

# It's official – California is in a drought



Cold overnight temps keep Taylor Creek frozen, but there is no snow along the banks. Photo/Kathryn Reed

**By Josh Richman and Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News**

SAN FRANCISCO – Gov. Jerry Brown on Friday officially declared that California is in a drought emergency, as the state struggled with the lowest-levels of rainfall in its 153-year history, reservoirs were at low levels and firefighters remained on high alert.

The governor asked Californians to reduce their water consumption by 20 percent. In practical terms, the drought declaration streamlines the rules for water agencies to transfer extra water from one part of the state to another. It also raises public awareness.

Brown was governor in 1976 and 1977, one of the most severe dry periods in the 20th century. The most recent extended drought was 1987-1992. The last governor to declare a drought declaration was Arnold Schwarzenegger, who did so during a period of low rainfall in 2008 and 2009. Brown lifted that declaration in 2011 after a wet winter.

The Sierra Nevada snowpack on Thursday was 17 percent of normal. Last year, most cities in the state received the lowest amount of rain in any living person's lifetime – with records going back to 1850.

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