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Los Angeles Times

Water and Power

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Your guide to the California drought from the Los Angeles Times.

NEWS AND POLICY

Getting hot, hot, hot: At 89 degrees, **Fullerton** was the [hottest place in America on Sunday](#). So what happened to **El Niño** with all of its rains and floods? High pressure in southwest California has kept the storms away from the southern region, though Northern California has received plenty of rain and snow. The hot temperatures and windy conditions mean Los Angeles and Ventura counties are at risk for volatile wildfires.

This is normal: The **drought** could just be the new normal for California. A new study finds the [American Southwest is a drier climate than it once was](#). “If you have a drought nowadays, it will be more severe because our base state is drier,” said Andreas Prein, the leader of the study and a research fellow at the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

ON THE GROUND

Measuring the snow: California’s method of checking the **snowpack** in the Sierra Nevada is something of a throwback. Surveyor **Frank Gehrke** [straps](#)

Sierra Nevada is something of a throwback. Surveyor **Frank Gehrke** straps on his snowshoes, grabs his pole and treks out to the snow to take measurements. “If Gehrke pulls up snow that is deep, dense and wet, it's good news for drought-plagued California, which has had anemic snowfalls since 2011. If the snow is shallow and fluffy, it's bad news,” writes columnist Robin Abcarian.

Dangerous conditions: A second hiker died this week after slipping near **Mt. Baldy**. Dong Xing Liu, 47, died Saturday after [he and his wife slipped and fell along the trails](#). Officials believe hikers are unprepared for the snowy and icy conditions they encounter as they summit the mountain. “We haven't had snow like this for years. You don't realize how treacherous it is until you get up there,” said sheriff's Cpl. Mike Ells.

When floods come: In the Bay Area, officials are [working on a system that can predict floods](#). Ultimately it could give residents a two-hour heads-up when a waterway overflows. “The first half of the problem is better data. The second half is: How do the public and emergency responders use that data?” said Len Materman of San Francisquito Creek's Joint Powers Authority.

OFFBEAT

Creepy crawlers: After the rain, [all sorts of creatures start to come alive](#) — molds, snails, mushrooms. “Hiking in Griffith Park after a storm, I look along the sides of the trail hoping to spot spectacular fruiting bodies — what most of us think of as mushrooms.”

BIG IDEAS

“We're in field-goal range, but you want a touchdown.”

– State Water Resources Control Board Chairwoman Felicia Marcus [on meeting the state's conservation goals](#)

DROUGHT SNAPSHOT

DROUGHT SNAPSHOT



Dan Charcoal practices his golf swing on Zuma Beach during a hot winter day. (Wally Skalj / Los Angeles Times)

LOOKING AHEAD

Tuesday: The Metropolitan Water District's board of directors will meet in downtown Los Angeles.

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