

MWELO

Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

What's Behind the Regulation

Julie Saare-Edmonds

DWR

Purpose of MWELO

- A model for local agencies to follow in order to enforce minimum building standards in landscape design and construction.
- Comes from AB 325 (1990) and AB 1881 (2006) Water Conservation in Landscaping Act
- Achieve the goals with sustainable landscaping and the watershed approach



History of MWELO

- Droughts of late 70's and 89-91
- 1990 Water Conservation In Landscaping Act
 - Stakeholder group formed of cities, counties, NGO, water suppliers and the landscape industry
 - MWELO into effect in 1993
 - some cities adopted, many ignored it or exempted themselves
 - Charter cities (Sacramento) were exempt

MWELO redux (2006-2010)

- Another drought cycle happened and wet El Nino's
- 2004 legislature asked the CA Water Conservation Council to form a large task force to study the MWELO
- 200+ members in groups debated issues
- 2006 Legislature updated Water Conservation Act
- 2010 new MWELO in effect
- Cities are no longer exempt

MWELO 2015

- During a very severe drought
- Governor issues Executive Order for DWR to update MWELO
- Reduction in water budget
 - Allows enough water to establish plants with local water restrictions in place
 - Minimalizes high water use, cool season turf grasses
- Cal Green Building code refers to MWELO as the authority on landscape building code

The Future is Now

- AB 2515 passed fall 2016
- DWR must update the MWLEO in synch with Cal Green (building code) cycle every three years
- DWR must re-write MWLEO by mid- 2018
- Landscape Stakeholder group is formed to work on issues- to make next update the best version
- New stakeholders are welcome
 - Give me your card or email me

The watershed approach

- Rain is a resource
- Living soils
- Right plants, right place
 - Natives and other climate adapted
 - Mediterranean climate
 - Deserts
 - Montane
 - Coastal sage
 - Chaparral



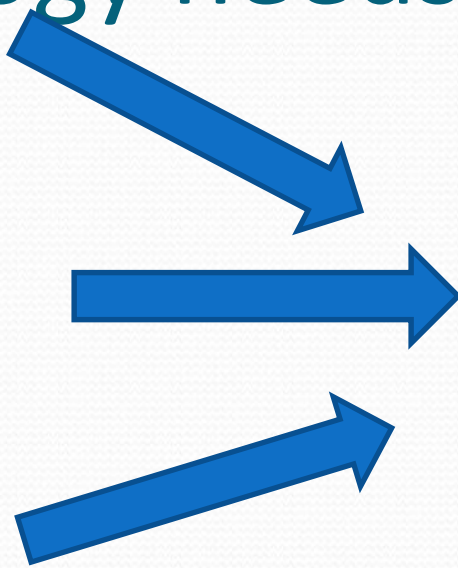
Biology needs Biological Solutions

Air

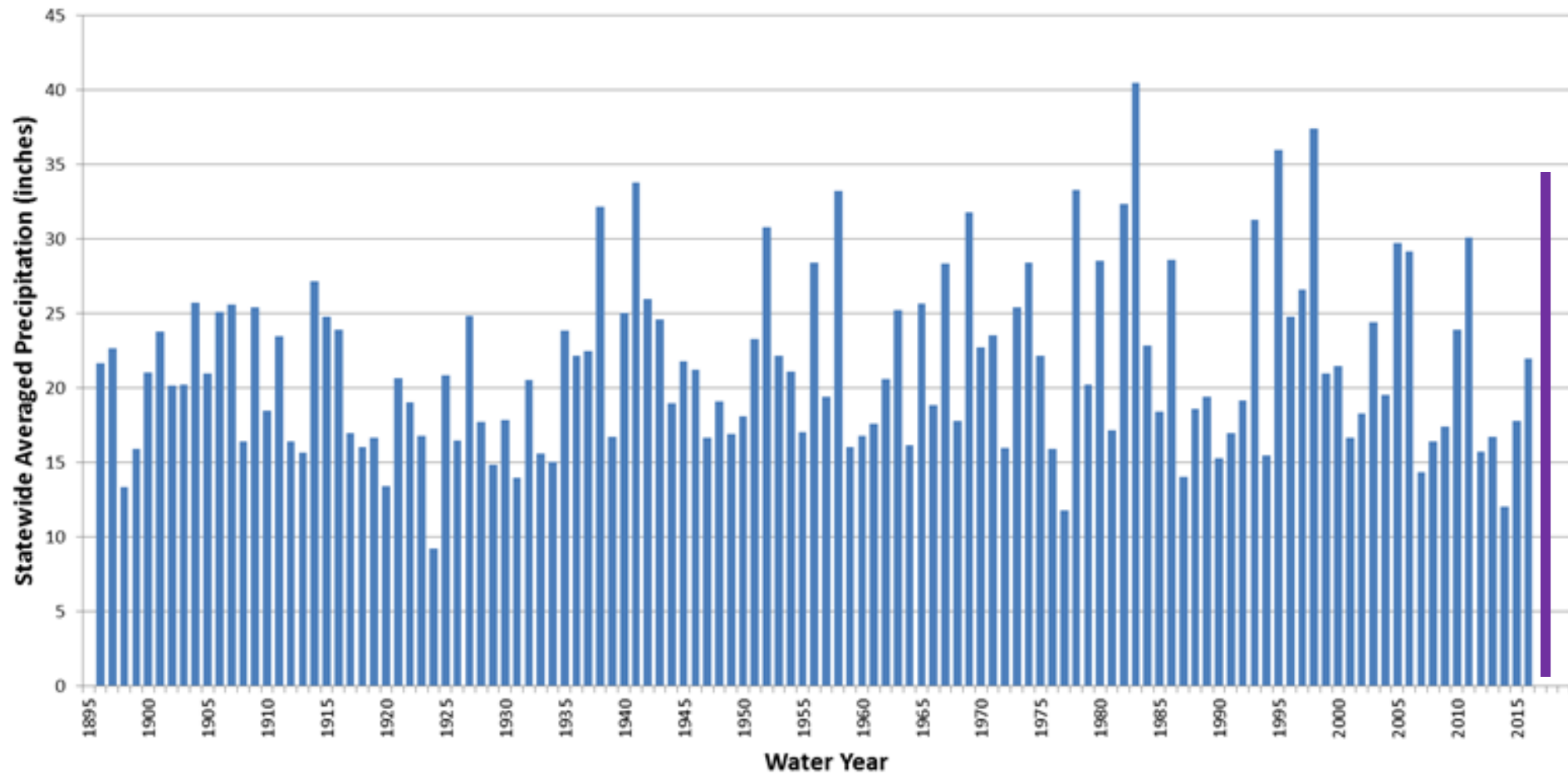
Water

Soil

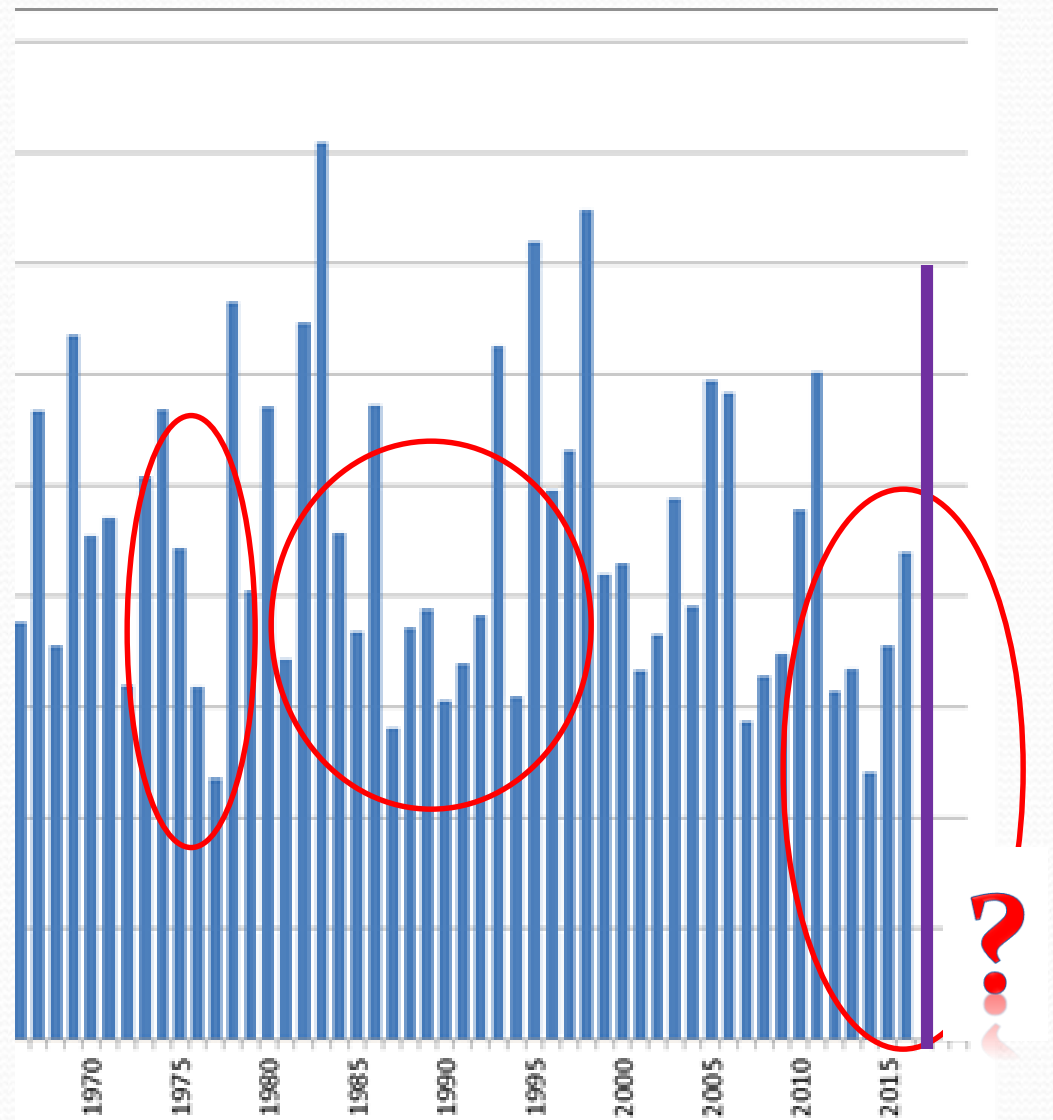
Life



CA Annual average rainfall 1895-2016



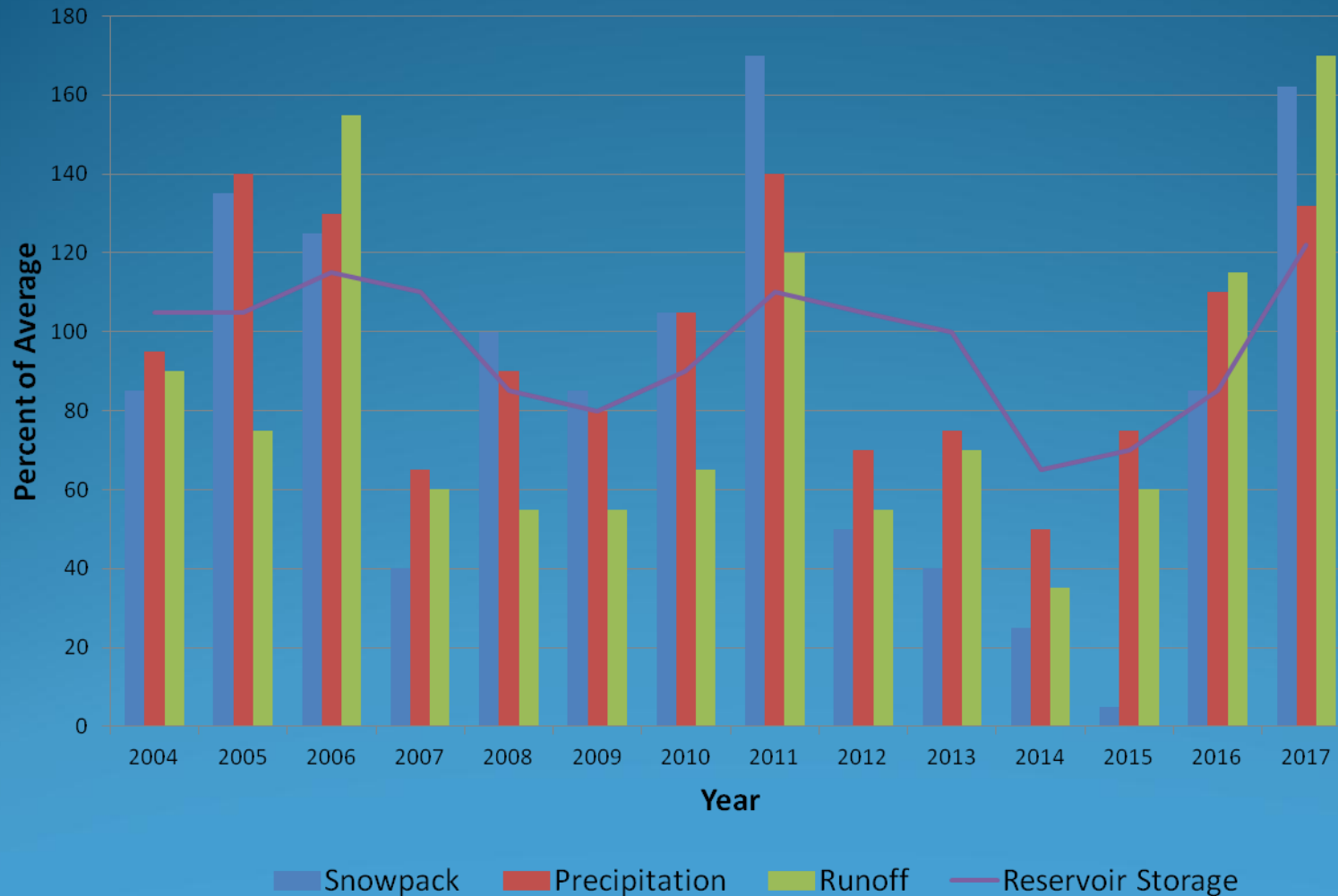
Since 1965



Department of Water Resources California

Cooperative Snow Surveys

April 1 Statewide Conditions



Issues with landscapes and landscape ordinances

- Stormwater capture
 - Done wrong or not at all
 - Over-engineered
- Grading
 - Compaction
- Push back on Flow Sensors, Master Valves
- Low Volume irrigation
- Range used in plant factors

Issues

- Invasive plants
- Irrigation efficiency
- Turf irrigation
 - Warm season vs. cool season
- **Existing Landscapes**
- Local agency
 - No inspections
 - No checking



issues

- Install other than approved design
- Auditing
- Hardscape and artificial turf and its role in the water budget (none at present)
- SLA water budgets
- Pools, and splash pads in the water budget
- Trees
 - Irrigation valves
 - Canopy hydrozone

Permanent restrictions to prevent water waste

- Using potable water to wash sidewalks and driveways;
- Allowing runoff when irrigating with potable water;
- Using hoses with no shutoff nozzles to wash cars;
- Using potable water in decorative water features that do not recirculate the water;
- Irrigating outdoors during and within 48 hours following measureable rainfall;
- Irrigation with potable water of ornamental turf on public street medians; and
- Irrigation with potable water outside of newly constructed homes and buildings that is inconsistent with regulations or other requirements established by the California Building Standards Commission and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

What's Happening Now

- AB2515 Update MWELO in synch with Cal Green
- Effective Date 1/1/2020
- Need to update by 2018
- Public process
- Stakeholder group



LSAG-Landscape Stakeholder Advisory Group

- Open to anyone
- Informal
- Met in January in Pomona, Sacramento in April, Fresno in Sept.
- Next meeting Dec. 18 San Diego
- Webinar –always
- Sign up to join



Draft Timeline

- Dec 18, 2017 full group meeting San Diego
- January 2018 workgroups give final recommendations
- Feb-June re-write regulation
- Public hearings, comments, Water Commission approval
- Final approval by 7/1/19
- Effective date 1/1/2020

Julie Saare-Edmonds

Julie.saare-edmonds@water.ca.gov