

The End of the ‘Permanent’ Drought

**John G. Parrish, Ph.D., California State Geologist,
California Geological Survey**

California is, dimensionally, a large state, being about 800 miles long (N-S) and 200 miles wide (E-W) – encompassing about 164 thousand square miles. Because of its geographic and topographic settings, the State’s climates vary from wet Mediterranean to Arid, and whatever is in-between. In the 1950’s and ‘60’s, the State of California embarked on a massive water storage and management program to ensure that the State’s burgeoning population (then about 20 million) would have fresh water supplies into the foreseeable future.

Although the State’s annual rainfall amounts have cyclically varied from abundance to paucity throughout its geological history, a three-year drought extending from 2012-’13 winter to 2014-’15 winter created near panic concern amongst the State’s elected officials and climatological pundits. In 2015 California was declared to be in a “Permanent Drought”, and its 39 million inhabitants would be making severe sacrifices -- forever. However, the 2016-’17 rainy season brought over 200% (over 88 inches) of average yearly rainfall – and the elected officials declared an end to the “Permanent Drought”.

Now – what about all the flooding, dam failures, and landslides?

Biography: **John G. Parrish** was appointed on April 1, 2005 to serve as the California State Geologist and Chief of the California Geological Survey. The State Geologist is the primary contact and spokesperson for the California Geological Survey with the Resources Agency, the Governor’s Office, the State Legislature, and the State Mining and Geology Board. Prior to his current position, he was the Executive Officer for the State Mining and Geology Board for eleven years. Before coming to state service, Dr. Parrish spent 21 years in various capacities of geological exploration for a large international petroleum company. A native of California, John was raised in Los Angeles. He received a BS in Geology from the University of Redlands in Southern California; an MS in Geology from the University of Houston; an MBA from California State University; and a PhD in Marine Geology from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Parrish is a California licensed Professional Geologist, a Certified Professional Geologist by the American Institute of Professional Geologists, a Certified Petroleum Geologist by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and a Founding Member of the Energy Minerals Division, and a Member of the Society of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers. He is the Past-President of the Association of American State Geologists; Chair of the California Earthquake Prediction and Evaluation Council (CEPEC), which reports directly to the Director of the California Office of Emergency Services; Board Member on the Consortium of Organizations for Strong Motion Observation Systems, and Chair of the California Integrated Seismic Network. He is also a former Board Member of the USGS’s Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee, past Board Chairman of the Western States Seismic Policy Council and served as the Representative-at-Large for the American Geosciences Institute. In 2005 Parrish was awarded the John T. Galey, Sr. Memorial Public Service Award by the American Institute of Professional Geologists. This

national award is given to an individual for outstanding public service well beyond the normal professional responsibilities.