

Water Windfall” Discovered Under California’s Drought-Stricken Central Valley

Though the aquifer could help with the current and future droughts, researchers caution getting too greedy with the resource

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California’s megadrought is stretching into its fifth year, and as the best hope for rain, [El Niño](#), fizzles, the outlook is grim. While Northern California’s [winter precipitation approached normal](#), 60 percent of the state remains in a severe drought.

So a new discovery under the Central Valley has residents excited; researchers from Stanford mapped out a deep groundwater reservoir under the Valley that holds three times more water than previously thought. They recently published their results [in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*](#).

“It’s not often that you find a ‘water windfall,’ but we just did,” study co-author Robert Jackson says [in a press release](#). “There’s far more fresh water and usable water than we expected.”

[Ria Misra at Gizmodo](#) reports that the researchers estimate the reservoir holds 2,700 cubic kilometers of water or approximately 713 trillion liquid gallons. That’s more than Lake Erie and Lake Ontario combined.

Read more: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/water-windfall-under-californias-drought-stricken-central-valley-180959590/#BbhHjpAbifFVBxT0.99>

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