

How the drought changed California forever

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

California's historic five-year drought is officially over, washed away with the relentlessly drenching rains, floods and snowstorms of this winter.

But just as tougher building codes and better emergency planning follow major earthquakes, the brutally dry years from 2012 to 2016 are already leaving a legacy, experts say, changing the way Californians use water for generations to come.

The drought's legacy includes landmark new laws aimed at limiting farmers from over-pumping groundwater; homeowners removing thousands of suburban lawns; voters approving billions in funding for new reservoirs; and vast expanses of forests dying off across the Sierra Nevada.

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