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## **Emergency Drought Barrier Removed from Delta**

### *West False River Boating Restrictions Lifted*

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has completed dismantling an emergency drought barrier that spanned West False River between Jersey and Bradford islands. The barrier was erected in May and June to prevent saltwater from pushing with the tides into the central Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta from San Francisco Bay.

The barrier was an essential part of DWR's strategy to maintain good water quality in the Delta, which provides water to 25 million Californians, including residents of the Delta and Contra Costa, Alameda and Santa Clara counties. DWR's State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project convey Delta water through their aqueducts to distant parts of the state.

A fourth year of drought made installation of the barrier necessary to preserve Delta water quality and conserve water in upstream reservoirs that otherwise would have been released to help block incoming tides of saltwater from San Francisco Bay.

Dismantling of the approximately 750-foot rock barrier began on September 8 and was completed on schedule. About 150,000 tons of large rocks (riprap) were used to build the barrier. The removed riprap will be stored near Rio Vista for possible use if drought conditions continue and installation of an emergency drought barrier is once again deemed necessary to preserve water quality. The material also will be available to reinforce and protect Delta levees in case of flooding this winter.

Paul Marshall, Chief of DWR's Bay-Delta Office, said the barrier achieved DWR's goals during this persistent drought. "The barrier worked by preventing salinity to reach the central Delta," he said. "We were able to save about 90,000 acre-feet in upstream reservoirs for the last quarter of 2015 and for fish releases."

More information on emergency drought barriers [is available here](#). To learn more about the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit [Drought.CA.Gov](#). Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](#). The State's turf and toilet rebate program is explained at [SaveOurWaterRebates.com](#).

Conservation – the wise, sparing use of water – remains California's most reliable drought management tool. Each individual act of conservation, such as letting the lawn go brown or replacing a washer in a faucet to stop a leak, makes a difference over time.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood management and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.



# FAQ: 2015 Emergency Barrier Removal at West False River

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## What happened here?

*In order to help deter the tidal push of saltwater from San Francisco Bay into the central Delta during California's extreme drought, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) installed an emergency temporary rock barrier across West False River, a Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta channel. The barrier helped keep saltier water to the west and protected water quality for people who live in the Delta, for Contra Costa, Alameda and Santa Clara counties and for other Californians who rely on the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP).*

*During construction, sheet piles and basketball-sized rocks were placed in the river. The temporary barrier spanned this approximately 750-foot wide channel between Jersey and Bradford Islands.*

*State and federal water and wildlife officials on the Real-Time Drought Operations Management Team selected this single project site to install an emergency barrier in 2015 for its ability to help protect water quality while posing the least harm for threatened and endangered fish.*

## What's happening now?

*DWR began removing the barrier in early September. Full removal of the rock in the channel was completed by November 15.*

## How well did the barrier work?

*Monitoring at various stations in the Delta showed that the barrier indeed helped improve water quality in the central and south Delta. Results were comparable to those forecasted by DWR's modeling work prior to the barrier's installation. Improved water quality allowed continued use of Delta waters for in-Delta agriculture, municipal and industrial uses and minimal exports by the SWP and CVP.*

## What happens if the drought continues?

*Although water year 2015-16 is forecasted to be wetter than the past four drought years, DWR must plan for the possible continuation of the drought. DWR is pursuing permits that might be needed for a spring 2016 installation of the West False River barrier if water conditions indicate California is indeed in its fifth year of drought.*

## Where can I find more information?

*Please see [DWR's emergency drought barriers webpage](#) and visit [saveourwater.com](http://saveourwater.com) for easy water-saving tips.*

# Temporary Emergency Drought Barrier in Delta

To protect the quality of Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta water that is used for millions of agricultural acres and by 25 million Californians, the California Department of Water Resources installed a temporary emergency rock barrier on West False River in May 2015. It was removed by November 15. Boating detours have been lifted.

