

AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION - April 20-22, 2015
California Drought: Causes, Impacts, and Policy

<http://chapman.agu.org/drought/>

Panel: Drought Impacts Ecosystems

Rapporteur: Ashmita Sengupta

Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, Costa Mesa, CA USA

Panel: Day Two Redux: Challenges/Needs/Gaps

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Conference Introduction

Currently, California is facing one of its most severe 3-year droughts in the instrumental record. Concerns have been raised, whether the current drought represents a “new reality” for California, and whether the past is a useful guidepost for the future. It is thus timely to assemble a wide collection of experts, students, and interested parties to examine the broad issues associated with California drought. A meaningful exploration of the drought problem must transcend supply issues, but also address demand. The conference, therefore, embraces a broad definition of drought – a condition in which demand for water exceeds available supply.

In this framework, vanishing water and surging demand are synonymous indicators for drought. The question whether the state may need to adjust to less rainfall must therefore go hand-in-hand with the issue of whether an adjustment is required in the characterization of available water resources even if precipitation doesn't change.

The primary objective of the conference will be exploring the progress, challenges, and opportunities to improve drought monitoring and prediction as well as policy and management solutions to enhance California's resilience to droughts.