

Calif. gives away more rights to water than it has

By Kat Kerlin, UC Davis

California has allocated five times more surface water than the state actually has, making it hard for regulators to tell whose supplies should be cut during a drought, UC researchers reported.

The scientists said California's water-rights regulator, the State Water Resources Control Board, needs a systematic overhaul of policies and procedures to bridge the gaping disparity, but lacks the legislative authority and funding to do so.

Ted Grantham, who explored the state's water-rights database as a postdoctoral researcher with the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences, said the time is ripe for tightening the water-use accounting.

Better information might enable state regulators to better target water cutbacks in times of drought, Grantham said.

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