What is WEF?

- Impartial nonprofit focused on public education of western water issues since 1977
- Rag-tag group of journalists and teachers
- **Mission**: Create a better understanding of water resources and foster public understanding and resolution of water resources issues through facilitation, education and outreach.
Why It’s Important to Cover Water
Context is half the battle!
How water moves in California is the other half!
Plus cool graphics!
California Water Development

Hetch Hetchy System
San Francisco PUC
1913 - Raker Act

Los Angeles Aqueduct
Los Angeles DWP
1913

Mokelumne River Aqueduct
East Bay MUD
1929

Central Valley project
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1940 (C.C. Canal first)

Colorado River Aqueduct
MWD of So. Cal.
1941

State Water Project
California DWR
1960 - Burns Porter Act
WHERE DOES MY WATER COME FROM?

When a person opens a spigot to draw a glass of water, he or she may be tapping a source close to home or hundreds of miles away. This webpage is intended to help Californians identify their source(s) of drinking water, learn more about how drinking water is treated, and learn how to help prevent pollution of our groundwater and surface water supplies.
Read the Latest Western Water News

Bruce Babbitt urges creation of Bay-Delta Compact as way to end ‘culture of conflict’ in California’s key water hub
Western Water News

Western Water is the only publication in the West to focus exclusively on in-depth coverage of water resource issues. Find it online, with expanded coverage and new features, at www.watereducation.org/WesternWater
Western Water News

Topics we’ve tackled:

- **Fire & Water**: As Wildfires Grow More Intense, California Water Managers Are Learning To Rewrite Their Emergency Playbook

- **Science**: Can a New Approach to Managing California Reservoirs Save Water and Still Protect Against Floods?

- **SGMA**: As Deadline Looms for California's Badly Overdrafted Groundwater Basins, Kern County Seeks a Balance to Keep Farms Thriving

- **Groundwater**: Recharging Depleted Aquifers No Easy Task, But It's Key To California’s Water Supply Future

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**As Wildfires Grow More Intense, California Water Managers Are Learning To Rewrite Their Emergency Playbook**

**WESTERN WATER IN-DEPTH**: Agencies share lessons learned as they recover from fires that destroyed facilities, contaminated supplies and devastated their customers

By Gary Pitzer and Douglas E. Beeman

It's been a year since two devastating wildfires on opposite ends of California underscored the harsh new realities facing water districts and cities serving communities in or adjacent to the state's fire-prone wildlands. Fire doesn't just level homes, it can contaminate water, stretch water systems, damage delivery systems and upset an agency's finances.

![Image: Fire and water logistics](source)

**Can a New Approach to Managing California Reservoirs Save Water and Still Protect Against Floods?**

**WESTERN WATER NOTEBOOK**: Pilot Projects Testing Viability of Using Improved Forecasting to Guide Reservoir Operations

Many of California's watersheds are notoriously flashy - swarming from below-average flows to jarring flood conditions in quick order. The state needs all the water it can get from storms, but current flood management guidelines are strict and unyielding, requiring reservoirs to dump water each winter to make space for flood flows that may not come.

![Image: Reservoir operations](source)

However, new tools and operating methods are emerging that could lead the way to a redefined system that improves both water supply and flood protection capabilities.

**As Deadline Looms for California's Badly Overdrafted Groundwater Basins, Kern County Seeks a Balance to Keep Farms Thriving**

**WESTERN WATER SPOTLIGHT**: Sustainability plans required by the state's groundwater law could cap Kern County pumping, alter what's grown and how land is used

Groundwater helped make Kern County the king of California agricultural production, with a $7 billion annual array of crops that helped feed the nation. That success has come at a price, however. Decades of unchecked groundwater pumping in the county and elsewhere across the state have left some aquifers severely depleted. Now, the county's water managers have less than a year left to devise a plan that manages and protects groundwater for the long term, yet ensures that Kern County's economy can continue to thrive, even with less water.

![Image: Groundwater management](source)

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**Recharging Depleted Aquifers No Easy Task, But It's Key To California’s Water Supply Future**

**WESTERN WATER NOTEBOOK**: A UC Berkeley symposium explores approaches and challenges to managed aquifer recharge around the West

To survive the next drought and meet the looming demands of the state's groundwater sustainability law, California is going to have to put more water back into the ground. But as other Western states have found, recharging overpumped aquifers is no easy task.

Successfully recharging aquifers could bring multiple benefits for farms and wildlife and help restore the vital interconnection between groundwater and rivers or streams. As local areas around the state draft their groundwater sustainability plans, though, landowners in the hardest hit regions of the state know they will have to reduce pumping to address the chronic overdraft in which millions of acrosstake more are withdrawn than are naturally recharged.

![Image: Aquifer recharge](source)
AS DEADLINE LOOMS FOR CALIFORNIA’S BADLY OVERDRAFTED GROUNDWATER BASINS, KERN COUNTY SEEKS A BALANCE TO KEEP FARMS THRIVING

WESTERN WATER SPOTLIGHT: SUSTAINABILITY PLANS REQUIRED BY THE STATE’S GROUNDWATER LAW COULD CAP KERN COUNTY PUMPING, ALTER WHAT’S GROWN AND HOW LAND IS USED

Groundwater helped make Kern County the king of California agricultural production, with a $7 billion annual array of crops that help feed the nation. That success has come at a price, however. Decades of unchecked groundwater pumping in the county and elsewhere across the state have left some aquifers severely depleted. Now, the county’s water managers have less than a year left to devise a plan that manages and protects groundwater for the long term, yet ensures that Kern County’s economy can continue to thrive, even with less water.

Exactly how sustainability will be achieved under the state’s 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is still to be determined. The Kern Groundwater Authority, formed in...
Hot Topics for 2020

- Delta Tunnel
- Delta flows plan
- PFAs (move to regulate in California)
- Microplastics
- Disadvantaged Communities ($130 Million Safe & Affordable Drinking Water Fund)
- Water Resilience Portfolio/Climate Change
- Groundwater Sustainability
- SGMA Deadlines: Jan. 31, 2020
- Critically Overdrafted Basins
Water Quality Regulators
Resources for Journalists

- Our own Western Water News
- Layperson’s Guides on key water topics
- Water Maps
- Website: **Free tool** for research and news
  - Online encyclopedia - Aquapedia
  - Aquaforinia daily aggregate of top water news
- Follow us on social media
AQUAFORNIA – Stay on Top of the Issues

💧 Top water news from California and the West in an easy-to-read headline format

💧 Updated Monday through Friday

💧 Impartial ranking of article importance

💧 Can use to do quick scan of stories each morning
Groups sue to stop California oil leases, citing dangers of fracking

Environmentalists sued the Trump administration Tuesday for approving new oil-drilling leases on federal land in eight Central California counties and the Sierra foothills, including sites near Yosemite National Park. ... The lawsuit seeks to halt the drilling plan until provisions are added requiring a thorough environmental review before extraction leases are issued.

Related article:
- USA Today: Conservation groups sue BLM over California fracking plan

Growers still unclear on how much groundwater they can use

The first question asked at the Eastern Tule Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board meeting on Friday represented the frustration of growers who are still facing the unknown. “It’s 2020,” the grower said, who went on to ask the board, referring to growers, “what can they pump?” The board is still working through the process on how much water growers can pump out of the ground.
AQUAPEDIA: Online Water Encyclopedia

- Terms and issues listed A to Z
- Historical water people
- Timelines
A new era of groundwater management began in 2014 with the passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which aims for local and regional agencies to develop and implement sustainable groundwater management plans with the state as the backstop.

SGMA defines “sustainable groundwater management” as the “management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results.”

When fully implemented, SGMA is expected to effectively administer groundwater pumping, though it remains to be seen if some of the damage done to aquifers is irreparable. Without SGMA, however, there is no hope for management.

In California, groundwater is a critical source of water for both farms and cities, supplying 40 percent of water in a typical year and as much as 60 percent in drought years.
During the last drought . . .
DROUGHT FAQS

California is no stranger to drought. When conditions become dry, water storage declines and water conservation mandates make news headlines; questions from the public often surface about what appear to be easy solutions to augment the state’s water supply. But the answers can be complicated and, in the end, there is no silver bullet to ensure a resilient water supply, especially during drought.

We explore “frequently asked questions” often posed by the public and provide answers below. Simply click on the question for the answer to appear.
Layperson’s Guides

All 16 guides are an excellent resource for researchers, reporters, lawmakers, students and the public

- Agricultural Drainage
- California Water
- California Wastewater
- Central Valley Project
- Climate Change
- Colorado River
- Colorado River Delta
- The Delta
- Flood Management
- Groundwater
- Integrated Regional Water Management
- State Water Project
- Water Conservation
- Water Marketing
- Water Recycling
- Water Rights Law
Understanding the plumbing and geography in California is half the battle.
Water Tours

- Six major tours most years, taking people to the source
- Central Valley, Lower Colorado River, Bay-Delta, Headwaters, Northern California and more!
- Some scholarships available for journalists
Conferences/Workshops

The Foundation coordinates an annual conference known as the **Water Summit**, along with events and workshops devoted to specific issues.

- Climate change
- Flood management
- Drought
- The Delta
- Water 101
- Groundwater/SGMA
- The Colorado River
- Agriculture
- Subsidence
Social Media

Water Education Foundation
@WaterEdFdn

Impartial nonprofit raising awareness of water resources in California & the Southwest, one tour, one lecture, one article, one tweet at a time. #42YearsStrong

Sacramento, California  watereducation.org/water101/2020

Born February 27, 1977  Joined July 2011

1,180 Following  5,216 Followers
Social Media

- Be on Twitter to find experts
- Use the hashtag: #cawater
- Find new reports, story ideas
Sign up for Western Water / AquaFornia

Go to Quicklinks at www.watereducation.org
Stay in Touch

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