

Drought worries Calif. brew masters

By Alastair Bland, NPR

Brewers around the country boast that their “pure” local water is the key to their beers’ unique flavor. Coors credits the trout streams of the Rockies. Olympia Beer’s slogan is, “It’s the water.” Cold Spring Brewing Co., in Minnesota, is named for a nearby natural spring.

In Sonoma County, Lagunitas Brewing Company, founded in 1993, has grown into one of the largest craft breweries in the nation. Like several other smaller local breweries, Lagunitas makes its beer with water from the Russian River, a 110-mile waterway that provides drinking water for more than half a million people.

But in the wake of 2013, the driest year ever recorded in California, Lagunitas’ owners say they’re nervous about shortages that could mean a switch from the river water to not-as-tasty well water.

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