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*Reclamation / News & Multimedia / News Releases / Reclamation outlines Central Valley Project initial 2021 water allocation*

NEWS & MULTIMEDIA

# Reclamation outlines Central Valley Project initial 2021 water allocation

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Central Valley Project agriculture

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – Today, the Bureau of Reclamation announced the initial 2021 water supply allocation for Central Valley Project contractors. Allocation amounts are based on an estimate of water available for delivery to CVP water users and reflects current reservoir storages, precipitation, and snowpack in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada. This year’s low allocation is an indicator of the dry winter California is experiencing after the dry water year of 2020.

“Although we had a couple of precipitation-packed storms in January and early February, we are still well below normal for precipitation and snowfall this year,” **said Regional Director Ernest Conant.** “We will monitor the hydrology as the water year progresses and continue to look for opportunities for operational flexibility.”

The California Department of Water Resources reports that as of Feb. 21, statewide average snow water content in the Sierra Nevada was 54% of the Apr. 1 average. Current Northern Sierra precipitation is 52% of the seasonal average to date.

Shasta Reservoir’s 4.5 million acre-feet capacity represents the majority of CVP water storage. Water from Shasta Reservoir is used for many purposes, including contractor supply for north and south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, as well as maintaining temperatures downstream of the dam throughout the summer and fall for threatened and endangered fish

species to the extent practicable. Currently, reservoir storage is below the historic average for this time of the year and runoff forecasts predict that overall storage might be limited if typical spring precipitation does not materialize.

Given the low snowpack and low projected runoff this spring and summer, Reclamation is announcing the following initial allocations:

### **North-of-Delta Contractors (Including American River and In-Delta Contractors)**

- Agricultural water service contractors north-of-Delta are allocated 5% of their contract supply.
- Pursuant to Reclamation's municipal and industrial water shortage guidelines, M&I water service contractors north-of-Delta (including American River and In-Delta Contractors) are allocated 55% of their historic use or public health and safety needs, whichever is greater.
- Sacramento River Settlement Contractors are allocated 75% of their contract supply.

### **Eastside Water Service Contractors**

- Eastside water service contractors (Central San Joaquin Water Conservation District and Stockton East Water District) are allocated 100% of their contract total.

### **South-of-Delta Contractors**

- Agricultural water service contractors south-of-Delta are allocated 5% of their contract supply.
- M&I water service contractors south-of-Delta are allocated the greater of 55% of their historic use or public health and safety needs, whichever is greater.
- The San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors and San Joaquin Settlement Contractors are allocated 75% of their contract supply.

### **Wildlife Refuges**

- Wildlife refuges (Level 2) north- and south-of-Delta, which also have allocations subject to pre-established Shasta inflow criteria, are allocated 75% of their contract supply.

### **Friant Division**

- Friant Division contractors' water supply develops in the Upper San Joaquin River Basin Watershed and is delivered from Millerton Lake through Friant Dam to the Madera Canal and Friant-Kern Canal. The first 800,000 acre-feet of available water supply is considered Class 1; Class 2 is considered the next amount of available water supply up to 1.4 million

acre-feet. Given the current hydrologic conditions, Friant Class 1 initial allocation will be 20% and Class 2 will be 0%.

- For the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, Reclamation is currently forecasting a “Dry” water year type, providing for 170,732 acre-feet to be used for Restoration Program purposes.

In addition to the initial 2021 CVP water allocation, several south-of-Delta and Friant Division contractors are rescheduling unused water from 2020 supplies into 2021. That water is being stored in San Luis Reservoir and Millerton Lake. The option to reschedule (carry over) water in San Luis Reservoir and Millerton Lake from one contract year to the next has been available to the water service contractors since the early 1990’s. That carry over option was instituted after a series of dry years in the early 1990’s to encourage conservation and best water management practices.

Reclamation notified the Sacramento River Settlement Contractors, San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors, San Joaquin Settlement Contractors, and Refuge Contractors that the forecasted inflow to Shasta Lake falls below the threshold and the water year is currently identified as a “Critical Year” as that term is defined in their contracts.

As the water year progresses, changes in hydrology and opportunities to deliver additional water will influence future allocations. Water supply updates will be made as appropriate and posted at <https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvp-water/index.html>.

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Relevant Link:

Central Valley Project Water Supply

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