

@latimesgraphics
2015 – Not a good year for snow sports
Fulsom 2014 – 17% of capacity
Shasta 2014 – 100ft below capacity
Getting the message out

serious drought
help save water
State taking leadership

PARDON THE APPEARANCE OF OUR LAWNS
DUE TO THE DROUGHT AND CURRENT WATER RESTRICTIONS,
CalPERS HAS STOPPED WATERING THE GRASS.
Is this temporary or the new reality?

- Prof. Scott Stine (CSUEB) quoted in NYT 04/13 – “Equally as important but much easier to forget is that we consider the last 150 years or so to be normal,” he added. “But you don’t have to go back very far at all to find much drier decades, and much drier centuries.”
Current Situation

• April 1 announcement: “California set a new "low water" mark today with its early-April snowpack measurement. The statewide electronic reading of the snowpack's water content stood at 5 percent of the April 1st average. The lowest previous reading since 1950 was 25 percent of average, so Water Year 2015 is the driest winter in California's written record.” DWR, Sacramento.
Recent Development

• Sfgate 04/19 announce results of SWCB meeting
• “Dead lawns and dirty cars may be the future for California under mandatory water reductions of up to 36 percent rolled out Saturday by state water officials.”
• “Under the new mandate, each of the state’s 400 largest water agencies is assigned to one of nine tiers of cuts, with those that have historically consumed more water required to make larger reductions”
My Pet Hate – Unnecessary Lawns!
Uses about 30-40 gal per sq.ft
Equivalent of 4ft deep over year
Can get $ for removal of grass
Uses <25% as much water
Can really enhance look and value and save $, labor, water quality
Save water & money

- 1.28 gpf toilet
- $90 incl tax at store
- $50 rebate from water agency
- Easy to install
- Replace 3.5 gpf
- 8 times/day = 6,482 gals/yr savings
- $32 savings/yr
- Makes money after ~ 1 yr
Other things you can do

• Be mindful of the water you use
• Avoid all waste and inefficiencies – be water wise and water smart
• Take advantage of the offers to change (free devices, rebates, cash for turfgrass, etc.)
• Make permanent behavioral and environmental changes – water issues are not going away
• Set a personal goal of 25% reduction (e.g. 5 minute showers, not 10; flush toilet every other time; don’t wash your car this month)