

Opinion: Playing the drought blame game

By Joe Mathews

I hate to play the blame game, but this drought is all your fault.

You are watering outdoors too much. You kept your lawn. You tore out your lawn – and put in hard surfaces that make your city hotter and the drought even worse.



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And you, with the beautiful swimming pool you keep refilling before your sweet summer parties? I'm shaming you on Twitter as the person most responsible for the drought. Not so popular anymore, are you?

You're rich, and this drought is all the fault of you rich people, with your lush gardens, living in those wealthy water-wasting places like Beverly Hills and Newport Beach. You poor people, too, shouldn't be spared, since you're using all that water in those semi-arid places where you like to live, like the Antelope Valley. Why can't you spend thousands on low-flow toilets and low-water appliances and drip irrigation, like the rest of us?

Those are just the people who are alive. Now I'm using my Ouija board to talk to you dead folks – this is your fault, as

well. You just lie there, oblivious to the drought, in those lush grassy cemeteries.

You in the different California regions should shoulder the blame. You water-guzzlers in Sacramento are responsible for this drought – you only recently got water meters. You newlyweds and nearly-deads in Coachella, how dare you keep gardens and lawns in the desert? And don't look smug, you hippies in San Francisco and Santa Cruz. Yeah, you use less per household than most of us, but you're so holier than thou about it that I get all hot and angry, and I have to cool off with an irresponsibly long shower.

You guys in agriculture, in places like the San Joaquin and Imperial valleys, are the biggest villains. The very few of you use as much as 80 percent of the state's non-environmental water to grow something as unimportant as food. You farmers are growing all the wrong crops in the wrong places. Almond groves. Alfalfa. Dairy cows, drinking 35 gallons a day – Water Mooooo-ches, you gals are–to produce the milk, to make the cheese, for the pizzas Californians eat. When you think about it, you pizza delivery guys are unindicted co-conspirators in the great water heist.

And why do you fishermen insist that water stay in the rivers and the Bay, when people need it? You're almost as bad as the fish. Delta smelt why can't you be a little tougher instead of getting all endangered and making people have to do without water because of you?

Don't think you're getting away with this, Silicon Valley and Hollywood. Your dream factories have long seduced people to come to this land where anything is possible (and where lawns get over-watered). For all your creativity, have your industries figured a way out of this drought? No! The finest executive Hollywood has ever produced –Captain James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise – put his mind to the question, and the best he could do was a water pipeline from Seattle that

would bankrupt the state. Maybe Spock could have solved the drought, but he died in February.

But why blame the drought entirely on fictional people from the future when you can blame old Delta families who have been farming there since the 19th century. You Delta folks just won't shut up – even after Jerry Brown told you to shut up – and let the governor build his two water-conveying tunnels under your homes and farms. Of, the drought is also all the fault of you, Gov. Brown, because you won't listen to anybody. You're a drought recidivist – we had one the first time you were governor too.

California state government, it's not just your policies that are letting this drought happen. You federal agencies are to blame too, with your regulations making it harder to move water around. You local water agencies didn't conserve fast enough and embrace tier-pricing quickly.

Don't try to hide, nature—I know it's you, not humans, who are responsible for this. Colorado River, how could you dry up on us? Hey, Sierra mountains, you can't call yourself Nevada (snowy) anymore.

Let's not forget who is responsible for rivers and mountains and the earth. This drought is on you, God. Not only do you fail to send California enough water, but also you deluge us with way too many possible culprits for this crisis.

If you can't make us examine our own culpability in this, couldn't you at least give us one clear-cut scapegoat, so we know exactly who to blame?

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