



# Big Bear Grizzly

Big Bear Lake (San Bernardino County) California

## Big Bear is dry, dry, dry



KATHY PORTIE/Big Bear Grizzly

**Big Bear Lake will need to rise 3 feet before the East Boat Launch can open in May. The lake level is 3 feet lower than it was at this same time last year.**

By Kathy Portie  
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Don't let the wet weather on Feb. 15 fool you. Big Bear Valley is dry and will be for the foreseeable future.

The drought may have received a reprieve in December, but January and February have barely seen a drop of rain much less snow. As of Feb. 14, Big Bear Lake is 15 feet, 1 inch from full, 3 feet lower than the same time last year. "We need a couple of decent storms," said Mike Stephenson, general manager of the

Big Bear Municipal Water District, which oversees recreation and safety on the lake. "If we don't get a couple of feet, we won't even be able to open the East Boat Launch in May."

Of course, Big Bear residents do not rely on the water in Big Bear Lake for consumption. The Big Bear Lake Department of Water and Power and the Big Bear City Community Services District get their water from the basin's aquifers. The aquifers are also seeing an impact to continued drought conditions. According to Jerry Griffith, water superintendent

for the CSD, the West Baldwin Sub-Basin average water level is down 32.17 feet. It's still a long way from the nearly 43 feet down in 2016, but without more precipitation to replenish the aquifer, the number could continue drop.

The good news is production demand has dropped, Griffith said. Still, there is concern. "If we don't get the kind of tracking we did in 2018, we could get as low as 43 feet down," Griffith said. "We need a year

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## Local school board plans to send letter to state leaders

By Judi Bowers  
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The survey results are in, now they are being shared with Governor Gavin Newsom. A vaccine mandate with no options for exemptions would be devastating to Bear Valley Unified School District.

On Feb. 2, Mary Suzuki, school superintendent, shared results of a community survey conducted several weeks ago. The survey asked a number of questions of community members and parents regarding masks and vaccine mandates in regard to COVID-19. In the past several months, parents have been vocal and clear in their message to the district: masks and vaccines should not be mandated. It should be the parent's choice whether their child is vaccinated against COVID-19, not the state government's.

The survey was taken by 658 people. Of those, 133 listed themselves as community members, 582 as parents of a child or children in the district in kindergarten through 12th grade. And 98 district staff members took the survey. All groups opposed the vaccine mandate and similarly opposed the mask mandate. The survey was conducted prior to SB 871 being introduced by Senator Richard Pan and based on a

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## Happy 104th birthday to Dr. Forrest Moodie

By Jess Madison  
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The Big Bear Grizzly salutes World War II veteran Dr. Forrest Moodie, who turns 104 on Feb. 23. Moodie has lived in Big Bear for 46 years and remains in his home with the assistance of his family and friends.

Moodie was born in a town which no longer exists: Fellows, California. He spent his early years in Taft, California, where his father was a

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Photo courtesy of Suzzy Czamecki

**Big Bear Lake resident Forrest Moodie has seen a lot in his lifetime. He will celebrate his 104th birthday on Feb. 23.**

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### BUSINESS



Say hello to the Big Bear Grizzly's newest reporter — Jess Madison.

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### SPORTS



There may not be a lot of athletes on the BBHS track roster, but it still good.

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# Drought continues in Big Bear

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like 2005 or 2011. That's the last time the basin was really full. Unless we have a miracle in March, we really need something."

Griffith said one thing that is saving the community from dire straights is conservation efforts. "Our customers and visitors are helping by not wasting water," Griffith said. "We're going to try to keep things at a Stage 2 water conservation level."

Reggie Lamson, general manager for the Big Bear Department of Water and Power, said one thing that has helped the DWP maintain solid water production numbers is the number of wells available. The DWP can rest a well for replenishing and switch to another well that has resources available, he said. "It gives us a lot of flexibility," he said.

But flexibility only goes so far. Lamson also credits customers' conservation habits for helping maintain and protect the aquifers. "We have to make do with what we have since we aren't on the Colorado River or state aqueduct systems," Lamson said.

The partnership between the DWP and CSD will also help monitor the water situation, Lamson said. "We will meet in (a) joint meeting with CSD in March," Lamson said. "That's what we are going to do moving forward so we can compare notes."

The Groundwater Sustainability Act of 2014 has also helped the local agencies better monitor water resources. "We received new guidelines of perennial yield in the basins," Lamson said. "We have new ways to incorporate climate change into the perennial yield equation."

According to meteorologist Liz Schenk of the San Diego office of the National Weather Service, the Climate Prediction Center data shows a probability of below normal precipitation for the region including Big Bear Lake. "The seasonal outlook from February through April is greater than less than normal precipitation," Schenk said. "Sometimes that data can be misinterpreted by people. It doesn't mean there won't be storms. But it is less than normal."

For example, in January of 2020, the National Weather Service recorded 4.51 inches for Big Bear. This year, that number fell to 0.34 inches. "Winter is when we get our precipitation," Schenk said. The dry trend Big Bear is experiencing, all of California is experiencing, leads to extended droughts, Schenk said. "Storm tracks are driving to the north," Schenk said.

David Lawrence, general manager for the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency, said the extended drought is the reason the Replenish Big Bear project is so important for the Valley. "It's the water sustainability efforts we can make in Big Bear," Lawrence said. "Mother Nature is all we've got. This is how we can bring back 20 percent of our water."

Lawrence said the next step for Replenish Big Bear is to submit permits to the regional water board on Feb. 28. "This is a really big step," Lawrence said. "Before we can discharge anywhere, we need waste discharge permits. Once we are accepted and receive guidelines, we can move

## Precipitation measured at Big Bear Dam

| Month | Precipitation (in inches) |
|-------|---------------------------|
| Sept. | 0.00                      |
| Oct.  | 2.11                      |
| Nov.  | 0.00                      |
| Dec.  | 16.84                     |
| Jan.  | 2.60                      |

## January Precipitation totals 2010-2022

| Year | Precipitation (in inches) |
|------|---------------------------|
| 2022 | 2.60                      |
| 2021 | 4.87                      |
| 2020 | 0.15                      |
| 2019 | 8.36                      |
| 2018 | 6.52                      |
| 2017 | 17.49                     |
| 2016 | 11.18                     |
| 2015 | 1.11                      |
| 2014 | 0.70                      |
| 2013 | 2.74                      |
| 2012 | 1.11                      |
| 2011 | 2.73                      |
| 2010 | 13.56                     |

Years with 0.00 precipitation in the month of January — 2003; 1976; 1972; 1924; 1887.

## February Precipitation totals 2000-2021

| Year | Precipitation (in inches) |
|------|---------------------------|
| 2021 | 0.18                      |
| 2020 | 0.80                      |
| 2019 | 23.63                     |
| 2018 | 1.26                      |
| 2017 | 3.71                      |
| 2016 | 1.12                      |
| 2015 | 2.33                      |
| 2014 | 8.27                      |
| 2013 | 3.10                      |
| 2012 | 2.89                      |
| 2011 | 9.60                      |
| 2010 | 9.65                      |
| 2009 | 13.89                     |
| 2008 | 7.64                      |
| 2007 | 3.44                      |
| 2006 | 8.78                      |
| 2005 | 12.10                     |
| 2004 | 9.16                      |
| 2003 | 10.68                     |
| 2002 | 0.29                      |
| 2001 | 10.81                     |
| 2000 | 10.61                     |

Source: Big Bear Municipal Water District

forward to environmental and design."

Lawrence said he is hopeful they will be able to start environmental work and pilot testing by the end of this summer or in the fall. It's a long term fix. For the short term, water conservation is Big Bear's most important tool.

For now, the DWP and CSD will monitor the aquifer levels and encourage the community to continue their strong conservation efforts. "It's always a good day to conserve water," Lamson said.

According to a recent story by ABC7 Los Angeles, a UCLA study recently published by the journal Nature Climate Change, states that the mega drought deepened in the West so much in 2021, it is the driest it has been in the region in "at least 1,200 years." Forty-two percent of the mega drought is attributed to human caused climate change, the study concludes.

Schenk said she is not familiar with the study, but calls the December storm that helped lower the drought in Southern California from severe to moderate a temporary fix at best. "The trends are not looking great," Schenk said. "There is another big system that does look like it has potential early next week, but beyond that it is looking bleak. It's hard to even say how much we really need. But one or two systems won't take us out of the drought."

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