

2,000 students later protested on  
11 campuses in Seoul. They bat-  
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Watsonville Register-Pajaronian  
10-13-89

# California still in grip of drought

RP 11-2-89

SACRAMENTO (UPI) — California is in the third year of a drought with more than 10 million residents under voluntary or enforced restrictions on their use of water, the Department of Water Resources reported Thursday.

It said that in spite of relief brought by heavy rains in Northern California last March, the Central Coast region and parts of the San Joaquin Valley may be in deep trouble without normal rainfall next winter.

The department made public a survey of the water situation in California in late September compiled by its drought response coordinator, Suzanne Butterfield.

She said California's water troubles are only part of a widespread pattern of drought in the western one-third of the United States.

As a result of dry weather in

the Rocky Mountain states, there has been a steep decline in the runoff of water into the Colorado River. The Colorado is the main source of supply for Metropolitan Water District, which wholesales water to about half the state's population in urban Southern California.

"That coupled with the fact that the South Coastal area has received the equivalent of only one full year's water runoff in the past three years could result in water supply problems for the district's 14.5 million people if next year is again dry," Butterfield said.

Up to now, availability of surplus water in the Colorado has enabled the Los Angeles and San Diego regions to avoid the worst effects of the drought, and to avoid seeking special help from Northern California.

Other effects of the rain and snow shortage cited by the re-

port include:

— Production of hydroelectric power in California will be below normal again this year because of limited water supplies. Pacific Gas & Electric Co. expects a decline of 30 percent. For Southern California Edison, production will be about 45 percent of normal. Utilities will make up the difference with electricity generated at oil and natural gas plants, with higher costs passed on to consumers.

— Trees are dying in forests because of the long dry spell. The Department of Forestry says that about 6 billion board-feet of standing timber in the state is dead, enough to build houses for more than one million people. Drought makes trees vulnerable to insect attack.

Water in storage in the state's 154 largest reservoirs totaled 17.5 million acre-feet on Sept. 1,

the survey said. That was up from the 14.8 million acre-feet available last autumn, but a large part of the new water was stored in Northern California as a result of storms last March.

Butterfield said reservoir storage is only 27 percent of normal in the Central Coast region, including Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. The Central Coast cannot look for outside help because it depends entirely on local supplies and is not tied into the state's big distribution systems.

The Monterey Peninsula and the Carmel Valley, which are served by the Carmel River and wells, have been on 20 percent rationing since the beginning of the year, the survey said.

Shortages in the Salinas Valley have been made up with record overdrafts of groundwater, resulting in salt water intrusion in some coastal areas.