

KLAMATH WATERSHED RESIDENTS:

Help Maintain Stream Flow this Summer for Threatened and Endangered Fish

As of July 2021, the Klamath River basin is in the midst of a severe two-year drought. Precipitation levels are half of normal across much of the Klamath River watershed. Flows in most streams in Northern California are at or below those of the 2012–2016 drought. The Scott and Shasta rivers, which are tributaries to the Klamath, are experiencing one of the worst droughts on record. Flows in the Scott River are in the lowest 5% on record, and flows in the Shasta River are in the lowest 1% on record.

Drought conditions can affect instream and riparian ecosystems and habitat. In particular, low river flows are a significant threat to Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead. During the summer months, salmon and steelhead depend on small amounts of flow to provide food and maintain survivable temperatures and oxygen levels in pools. Adult salmon also require sufficient flows to migrate to key spawning areas. The current low flows are expected to continue into the fall, which will put juvenile salmon and steelhead in a precarious situation until winter rains return.

Immediate actions are needed to mitigate drought conditions, including efforts to conserve surface water and groundwater. Surface flows in these watersheds are influenced by groundwater, especially during the summer and fall before winter rains return. Groundwater pumping can reduce surface flow, particularly when a well is located close to a surface waterway.

You can help protect our waterways, including threatened and endangered fish species, by taking voluntary actions to reduce your water use. Even small efforts by individual property owners can help improve stream flows that sustain these fish. Such efforts include:

- Reduce water diversions, including pumping from wells close to streams, to preserve stream flow.
- Conserve water wherever possible, including limiting landscaping irrigation, checking for leaks, and upgrading to efficient appliances. For tips, visit saveourwater.com.
- Coordinate with your neighbors to divert water at different times to limit cumulative impacts.
- Prepare for next year by exploring roofwater harvesting, tank storage, and other long-term options.

Any immediate actions taken on your part could be instrumental in protecting your local waterway this summer! Additional information on ways to conserve water can be found at: saveourwater.com.



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RESOURCES & CONTACT INFO

Information for those interested in long-term solutions, such as off-stream storage, habitat restoration, groundwater recharge, and projects that enhance streamflow during critical dry periods, can be found here:

Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District: svrccd.org

Siskiyou County Farm Bureau: siskiyoucountyfarmbureau.org/

Siskiyou Resource Conservation District: siskiyourcd.com

Local irrigation districts, water conservation organizations, and other local entities may have more resources or information.

Drought Information & Updates at www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought