



**From Drought to Reservoir Recovery: Lake Oroville during and after the drought.  
(Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)**

# **California Water and Infrastructure Report**

## **For May 11, 2023**

**(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>

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## A Note to Readers

As the California drought has now nearly completely disappeared, and the snowpack in the Sierras begins to melt, adding more to the flooding in the state, there is not much new to add to this ongoing story.

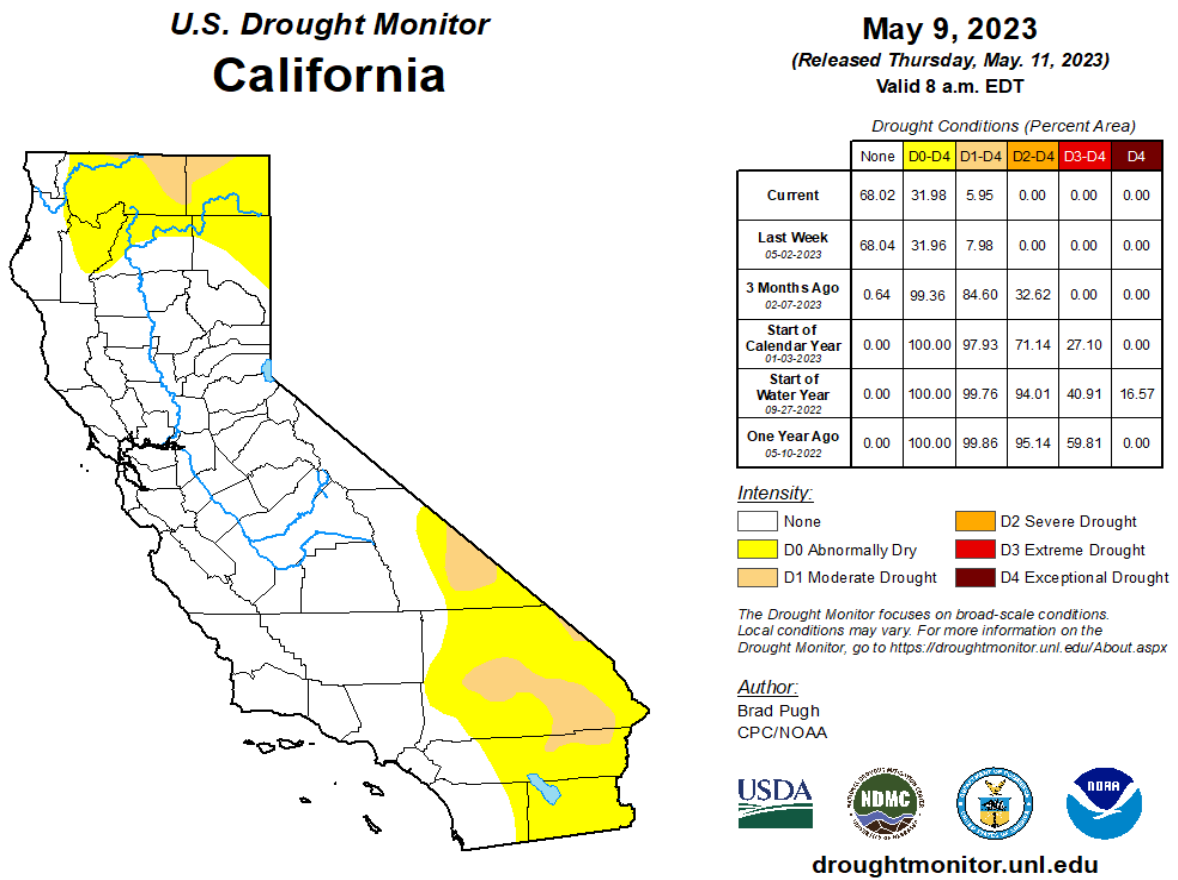
Also, there is not much new to report on the Colorado River crisis, and the coverage below reflects that.

So, this week's report will be of fewer pages than usual.

The **Feature** this week is a video on the ongoing banking crisis being a reflection of a more fundamental crisis of the entire financial system. That and what must be done is the subject of the presentation by my associate Brian Lantz from LaRouche PAC

## U.S. Drought Monitor

With less than 6% of the state now in “Moderate Drought,” attention now focuses on the flooding and how to capture all the water that the remarkable winter provided, especially now, as the huge snowpack has begun to melt.



# While the Drought is Gone, the Reservoirs Are Filling

The article below has stunning before and after photos of Lake Oroville. I include below just one of them.

## California's Lake Oroville highlights reversal of severe-drought levels in stunning before and after images

### Lake Oroville water levels: Drought and After the Drought



(Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

Richard Suter

Sun, May 7, 2023, 8:55 AM PDT · 1 min read

<https://sports.yahoo.com/california-lake-oroville-highlights-reversal-155512557.html>

The storms that hit California in the past months provided glimpses of hope as the severe drought up and down the state dropped water levels to shocking all-time lows.

While the large fronts that began at the start of the year have caused flooding and massive amounts of snowfall at the higher elevations—which left thousands stranded with little to no help—it has combated the worrisome draughts.

And few areas have highlighted the drastic change more than Lake Oroville, the state's second-largest reservoir that is now 69% full.

## The Floods to Come

### California's epic snowpack is melting. Here's what to expect

May 5, 2023 5:00 AM ET

Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

By [Nathan Rott](#), [Claire Harbage](#)

<https://www.npr.org/2023/05/05/1173069933/snowpack-california-2023-flooding-what-to-expect>

CORCORAN, Calif. — The waters from [a long-dry lake](#), resurrected by epic rains earlier this year, already lap at the levee of this Central Valley town of 22,000 people. A hundred square miles of crops are drowning around it. But the flood that Corcoran City Manager Greg Gatzka is really worried about has yet to come.

That flood — frozen in a historic snowpack — is still sleeping, piled around Sequoia trunks, some 80 miles away. Unseasonably warm temperatures are starting to wake it up.

For Gatzka, warmer temperatures mean "the snowpack, the ominous thing that we can see on the horizon ... is coming our way," he said.

Four major rivers empty into the landlocked southern end of the Central Valley and the clay-packed bed of the Tulare Lake Basin. All start in the snow-packed Sierra Nevada mountains and end, eventually, in the fast-growing expanse of Tulare Lake — what used to be the largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi River.

## The Colorado River Crisis

While the abundant snowpack in the Rocky Mountains is now alleviating the danger of Lake Mead and Lake Powell continuing to drop to dangerous levels, every water agency in seven states is awaiting May 20, when the Interior Department will announce what the reductions in water withdraws will be enforced on each state. Will that ignore California's insistence that the "Law of the River" be the guide, in which those with the oldest water rights will be the last forced to reduce their water use. Or will it be a more equitable policy in which those oldest rights held by especially those farmers in the Imperial Valley of California will be forced to take the largest hit.

In other news from the Colorado River Basin, the attempt to pay farmers not to grow crops to reduce their water use has not yet been very successful, as the article below illustrates.

The photo and the accompanying eight minute video present an excellent summary of the current state of the river and the rising level of Lake Mead, though the text under the photo (below) is a little bit of

an exaggeration: “In 2022, it dropped to record low levels, and nearly reached dead-pool status.”

Otherwise, the video does present an excellent summary of the the current status of the river, the importance of reducing water withdraws and the actions of the states attempting to come to an agreement on the amount each state will cut.



“Lake Mead is one of the largest reservoirs in the United States. In 2022, it dropped to record low levels, and nearly reached dead-pool status. But today, the reservoir's condition is very different. Water Levels are rising, and snowpack on the Colorado River is reaching record high levels. Therefore, how what does the future hold for Lake Mead, and how will rising water levels affect the future of this reservoir?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvXa4MGYhyQ>

## **A plan to pay farmers to use less of the Colorado River comes up dry**

**“It’s a comical mess,” Shaun Chapoose, chairman of northeast Utah’s Ute Indian Tribe, said. “They ain’t fixing nothing.”**

By [Conrad Swanson Dp](#) | [cswanson@denverpost.com](mailto:cswanson@denverpost.com) | The Denver Post  
May 9, 2023 at 7:00 a.m.

<https://www.greeleytribune.com/2023/05/09/colorado-river-conservation-pilot-savings-water/>

One way to save massive amounts of water from the [drying Colorado River](#) — state and federal officials had hoped — was to effectively buy water this year from farmers and ranchers with a \$125 million conservation program.

But very few are taking the offer. Or those willing to sell were turned away.

“It’s a comical mess,” Shaun Chapoose, chairman of northeast Utah’s Ute Indian Tribe, said. “They ain’t fixing nothing.”

Federal officials want to save between [2 million and 4 million](#) acre-feet from the Colorado River. An acre-foot is a volumetric measurement of water amounting to about 326,000 gallons or a year’s worth

for two average families of four.

Most of those savings must come from Arizona and California, which use the vast majority of the river's water, more than their allotment. But the System Conservation Pilot Program was meant as a way for upper-basin states to contribute water savings and help prop up sinking water levels at lakes Powell and Mead, the country's two largest reservoirs.

If each of the program's approved applications works out as expected the upper-basin can expect to save about 39,000 acre-feet at a cost of about \$16 million, Cullom said.

That's less than 2% of the smallest amount of water federal officials hope to save.

Out of the gates, that timing put farmers in a difficult position, Gene Shawcroftenvi, chair of the Colorado River Authority of Utah, said. Farmers are an important part of the program because agriculture consumes, by far, the vast majority of Colorado River water.

Farmers need to buy fertilizer, seed and fuel for their equipment far in advance of when they start planting, Shawcroft noted. And by the time the pilot program began accepting applications, many had already made those purchases.

The number of willing participants dwindled immediately, Shawcroft said. And [then came the snow](#), more than almost anybody expected. Farmers who have been suffering extremely dry conditions in recent years can expect more water to grow their crops and many intend to, rather than selling their water rights for the year.

## Feature

With near daily headlines of a slow-motion banking crisis, the following video from my colleague Brian Lantz at LaRouche PAC, in which he presents the more fundamental crisis of the banking and financial system brought do us over the past 50 years by turning the entire economy into a gambling casino.

Brian also presents an outline of what an actual human economy is and the policies required to return the nation to one in which a single family income is able to provide what every family desires and deserves.

### **It's Not Just the Banks That Are Failing**

By [Brian Lantz](#)

May 09, 2023

[https://www.larouchepac.com/it\\_s\\_not\\_just\\_the\\_banks\\_that\\_are\\_failing](https://www.larouchepac.com/it_s_not_just_the_banks_that_are_failing)

The video is 52 minutes.

Behind the almost daily headlines of another failing or about-to-fail bank, lies the simple reality that the economics of globalism are just plain wrong. For too long, many of our fellow citizens have thought that they have no choice but to hustle to survive in the equivalent of a criminal enterprise.

Tonight, Brian Lantz will give you a "pre-mortem" on the dying system, and will present the outlines of the alternative. The metric of a functioning, human economy is one in which a young family can afford to have children on a single income, and have confidence that those children have opportunities for a productive future. Those steps start with Donald Trump's "Agenda 47."