

# Drought tests California tourism

By Elizabeth Zach, New York Times

Disneyland is anything but underwhelming. Its deluxe fountains constantly spout, water rides regularly douse patrons, and plush gardens all lead children, and sometimes adults, to both squeal with delight and break down in tears.

So you may suspect that a Southern California theme park that relies on evoking a fantastical world of grandeur would view the water restrictions in the wake of the state's drought as onerous. That would be wrong.

The drought has already changed the habits of a tourism industry that includes the state's signature theme parks, world-renowned golf courses, extensively manicured hotel and spa grounds and the abundance of natural wonders that make up a \$57 billion tourism industry and employ nearly 5 percent of the state's workers.

But new limitations calling for people, governments and businesses to reduce water use by as much as 36 percent compared with 2013 mean different things to different attractions. The large-scale destinations say that they'll continue to cut use, so the restrictions will in some ways mean business as usual.

At Pebble Beach golf resort in Northern California, the 454 guest rooms are also equipped with low-flow shower heads and guests can choose to have linens changed less often. The links are watered with reclaimed waste water, a \$67 million project that the Pebble Beach Company says has also reduced discharge into Carmel Bay.

At another popular tourist destination, away from the coast

and into the Sierra Nevada, ski operators around Lake Tahoe are seeking to boost their warm weather attractions on the heels of a weak winter season. Seven resorts in the Lake Tahoe area closed early this season because of limited snow.

Andy Wirth, president and chief executive of Squaw Valley Ski Holdings, said that although the number of winter visitors the last four years has been between 20 and 25 percent fewer than before the drought, he is cautiously hopeful that other area attractions will draw them.

**Read the whole story**