



Drought Response Program

The Bureau of Reclamation's Drought Response Program supports a proactive approach to drought. It provides assistance for drought contingency planning and to take actions that build long-term resiliency to drought. The Drought Response Program includes three programs: Drought Contingency Planning, Drought Resiliency Projects, and Emergency Response Actions.

Drought Contingency Planning

Reclamation provides financial assistance for applicants to develop a drought contingency plan or update an existing plan to meet the required elements described in the Drought Response Program Framework.

Most drought contingency planning processes are structured to address the four following questions:

- How will we recognize the next drought in the early stages?
- How might hydrologic risks and uncertainties exacerbate/affect drought?
- How will drought affect us?
- How can we protect ourselves from the next drought?

The planning process is structured to help planners answer these questions and encourage an open and inclusive planning effort that employs a proactive approach to build long-term resiliency to drought.

For example, Reclamation provided funding to the Dolores Water Conservancy District to develop a drought contingency plan with the Ute Tribe Farm and Ranch Enterprise and the Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company. The plan includes the areas served by Reclamation's Dolores Project, located in southwest Colorado, which provides irrigation water for approximately 36,600 acres of irrigated land, provides municipal and industrial water to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, the tribal community of Towaoc, several other towns, and serves downstream fish and wildlife purposes.

Drought Resiliency Projects

Reclamation also funds projects that help communities prepare for and respond to drought. Typically, these types of projects are referred to as "mitigation actions" in a drought contingency plan. Eligible project types include:

- Infrastructure improvements, modifying surface water intakes, and recharge, treatment, and storage facilities.
- Decision support tools, including drought forecasting tools, and water measurement and monitoring equipment.

As part of the Drought Resiliency Projects program, Reclamation provided funding to the Semitropic Water Storage District in California's southern San Joaquin Valley for groundwater well extraction improvements that will provide drought resiliency benefits to the districts and landowners that participate in the Semitropic Groundwater Storage Banking Program.



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Emergency Response Actions

Reclamation continues to undertake emergency response actions under the Drought Response Program to minimize losses and damages resulting from drought, relying on the authorities in Title I of the Drought Act. Emergency response actions are crisis driven actions in response to unanticipated circumstances. Eligible emergency response actions are limited to temporary construction activities and other actions authorized under Title I that do not involve construction of permanent facilities, including water purchases and use of Reclamation facilities to convey and store water.

During an extreme drought event in California, Reclamation provided emergency funding to the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board for costs associated with operating a temporary pumping barge system to maintain water deliveries during unprecedentedly low levels at Lake Cachuma due to ongoing, critical drought in Southern California.

For more information: Please visit www.usbr.gov/drought or contact Reclamation's Drought Coordinator, Sheri Looper, at 916-978-5556 or slooper@usbr.gov.

