

# Record-setting winter leaves Central Valley Project well-positioned at start of 2024 water year

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, 10/03/23

A record-setting winter in 2023 has left the Bureau of Reclamation’s Central Valley Project reservoirs in good shape as it begins the 2024 water year with 8.17 million acre-feet of water in storage.

“We could not have asked for better conditions in 2023 and the rain and snow were a welcome reprieve after the driest three-year stretch ever,” said Reclamation Regional Director Ernest Conant. “The ample precipitation California received has left our reservoirs well positioned as we transition to a new water year.”

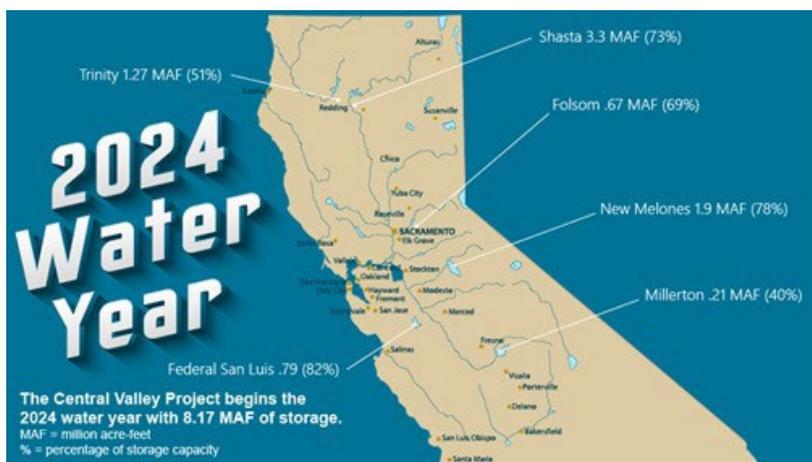
California’s drought was effectively eliminated between December 2022 and March 2023 as a series of at least 12 strong and extreme atmospheric rivers hit the West Coast. The storms’ aftermath marked the first time since 2020 that none of California was in exceptional or extreme drought.

Early in 2023, so much water was in the system that Reclamation declared the availability of Section 215 water for those able to enter temporary water service contracts. (Section 215 refers to a provision in the Reclamation Reform Act of 1982 that defines temporary water supplies and allows non-storable water to be applied to lands otherwise ineligible to receive federal water).

Reclamation’s initial CVP allocation of 35% in February reflected the improved hydrologic conditions. By March, Shasta Reservoir increased to 81% of capacity, and San Luis Reservoir, the largest off-stream reservoir in the U.S., increased to 97%. In April, Reclamation increased all CVP water supply allocations to 100%.

Regional Director Conant added, “While we are pleased to start the 2024 water year with reserves, we know firsthand that California’s changing climate is unpredictable and dry years will undoubtedly reoccur. Reclamation will continue to manage water supplies accordingly and as always, encourage conservation and wise use of our water resources.”

The CVP’s major reservoirs are (from north to south) Trinity, Shasta, Folsom, New Melones, Millerton, and the federal share of San Luis Reservoir. The water year begins Oct. 1 each year and ends Sept. 30.



**Comparison of Previous End-of-Year Storage in Major CVP Reservoirs (Million Acre-Feet)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>1977 (Driest Year)</b>	<b>1983 (Wettest Year)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.17</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>6.01</b>	<b>9.02</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>9.8</b>

The CVP is the largest single source of irrigation water in California, typically supplying water to about 3 million acres of agricultural land in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys. The CVP also provides urban water for millions of people and industrial water, including that essential to the San Francisco Bay Area's economy. Water from the CVP is also vital for the environment, wildlife and fishery restoration, including providing water to 19 refuges in the Central Valley, and hydroelectric power production.

# **New Water Year Underway, California Prepares For A Possible Wet El Niño Year**

California Department of Water Resources, 10/04/23

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today highlighted how the State and its federal and local partners are preparing for the new water year which started October 1 and the possibility of another wet season under strong El Niño conditions.

California's investments in forecasting and emergency preparedness paid off during last season's storm events and the State is incorporating lessons learned during the last water year and advancing the science and technology that will be critical to managing water in the coming years. DWR will utilize the most advanced forecasting tools with our partners like NOAA, Scripps, and others to prepare for whatever may come to California in the months ahead.

DWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which operate the State Water Project and Central Valley Project respectively, are closely coordinating to ensure the state's reservoirs have flood space available under a second year of flood conditions as well as store as much water as possible in case of a return to drought conditions.

This past winter's storms provided a huge boost to the State Water Project. Lake Oroville levels recovered and had the single biggest increase in the State Water Project's history last year. The SWP was able to capture a total of 3.5 million acre-feet in reservoirs since December 1, 2022. Oroville is currently at 136 percent of historical average today, up from 64 percent of average a year ago. San Luis Reservoir, the jointly operated reservoir in Merced County, sits at 190 percent of historical average today, up from 67 percent this time last year. You can find additional reservoir levels at California Water Watch.

In addition to smart water management, DWR is working to prepare local communities for the threat of a second year of flood conditions. DWR is providing vulnerable communities with funding, flood fight training, and continued material support across the state. DWR is starting this water year with more flood fighting materials on hand than last year, including 2.4 million more sandbags, pre-positioned at more locations.

The State-Federal Flood Operations Center (FOC) is working with local counties and communities to provide flood fight training and pre-season emergency response coordination across the state to ensure vulnerable communities have the resources and training needed to respond to potential flooding. A list of those counties is available in the PowerPoint presentation linked below.

The Governor, in partnership with the Legislature, has invested a total of more than \$430 million in the most recent budget to support flood response and projects to protect communities from future flooding.

As the new water year gets underway, communities and all Californians are urged to be aware of local flood risks, be prepared to evacuate and know your evacuation routes, and take action immediately when evacuation orders are issued by local authorities. State agencies are coordinating during California Flood Preparedness Week, October 21 – October 28 to help local communities prepare for possible flooding.

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