

NEWS CLIPS

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Tap water: The real superfood Tap water, caviar play roles in brain health

ROBIN ABCARIAN

LA Times 4/06/2018

Lisa Mosconi, an Italian-born neuroscientist and nutritionist, had no idea how important the taste of water was to her until she moved to New York City and took a long sip from the tap.

“This is supposed to be the best water in America,” she said, “but it tasted awful. It was disgusting.”

She set off to the grocery store in search of the sort of good-tasting water that flowed from her tap in Italy, and was soon confronted by a confusing array of choices: purified, distilled, natural spring, seltzer, soda. Most were in the refrigerated section.

“No Italian puts water in the fridge,” she said. “Water is actually more hydrating when it’s warm.”

It didn’t take long for Mosconi, the associate director of the Alzheimer’s Prevention Clinic at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City, to conclude that Americans, with their affinities for coffees, Frappuccinos, sodas, juices and alcohol, are basically walking around in a state of dehydration, which can be devastating for the brain.

About 40% of Americans, she discovered, drink fewer than four glasses of water a day, including 7% who drink no water at all.

“This is incredibly dangerous,” she told me during a phone interview on Thursday. “The rationale is ‘I drink milk, juice, that’s water right?’ No, it’s not.”

In the brain, which is 80% water, even very mild dehydration — a 3% to 4% decrease in water — can cause neurological issues, Mosconi said. “Fatigue, brain fog, headaches, mood swings.” More worrisome, it may contribute to serious brain problems.

“There are no studies that look specifically at water intake and Alzheimer’s,” she said. “But some look at the brains of people who are not drinking, and they show many parts of the brain get thinner and lose volume over time in people who are dehydrated. If you don’t drink water, it looks like your brain is aging faster.”

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Last week, I heard Mosconi speak at an event organized by former California First Lady Maria Shriver, who founded the Women’s Alzheimer’s Movement, which is focused on discovering why two-thirds of Alzheimer’s patients are women.

Mosconi has just published her first book, “Brain Food: The Surprising Science of Eating for Cognitive Power,” a guide to the latest research on the links between nutrition and brain health. (This book will make caviar lovers very happy; Twinkie lovers, not so much.)

Mosconi, who has received a five-year grant from the NIH to study Alzheimer’s and women’s brains, mentioned onstage that she recommended people drink tap water, which I repeated probably a little too glibly, as I soon received a number of emails from people wondering why.

“Everybody is asking me about water too!” Mosconi emailed when I reached out to her for elaboration.

As it turns out, compared with, say, distilled water or purified water, tap water generally contains minerals the brain needs to keep itself hydrated. As long as water districts filter out harmful substances like asbestos, lead and benzene, tap water is better for your brain than water stripped of all substances.

“Purified and distilled waters are just fluids,” Mosconi said. “There is nothing hydrating there.”

For herself and her family, Mosconi buys bottled spring water or mineral water. Often, people complain about the expense. But the cases of Poland Spring water that she buys cost about the same as a case of Coca-Cola, and surely there is no question which is better for your brain. (Or your body.)

Also, she said, she drinks aloe water every morning because it makes her feel more alert than coffee does.

What makes aloe so beneficial? “Plant experts say it’s nature’s most potent hydrator,” Mosconi said. “The aloe leaf is 99% water with more than 200 active compounds.”

Now, a few words about food, including Twinkies and caviar.

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Sadly, so many of the foods we think of as nutritious are not. Take most string cheese, a processed food. Or processed yogurt.

“Any yogurt with sweeteners and ‘natural flavorings’ and low-fat milk,” Mosconi said. “Those are crappy foods. If you get a nice plain, full-fat yogurt — that’s good for you.”

As we chatted, she looked up the ingredients listed on a container of 80-calorie “lite” strawberry yogurt: “Fructose, modified food starch, natural and artificial flavors, black carrot juice concentrate for color. Malic acid, sucralose, potassium sorbate, sodium citrate. This is a very highly processed food,” she said, “although McDonald’s is much worse.”

Lately, as we've transitioned from anti-fat hysteria into a more measured approach, people may not realize, said Mosconi, that the only kind of fat the adult brain wants (and can use) comes from fish, nuts and seeds.

"If you're eating butter thinking that fat is going to replenish your brain, that is not correct," she said.

This is where caviar — or really, any kind of fish eggs — come in. "Fish eggs are the best treat for our big, hungry brains," writes Mosconi in "Brain Food." They are full of beneficial fats, and you don't have to break the bank to get them.

"Salmon roe is just as good as the black caviar," Mosconi said. Four ounces costs roughly the same as a box of Dunkin' Donuts, she said.

I suggested that getting people to trade their maple logs for fish eggs might be a struggle, given that doughnuts taste so much better. "No, they do not!" she exclaimed, putting voice to what is probably an unbridgeable cultural divide.

At this point, I had to ask about Twinkies.

Mosconi had never heard of them.

"Oh my God," she exclaimed as she skimmed over the ingredient list she had Googled. "Bleached wheat flour, B vitamins, sugar, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, partially hydrogenated vegetable and/or animal shortening, dextrose, modified corn starch, whey, glucose, soy bean oil, etc. etc. I would say 95% of the ingredients are toxic. This is horrible!"

Maybe so, but Americans love them some Twinkies. In 2012, production of the "golden sponge cake with creamy filling" ceased after Hostess filed for bankruptcy. After a public outcry, the company began making them again in 2013. Sales are stronger than ever.

I didn't have the heart to tell her about Sno Balls and Ho Hos.

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Water District Board Votes for Safe Potable Water

The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) Board of Directors voted to unanimously support AB 2050 which provides solutions to ensure that communities served by non-compliant water treatment systems receive safe and reliable potable water.

Assembly Bill 685, signed by Governor Brown in 2012, established the Human Right to Water which declares that all Californians have a right to clean, healthy, affordable water. As of November 2017, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) found that 329 water treatment systems, impacting nearly 800,000 Californians, lack this right due to minimized local financial assets, qualified management, poor technical resources and erroneous infrastructure. These issues disproportionately affect small, rural systems that serve populations under 10,000 residents.

Several laws have already been passed that address elements of the water accessibility problem but have not provided lasting change that focuses on local governance structure of the non-compliant systems to ensure

water safety.

AB 2050 looks to establish The Small System Water Authority Act of 2018 which would provide a framework to merge small non-compliant water systems into larger public water systems thereby augmenting financial capacity, consolidating managerial functions, and improving economies of scale.

"LVMWD unconditionally considers water to be the most precious of resources and is unwavering in our position that clean drinking water is a right for all Californians," said Charlie Caspary, Board Director of LVMWD. "Unlike other proposed legislation, AB 2050 gets to the heart of the non-compliance issue by providing the framework needed to create a governance structure that will work for our rural communities."

Under the bill, the SWRCB will be authorized to alert the non-compliant systems that they are in violation of public health standards and provide them the opportunity to develop a compliance plan. If unable to develop an approved plan the SWRCB will notify the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) that the non-compliant

system needs to be dissolved and possibly solidify them into an Authority.

The new Authority will be formed as a special district with a Board of Directors, financing opportunities, scaled to the needed size to coordinate regional agreements and implement the infrastructure required to remove harmful water contamination.

Valley News Group, April 5, 2018, Page 11

Eye on water

By [The Acorn Staff](#) | on April 04, 2018

The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District board of directors voted to unanimously support AB 2050, a state bill that ensures communities served by non-compliant water treatment systems still receive safe and reliable potable water.

As of November 2017, the State Water Resources Control Board found that 329 water treatment systems impacting nearly 800,000 Californians are not up standard due to financial problems, unqualified management and poor technical resources and infrastructure.

Most of the non-compliant water systems lie in small, rural communities with fewer than 10,000 residents.

AB 2050 looks to establish the Small System Water Authority Act of 2018, which would provide a framework to merge the troubled entities into larger public water systems, thereby improving financial capacity, consolidating managerial functions and taking advantage of economies of scale.

Under the bill, the water resources board will be authorized to alert the non-compliant systems that they are in violation of public health standards and provide them the opportunity to develop a compliance plan.

If an approved plan is not forthcoming, the board will notify local agencies that the non-compliant district needs to be dissolved and possibly become part of a new water authority.

The new authority will be formed as a special district governed by a board of directors. It will have financing opportunities that are scaled to meet the district's water quality obligations and allow it to build the infrastructure required to remove harmful water contamination.

"Water is a very complex issue in this state and this bill will help to cut through the layers of bureaucracy to address the fundamental need of clean water," said Joe McDermott, the Las Virgenes director of resource conservation and public outreach.

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Area wildflowers proving to be late bloomers

By [The Acorn Staff](#) | on April 04, 2018



LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE— Pink wildflowers decorate the China Flat Trail as it ascends from Oak Park up to Simi Peak. JOHN LOESING/Acorn Newspapers

Less than average rainfall and late-season rainstorms might mean this year's wildflowers will be showing their colorful wares later than normal, ecologists at Santa Monica Mountain National Recreation Area say.

Normally at this point in the season the wildflowers would be in full bloom, but so far park rangers report only seeing a few prickly phlox, currants, Indian paintbrush, bush lupine and California brittlebush. Still, hope is not lost.

"The recent rains that we've had are encouraging," said Joey Algiers, a National Park Service restoration ecologist. "What was looking like a bad year for wildflowers could turn around, potentially peaking in mid to late April."

It's been a confusing winter season for plants, Algiers said. First, it was warm, then it got dry and then it became cold, followed by frost and heavy rains.

At the weather recording station in Cheeseboro Canyon in Agoura Hills, there's been a little over 7 inches of precipitation so far. Last year, more than 18 inches had fallen by this time. "The cues are sort of out of whack," Algiers said. "Plants respond to temperature, water and sunlight cues."

Ralph Waycott, a volunteer who has been leading hikes through the Backbone Trail for 15 years, says he will typically see 150 or more species in bloom, with sometimes 100 or more species clustered in the most prolific segment.

"There are a few things coming up," Waycott said. "Plants are just now getting to the blooming schedule. They're late bloomers this year."

A few of the recommended locations to see wildflowers in the Santa Monica Mountains are Malibu Creek State Park, the China Flat area in Cheeseboro Canyon and Rancho Sierra Vista in Newbury Park.

Fire-wise tour is hot stuff

Self-guided garden walk on Saturday

By The Acorn Staff | on April 04, 2018

Mountains Restoration Trust and Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants will host a self-guided tour of three Calabasas homes to show how native plant landscaping can help protect properties in high-risk fire areas.

Each property will have at least 50 percent California natives.

The tour will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sat., April 7 in Calabasas.

Docents will be on hand to discuss design and maintenance techniques that minimize danger to the home, including plant selection and home preparation.

Participants must preregister; the fee is \$5.

Registered participants will receive a map of the homes on the tour via email before the day of the event.

A hard copy of the map can be picked up at Mountains Restoration Trust headquarters, 23075 Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas.

To register or for more information, visit mountainstrust.org.

There's a downside to those green hills

Recent rains revived grasses, which can dry out, act as 'kindling in the fireplace' for wildfires to spread

Cheri Carlson

Ventura County Star USA TODAY NETWORK 4/05/2018

Grass-covered hills might look good now, but authorities say that could mean a busy fall and summer for firefighters.

Over the past several weeks, brush has gotten damper, greener and less likely to burn. Stands of tall, green grass have blanketed Ventura County and much of the state.

That's good news. But there's a downside: Like last year, there could be a significant amount of grass-fire activity, according to the Ventura County Fire Department.

"Grass is the main ignition source," said county fire Capt. Ken VanWig. "It's like the kindling in the fireplace."

As the fine grass dries out, it becomes a bed of fuel that makes it easy for fires to start and to spread quickly.

Back in February, it looked like the grass crop would be sparse. Then it started raining.

It was just enough and just in time to revive grasses, VanWig said.

"It was a very unusually dry fall and winter," said Scott Holder, a hydrologist with the Ventura County Watershed Protection District.

March, however, was a wet one. Most areas in the county recorded from 4 to 8 inches of rain last month, which was well above normal.

So far for the season, the county is still on track to have a dry year.

Rainfall totals are about 45 percent of normal. But that's not dry enough to break records, Holder said.

It's also not unusual in recent years.

"With the exception of last year, which was slightly above normal (rainfall), we've been dry since 2011," he said.



**Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa in the Santa Monica Mountains greened up from recent rains. But the grasses dry out and act as tinder for fires.
PHOTOS BY JUAN CARLO/THE STAR**



Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa in the Santa Monica Mountains is getting green and flowers are blooming from rains. “Grass is the main ignition source.”

Ken VanWig Ventura County Fire Department

Last year's rains meant a bumper crop of grass in the county.

When the Thomas Fire broke out in December, it raced through a carpet of dry grass and drought-stressed chaparral.

The fire burned more than 440 square miles in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, becoming the largest in state history.

This year, the grass crop is closer to normal. The county also still has drought-stressed and dead brush.

"Where the Thomas Fire didn't burn, we still have plenty of fuel out there that's still in a critical state," VanWig said.

Every two weeks, firefighters with the Ventura County Fire Department cut samples in the same five spots from Simi Valley to Ojai.

They test for moisture levels in the vegetation, a good predictor of fire danger.

They cut tiny sections of chamise, a resilient plant that grows in all five areas.

But since the Thomas Fire, the sites have dropped to just three. Vegetation at a Casitas location all burned in the fire. An Ojai Valley site also was damaged.

In wet conditions, like now, the numbers can climb over 100 percent because of the weight of the moisture.

As the brush dries out, the potential for large fires increases.

Samples taken April 1 showed rising moisture levels, yet all but Malibu's plants fell under that 100 percent mark.

By late summer and fall, the numbers drop.

Moisture levels typically reach critically dry levels by October, after the county's hottest, driest months. For the past several years, they've hit that mark several months in advance.

Fire officials said Southern California likely will see the potential for large fires climb to above normal as early as May.

PUBLIC SAFETY BRIEFS

Late-season storm will bring more rain to county

Ventura County Star 4/05/2018

Ventura County will see some rain later this week, according to forecasts by the National Weather Service.

After a cloudy Thursday, rain is expected to begin falling late Friday and last through Saturday afternoon, according to Stuart Seto, a specialist with the weather agency.

“It’s just a late-season storm busting through the area,” Seto said.

Between one-third and two-thirds of an inch of rainfall is expected in Ventura County, with higher elevations expected to receive greater amounts.

Snow is expected to fall as low as 6,000 feet elevation, according to forecasts.

The warm and late-season storm continues California’s turnaround from what was shaping up to be a year on par with the worst years of the recent drought.

Absent significant storms in November and January, California’s rain season was dramatically below average — particularly in Southern California. But then in March, much of the region between San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles counties saw rainfall above and beyond seasonal averages for March, the weather agency said.

Paso Robles received 272 percent its monthly average, while Ojai received 254 percent and Palmdale got 155 percent, the agency said. Last month provided more than half of the season’s rainfall for much of the region.

The series of storms also helped replenish the Sierra Nevada snowpack, a precious resource for California in the spring and summer. The statewide snowpack was at 23 percent of average going into March and leapt to 52 percent of its annual average by April 1, the state Department of Water Resources said.

“These snowpack results — while better than they were a few weeks ago — still underscore the need for widespread careful and wise use of our water supplies,” department Director Karla Nemeth said. “The only thing predictable about California’s climate is that it’s unpredictable. We need to make our water system more resilient so we’re prepared for the extreme fluctuations in our water system, especially in the face of climate change.”

This week’s storm isn’t expected to contribute significantly to the snowpack, officials said.

Storms slow Calif.'s approach to drought

End to rainy season boosts Sierra Nevada snowpack

Rich Pedroncelli and Ellen Knickmeyer ASSOCIATED PRESS
Ventura County Star 4/03/2018

PHILLIPS STATION, Calif. – A stormy close to California's rainy season has slowed the state's plunge back into drought, bringing the vital Sierra Nevada snowpack to just over half of average, water officials said Monday.

The welcome run of rain- and snowstorms last month more than doubled the state's snow totals for the year, hiking it to 52 percent of normal.

Runoff from snow historically supplies a third of California's water, and the April snow survey done Monday typically is the most important for gauging how much – or how little – water California's cities, farms and wildlife can expect after the winter.

"A good March, but certainly not a great March," state snow-survey chief Frank Gehrke told news crews who followed him to the snow-covered Phillips Station for the survey.

Gehrke measured 32.1 inches of snow with a metal rod, one of hundreds of manual and electronic readings the state uses to gauge Sierra snowpack.

Californians may have caught a break thanks to the late-season storms, but "it's not nearly where we would like to be," Gehrke said.

California had only about a quarter of its normal snowpack going into March, typically the last month of the rainy season.

The dry winter sent most of arid Southern California back into drought, less than a year after Gov. Jerry Brown ended the state's drought emergency.

A near-record wet winter in 20162017 snapped the previous five-year drought, which triggered a 25 percent water-conservation order for cities and towns.

Despite this year's drier than normal weather, state reservoirs remain fuller than usual thanks to water held over from the previous winter.

With the emergency declaration lifted, Californians are using almost as much water as before the previous drought. State officials so far are largely relying on messaging to urge residents back to water-thrifty ways.

"Potentially, we're living off our savings from last year so we have to be very prudent in our water use," Gehrke said.



California Department of Water Resources employees Karla Nemeth, center, and Frank Gehrke conduct a snow Monday near Echo Summit. RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

MWD plans to seek one water tunnel instead of 2 Push for 2 delta tunnels ends

Agricultural districts were loath to join project, agency says.

By Bettina Boxall
LA Times 4/03/2018

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is dropping plans to push ahead with a two-tunnel proposal to revamp the state's water delivery system, opting to pursue a scaled-back version instead.

In a memo to the agency's board Monday, MWD officials said the decision followed discussions with major agricultural districts that remain unwilling to make any financing commitments for the project, known as California WaterFix.

Rather than fund much of the full project on its own, the staff will ask the board to vote next week to approve \$5.3 billion in funding for a smaller capacity, one-tunnel version.

MWD General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said his preference had been to build the full project, but it was time to make a decision.

"More important is that we just get going.... We're talking one tunnel for now," he said.

Money has been a major sticking point for the much-debated project, which is intended to sustain water deliveries to San Joaquin Valley agribusiness and urban Southern California.

As originally proposed, the urban and farm districts that rely on deliveries from the southern portion of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta were supposed to pick up the \$17-billion bill to construct two massive water tunnels under the delta.

MWD and most of the urban districts voted last year to contribute their share. But agricultural districts that had long supported the project said the tunnel water would be too expensive and voted against joining WaterFix.

That prompted Gov. Jerry Brown's administration to downsize the initial construction to a less expensive, one-tunnel project that would be used and financed by the largely urban districts supplied by the State Water Project.

Not long after the state announcement, some MWD board members suggested that the agency consider paying for agriculture's unfunded share so that both tunnels could be built.

The staff analysis of how MWD could do that assumed that agricultural districts would buy in to WaterFix when it was completed. That way, the staff said, MWD would eventually be reimbursed for taking on agriculture's upfront costs.

But by the end of last week, it became apparent that the Westlands Water District and other irrigation agencies weren't willing to sign options or purchase agreements assuring that they would in fact join the project in the future.

Representatives of L.A. and the San Diego County Water Authority had also expressed concerns that if MWD boosted its tunnels investment to roughly \$11 billion, that would jack up local water rates and divert funds from regional supply programs, such as building recycled water and stormwater capture facilities.

L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti, who appoints the city's MWD delegates, has also said he opposed two tunnels.

Still, Los Angeles and San Diego together don't have enough votes to stop MWD from taking on much of the twin-tunnel costs.

In remarks to the media Monday, Kightlinger said the staff recommendation to move ahead with one tunnel was based on agriculture's inability to commit to future funding rather than a vote count or L.A.'s doubts.

He said the staff will ask the board at its April 10 meeting to progress with one tunnel by adding an additional \$1 billion to the \$4.3-billion financing package the board approved last fall.

By partially diverting some supplies from the Sacramento River in the northern delta, the tunnel project is intended to lessen the environmental harm of the massive pumping operations that fill southbound aqueducts.

The powerful pumps now draw entirely from the southern delta, causing water channels to flow backward, confusing migrating salmon and drawing the imperiled delta smelt into bad habitat. Those effects have triggered endangered species protections that at times limit delta exports.

Although MWD has argued that two tunnels would provide more environmental benefits and more flexibility in export operations than one, some water experts have questioned whether a second tunnel is worth the added expense.

"There are significant improvements even with the one-tunnel approach over the status quo," Kightlinger said Monday.

Groundwater well workshop on new meter rules

Gretchen Wenner

Ventura County Star USA TODAY NETWORK
4/02/2018

With new rules in play requiring automated meters for many local agricultural wells, a workshop is being held Tuesday afternoon in Oxnard on the metering program and financial incentives available for farmers.

The meters, which will automatically gather and transmit groundwater pumping data, are part of an ordinance approved by the board of the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency in late February. For ag wells, the deadline for installation is Dec. 31. The agency's boundaries include the Oxnard Plain and stretch inland past Camarillo and Moorpark.

Improved data collection will allow better management of stressed groundwater resources, agency officials said, and help with trading in Fox Canyon's water market.

Grant money from the Natural Resources Conservation Service could provide well owners with up to \$3,500 for installation of automated meter infrastructure, or so-called 'AMI,' if they participate in a water market pilot program available for wells in the Oxnard and Forebay basins. Up to \$2,500 in incentives are available without participation in the market.

Incentives are only available for the first 100 approved applications through May 30.

The AMI/Water Market Workshop will be held at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Oxnard campus of Cal Lutheran University, located at 2201 Outlet Center Drive, Suite 600.

Lawsuit links sewage leaks to death

DC center that treats VIPs beset by problems

Jayne O'Donnell USA TODAY
Ventura County Star 4/02/2018



The Sierra Nevada snowpack will be 64% smaller by the end of the century. The snowpack provides nearly two-thirds of California's fresh water in an average year. (Michael Mello)

“A black, grainy foul-smelling substance” coated the floor of an operating room at the MedStar Washington Hospital Center, which also suffered from at least one “active leak” of sewage, according to a review by the District of Columbia health department last August.

That health department report was cited in a lawsuit filed against the hospital by the husband of a woman who died from an infection after surgery there, where the operating rooms had suffered from leaks of bacteria-filled sewage for months.

Carol Leonard, 70, had thyroid surgery in February 2017 at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, which is the goto hospital for Congress and the White House. The surgery was so routine, she was told she'd be out the next morning or possibly the same day.

Within a week, the grandmother of six was dead.

Leonard's surgery was five months after Washington's health department issued a report in August 2016 that detailed sewage leaks in several operating rooms and was

only recently released. Investigators returned Aug. 18, 2017, to find continued problems with sewage.

Staff and contractors the hospital identified as being responsible for cleanup told investigators they were not made aware of a leak in a room where several patients were operated on last July, according to the health department report reviewed by USA TODAY. The sewage leaks were known as “black water” leaks, employees said.

“MedStar Washington Hospital Center has not experienced any new leaks, and we have completed all of the physical plant work identified in our 2017 action plan,” Washington Hospital Center spokeswoman So Young Pak said in a statement.

The recent report shows the hospital was placed in “immediate jeopardy” of losing its Medicare and Medicaid funding because of its failure to protect patients. Since the government tends to be hospitals’ largest payers, losing accreditation can be devastating.

Washington Hospital Center submitted a plan for correction Aug. 18 and the designation was removed Aug. 21.

Our waning snowpack

By Alex Hall and Katharine Davis Reich
LA Times 4/06/2018

Although recent storms have dumped heavy snow across the Sierra Nevada, Monday's snowpack measurement will almost certainly show that it is still well below average.

Last week, the Sierra-wide reading put the total snowpack at 15.8 inches of water content, or 43% below normal.

Here's an even more sobering reality. According to our new research, such spring snow measurements will be considered far above average in the decades to come.

We have just completed detailed projections of the Sierra Nevada's future climate. Our findings tell the story of a snowpack on life support. If greenhouse gas emissions continue unchecked, by the end of this century, the Sierra snowpack in a typical April will be 64% smaller than it was at the end of the 20th century.

In simple terms: We're going to lose a lot of snow to climate change. Equally worrisome, California's water infrastructure is not resilient enough to make up for the loss.

Although the Sierra Nevada represent just a quarter of California's land mass, they provide nearly two-thirds of the state's fresh water in the average year. About half of that water comes in the form of rain, the other half as snow.

Our models show that there will be the same amount of overall precipitation in the future, possibly more. But global warming will cause a greater portion of it to arrive as rain instead of snow. It will also cause the snow that does fall to melt more quickly.

Whereas rain runs off into rivers and reservoirs immediately, snow conveniently remains frozen until the spring thaw, when it melts and flows downstream well into summer. This is how California has dealt with the fact that our wet season — November to March — is not when our state uses the most water. We use the most water during the summer, when our crops and outdoor landscapes are thirstiest.

But springtime snow loss is just part of the story. We also assessed the changes in runoff from rain and snowmelt throughout the year.

By the end of this century, runoff will come in earlier, flashier spurts rather than the predictable spring and summer supply that water managers are used to. Storms that once produced snow will become heavy rain events. This will contribute to a significant shift in the timing of water flow into our dams and reservoirs. The midpoint of the annual runoff — when half the water that leaves the Sierra has done so — will get bumped up by 50 days on average, from May to March.

We won't have to wait until the end of the century to see these effects. If there were no human-caused climate change, the snowpack during the recent drought would have

been about one-third larger than it was. Under a business-as-usual scenario in which the world fails to act, the average April snowpack in the Sierra will be 30% smaller by mid-century.

The worst of the effects aren't inevitable. Although significant global emissions cuts wouldn't make much of a difference by mid-century, they could reduce end-of-century changes by half.

In either scenario, California's water managers will face tough questions soon. Among them: How can earlier, flashier water flows be captured so that wintertime floods are prevented? And given the limited space in our reservoirs, how can this water be stored so that it lasts through the dry season?

From our position in climate science, we can only relay the message that the research delivers to us. We can't offer easy answers on the best policies or technological solutions. But we do have some suggestions for how they might be identified.

A sensible first step would be for California to undertake a comprehensive assessment of our water infrastructure's vulnerabilities to climate change. We should also do cost-benefit and environmental-impact analyses for all possible options for replacing the storage capacity of the Sierra snowpack. We are doubtful that building new dams or raising the height of existing ones would make sense. Dams are expensive and cause environmental damage. It's unclear that the storage gained would justify the costs.

Increasing groundwater storage is a more promising option. One idea is to divert Sierra storm water to open fields, where it can seep into groundwater aquifers. This would present many challenges, including potential issues around water rights, but underground storage could ultimately hold more water than new surface reservoirs.

Coastal communities could make better use of local water. In Los Angeles, most rainfall washes out to the ocean unused. Efficient rainwater capture, water recycling and conservation would lessen dependence on Sierra water and thus increase the city's resilience to snowpack changes.

There are at least 23 million stakeholders in the Sierra Nevada's water resources. State leaders, city governments, water managers, agriculture, communities in the Sierra and Angelenos — we all need to participate in the critical discussion about how climate change will affect our water supply.

Alex Hall is a professor of atmospheric and oceanic sciences at UCLA and director of the Center for Climate Science . Katharine Davis Reich is a science communicator and outreach director at the center.



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