

**ATTACHMENT 1**



**Monthly Drought Update  
Tuesday April 8, 2014  
San Luis Obispo County**

**CURRENT CONDITIONS**

**U.S. Drought Monitor Status:**

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report released March 25, 2014 indicates San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating.

**Recent Precipitation:**

As of March 24, 2014, San Luis Obispo County has had no measurable rainfall since the proclamation of a local emergency due to drought conditions on March 11, 2014.

**San Luis Obispo County Precipitation Totals (in inches):**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Rainfall Total Received from Last Update (3/8/14 to 3/24/14)</b>	<b>Rainfall To Date 3/24/2014</b>	<b>Avg. Rainfall</b>
Nipomo South (730)	0.00	3.228	16
Lopez Dam (737)	0.00	6.710	21
SLO Reservoir (749)	0.00	6.89	25
Los Osos Landfill (727)	0.00	5.472	20
Cambria (717)	0.00	5.276	22
Rocky Butte (703)	0.00	9.094	39
Santa Margarita (723)	0.00	6.614	26
Salinas Dam (719)	0.00	5.787	23
Atascadero (711)	0.00	4.764	18
Templeton (762)	0.00	4.843	14.7
Paso Robles (city)	0.00	4.99	14.33
Hog Canyon (709)	0.00	3.071	16

Source: [www.slocountywater.org](http://www.slocountywater.org) County of San Luis Obispo-City of Paso Robles Website

**Near-term Outlook for Precipitation:**

Beginning Tuesday, March 25, 2014, several storms will travel through the state that will possibly bring significant rain and snow. Precipitation is predicted to be heaviest in the far northern portion of the state. According to the National Weather Service, the 30-day outlook statistical tools favor below-median precipitation in the southwest for all of California. As our state's rainy season nears its end, much of California has received only about 50% of normal precipitation for this rainy season. Heavy rain and snow would have to fall throughout California most days in April to reach average annual rain and snowfall levels, which is highly unlikely. Even with such precipitation, California would remain in drought conditions, due to low water supplies in reservoirs from the two previous dry years.

**Reservoir Levels (% of capacity):**

Note: Historical averages calculated using data from the following time frame:

Nacimiento: 1959 – 2013; Lopez: 1994-2013; Salinas: 1987-2013; and Whale Rock: 1985-2013.

<b>Reservoir</b>	<b>% of Capacity</b>	<b>Avg. % Capacity</b>	<b>Updated</b>
Nacimiento	22%	62%	3/25/2014
Lopez	56%	78%	3/25/2014
Salinas	38%	77%	3/25/2014
Whale Rock	55%	79%	3/19/2014

Source: [www.slocountywater.org](http://www.slocountywater.org) County of San Luis Obispo

## ATTACHMENT 1

### STATE WATER

**Status:** Based on discussions with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), initial weather conditions, and existing carry over water amounts, the Public Works Department remains cautiously optimistic of meeting 100% of requested water in 2014, with some improved delivery potential for 2015.

**Actions:** The Public Works Department continues to coordinate with DWR regarding State Water Deliveries including correspondence with Mark Cowin, DWR Director.

### VULNERABLE WATER SYSTEMS

#### **County Operated (State water):**

- **Chorro Valley Institutions** (CMC, Animal Services, Sheriff, County Operations, Camp San Luis, Cuesta College, County Office of Education)  
Status: Proposed emergency inter-tie project
- **Santa Margarita**  
Status: Proposed emergency inter-tie project

#### **Non-County Operated:**

- **City of Morro Bay**  
Status: Emergency inter-tie with Chorro Valley and desal permit
- **Cambria CSD**  
Status: Proposed brackish desal & inter-tie with San Simeon
- **San Simeon CSD**  
Status: Proposed brackish desal & inter-tie with Cambria CSD
- **Heritage Ranch CSD**  
Status: Emergency inter-tie agreement between Flood Control District and CSD near complete and will be submitted to governing boards for approval soon
- **Rural Paso Robles residents**  
Status: Continue to identify water trucking options and outreach efforts.

### IMPACTS

#### **Agricultural Impacts:**

Agricultural conditions continue to deteriorate due to lack of moisture. This is especially evident for rangeland. The result of poor grazing conditions is contributing to the unusually high number of cattle that have been sold through the Templeton Livestock Market. These sales have occurred earlier than normal and younger, lighter weight, calves and cows are being sold as ranchers reduce herd size due to the expense of supplemental feeding. At the Cattlemen's meeting on March 18, 2014, it was reported that over 10,000 butcher cows have already been sold at the Templeton Market since October 1, 2013 (does not account for the number taken to other markets such as Formosa or the 101 in Prunedale). The normal number for this time is about 1,500. Long-term impacts will be felt as ranchers wait for rangeland forage plants to rebound before rebuilding reduced herds. It is estimated that it could take up to five years for ranchers to re-build their herds.

All areas of agriculture are feeling the impacts of the drought. Several coastal avocado growers have begun cutting trees back to preserve the trees as best they can. This will result in loss of crop for several years until available moisture conditions return to normal levels. Vegetable production in the south county remains at near normal levels and growers may see higher demand and prices as production in other parts of the state is reduced due to lack of water for irrigation.

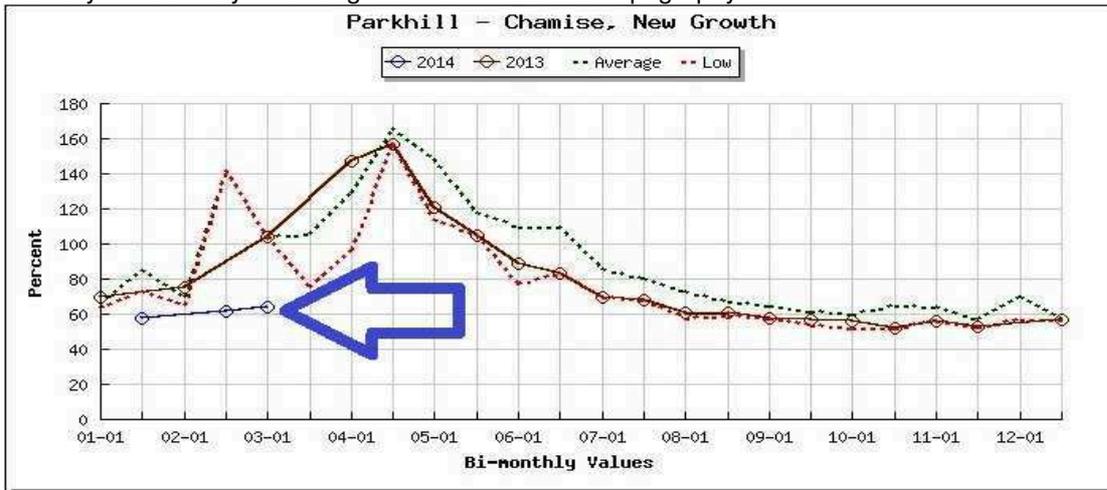
According to staff at the USDA Farm Service Agency, no new financial aid programs for growers have been announced.

#### **Fire Danger:**

Live Fuel Moisture (LFM) – LFM is the moisture content of live vegetation expressed as a percentage of the oven-dry weight. Values measured bi-monthly at 3 sites around the County continue to run at historically low levels. We expect the spring "spike" to be comparatively low and for shrub species throughout the County to remain available for burning through the spring months into fall rather than from mid-summer into fall as in normal years. New historical low LFMs are likely to occur continuously through

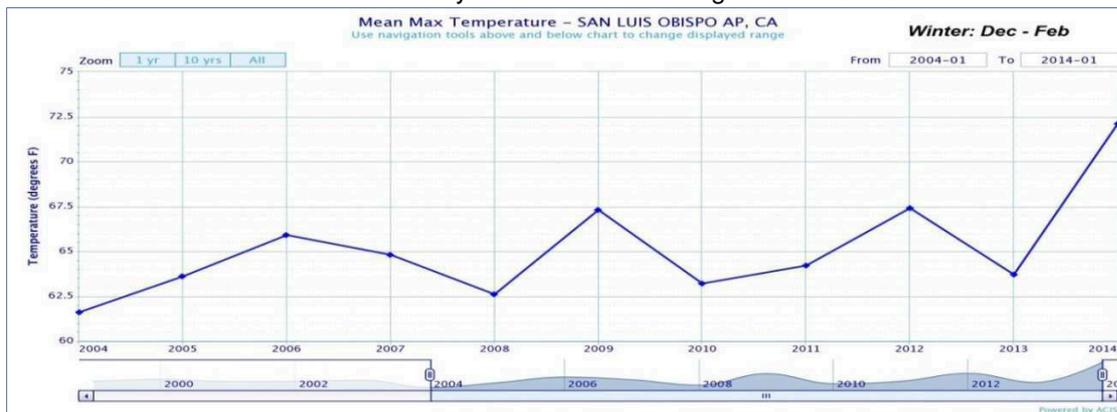
**ATTACHMENT 1**

at least fall of this year. "Fuel-driven" fires will be possible months earlier than normal and high fire intensity will be likely when aligned with wind and/or topography.

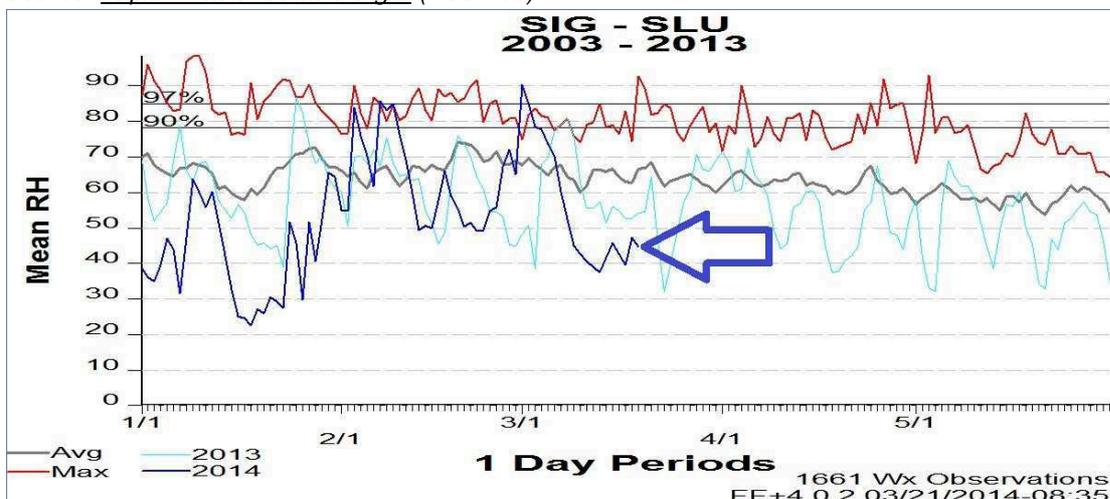


Source: [http://www.wfas.net/nfmd/public/states\\_map.php?state=CA](http://www.wfas.net/nfmd/public/states_map.php?state=CA)

Temperatures/Relative Humidity (RH) – Due to this past winter’s weather patterns, and the prevalence of high pressure driven off-shore Santa Lucia wind conditions, average temperatures have been higher than in recent years. Coupled with correspondingly low RH levels, the fire danger has remained elevated throughout the fall/winter months except for two short periods during precipitation events. As significant as the higher fire danger has been on a daily basis this past fall/winter, these conditions also cause continuous drying of both live and dead fuels which is cumulative and likely to lead to unprecedented dry fuel conditions for the remainder of the year or until there is significant rainfall.



Source: <http://xmacis.rcc-acis.org/#> (Dec-Feb)



## ATTACHMENT 1

Energy Release Component (ERC) – ERC is an index related to how hot a fire could burn. It is directly related to the 24-hour, potential worst case, total available energy (BTUs) at the head of a fire. The ERC can serve as a good characterization of fire season as it tracks seasonal fire danger trends well. ERC has low variability, and is the best fire danger component for indicating the effects of intermediate to long-term drying on fire behavior. So far in 2014, 10-year high ERC's have occurred in all of January, half of February and for the past week in March.

Dead Fuel Moisture – The moisture content of dead organic fuels is another important component of the relative fire danger. As with LFM above, dead fuel moisture levels are a good indicator of how likely fuels are to ignite and how intensely they will burn. 100-hr fuel refers to vegetation between 1 and 3 inches in diameter and 1000-hr fuel is 3-6 inches. As indicated by the charts below, dead fuel moisture levels are currently at 20-year lows on the Central Coast.

Other Fire Danger Indicators – Another important factor increasing the fire danger as well as an indicator of drought severity and the resulting effects on forest/range health is the widespread increase in the occurrence of tree mortality throughout the County. A variety of both native and introduced tree species affected over a broad range of elevations including Monterey pine, coast live oak, grey pine, California bay, eucalyptus, Monterey cypress, Scotch pine, palms and many others. In many inland areas, trees already under severe drought stress experienced significant frost/freeze damage. Due to their diminished natural defense mechanisms, stressed trees are particularly vulnerable to secondary pests such as bark beetles and defoliating insects such as oak moths.

### **Economic:**

If conditions continue, negative economic impacts will continue to mount. To date, 56 of the 58 California counties have been declared as official disaster areas. Farmers in these counties are eligible for low interest emergency loans and other disaster assistance programs. No information is available yet regarding impact on labor due to drought.

## **STATE & FEDERAL KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM LAST MONTH**

### **Federal Government:**

No additional actions have been reported other than the availability of the federal agriculture and related industry assistance programs previously announced. As noted below, the State continues to gather information from agencies statewide, including San Luis Obispo County, to help consolidate damage and related costs with the intent to help justify additional federal assistance.

### **State Government:**

While there are no action updates from the State since the proclamation on March 11, 2014, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) continues to coordinate the gathering of information from other state agencies and local governments. This effort includes weekly conference calls which our County OES participants in and during which County OES continues to provide input in the situation in our county. This includes the situation in Cambria as well as passing on information on the struggles our agriculture continues to face. The information from us and others throughout the state is reported weekly to the Governor's Drought Taskforce., which continues to meet weekly. The Governor's Task Force is gathering and consolidating information to help potentially justify additional federal assistance.

As of March 25, 2014, Cal OES is reporting that 18 counties have now proclaimed a local emergency due to the drought, including San Luis Obispo County.

## **COUNTY DROUGHT TASK FORCE KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM LAST MONTH**

### **County Water Resources:**

The Department of Public Works has taken the following actions since the last update:

- Opened Public Works Department Operations Center (Emergency Coordination Center)
- Coordination with state & federal lobbyists
- Met with Chorro Valley institutions related to Nacimiento proposed inter-tie
- Met with State Water contractors
- Presented drought update to WRAC, Zone 3, Paso Robles Blue Ribbon Committee
- Toured CMC water facilities to initiate emergency inter-tie efforts

## ATTACHMENT 1

- Identifying potable and non-potable water trucking operations and sources of potable water to enhance responsiveness as drought continues
- Visited Sacramento to coordinate issues related to water shortages

### **County Facilities Usage & Conservation Actions:**

General Services Agency continues to replace existing fixtures with low flow devices and to prepare documents for a water audit.

### **County Public Outreach Actions:**

In an effort to raise awareness about water supply issues and communicate the call for a 20% voluntary reduction in water usage, the County continues to examine multiple channels of communication for water conservation outreach efforts. Members of the task force have created a communications plan consisting of multiple tools to in order to remind residents countywide of the importance of water supply.

#### Tool #1: Local Collaboration

Status: The County continues to work collaboratively with a network of water purveyors and cities for broad public outreach.

#### Tool #2: Website Marketing & Social Media

Status: Staff is developing a webpage that will carry drought information, latest news and updates, water conservation tips, and links to other websites for more detailed information. As presented in the March 11, 2014 staff report the following websites are currently in use by the County:

- Save our Water ([www.saveourwater.org](http://www.saveourwater.org)): Governor's go-to resource for water conservation & the link is posted on County's homepage.
- SLO Water Wise Landscaping website ([www.slowaterwiselandscaping.com](http://www.slowaterwiselandscaping.com)): The County, in coordination with the Partners in Water Conservation (PIWC), continues to sponsor a website tool for water conservation in the home of commercial landscape.
- San Luis Obispo County Water Resources website ([www.slocountywater.org](http://www.slocountywater.org)): The San Luis Obispo Water Resources website provides water conservation resources and links, including a link and information regarding Water Wise Landscaping.  
University of California Cooperative Extension  
([http://cesanluisobispo.ucanr.edu/Drought\\_Information/](http://cesanluisobispo.ucanr.edu/Drought_Information/)): The UCCE Farm Advisor website provides drought resources for agriculture.

#### Tool #3: Water Purveyor Outreach (use water bill as the first-line educational tool)

Status: The Public Works Department continues to develop and distribute water conservation information to water customers. The following is a list of the department's current efforts:

- Inserted bi-lingual water conservation letter in March utility bill for Shandon
- Dedicated section of water confidence report for water conservation and mailed to Santa Margarita
- Anticipate water conservation in next billing cycle for Cayucos
- Developing water conservation brochure for all retail water systems
- Gave drought presentation to WRAC, Paso Robles Blue Ribbon Committee and Zone 3 Advisory Committee

#### Tool #4: Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Status: Staff is in contact with multiple media sources to request the airing of Public Service Announcements that have been prepared by the State.

#### Tool #5: News Media

Status: Staff continues to examine all media outlets. Currently, staff is developing media tools to submit to AGP Video, Inc. for broadcasting.

#### Tool #6: Advertising

Status: Staff is currently researching costs for multiple sources of advertising including television, radio, and billboards.

#### Other Marketing Tools

The County continues to examine other marketing tools for water conservation outreach.

## ATTACHMENT 1

### **DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION**

State's Water Conservation Campaign; Save our Water ([www.saveourh2o.org](http://www.saveourh2o.org))

California's Drought Information Clearinghouse; Dought.CA.Gov ([ca.gov/drought/](http://ca.gov/drought/))

California Department of Food and Agriculture; Drought information ([www.cdfa.ca.gov/drought/](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/drought/))

California Department of Water Resources; Current Water Conditions  
([www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/drought/](http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/drought/))

California State Water Resources Control Board; Water Rights, Drought Info and Actions  
([www.swrcb.ca.gov/waterrights/water\\_issues/programs/drought/index.shtml](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/index.shtml))

California Department of Public Health; Drinking Water CDPH Drinking Water Program  
([www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/pages/dwp.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/pages/dwp.aspx))

USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information; USDA Programs  
([usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=DISASTER\\_ASSISTANCE](http://usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=DISASTER_ASSISTANCE))

UC Cooperative Extension Drought Information Resources; Drought Information Resources;  
[cesanluisobispo.ucanr.edu/Drought\\_Information/](http://cesanluisobispo.ucanr.edu/Drought_Information/)