



Media Release

Low water levels trigger curtailments for water right holders in Mill and Deer creeks

Measures needed to maintain minimum flows to protect fish

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SACRAMENTO – With climate change impacts reducing water levels to almost half of normal volume throughout the Sacramento River basin, the State Water Resources Control Board today ordered all 22 right holders in the Mill and Deer creek watersheds to stop diverting to protect drinking water and other health and safety water supply needs and meet flow requirements for endangered and threatened fish species.

An [emergency regulation](#) authorizing curtailment orders in the watersheds was adopted by the State Water Board on Sept. 22, 2021 and approved by the Office of Administrative Law on Oct. 4, 2021.

Located in Tehama County, the creeks are crucial water sources for the threatened spring-run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout, along with the endangered winter-run Chinook. They also provide drinking water and supplies for agriculture, fire protection, livestock, recreation and other uses.

“It is imperative that we take this action to maintain minimum flows in Mill and Deer creeks for the spawning and survival of several of the state’s iconic salmon, as well as steelhead trout species,” said Erik Ekdahl, State Water Board deputy director for Water Rights. “We are available to help water right holders comply with these orders.”

Today’s board action is part of a comprehensive response to drought following Gov. Gavin Newsom’s May 10 state of emergency for counties of the Klamath River, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Tulare Lake watersheds, which includes the Mill Creek and Deer creek watersheds. The proclamation was expanded July 8 to cover 50 of the state’s 58 counties, with the governor also asking all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water usage by 15%.

The proclamation directed the board, in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, to evaluate appropriate minimum instream flows and other actions to protect salmon, steelhead and other native fish species. The minimum flow requirements for Mill and Deer creeks are consistent with those established during the prior drought. The board previously adopted emergency regulations for the watersheds in 2014-15.





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The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.