

Kern River 101

Making the Most of the Hardworking Kern River

For over a century, the region's water users have been working together to sustainably manage the limited water resources all of Kern County relies on from the Kern River – providing the water our families, farmers, businesses and disadvantaged communities rely on to support our thriving agricultural industry and the backbone of our region's economy.

Fast Facts: Kern County Agriculture

20% of Kern County's Workforce

\$86.5 Million in Farmworker Income

250+ Crops

731,000 Acres of Irrigated Cropland

\$7.6 Billion Gross Production Value

2nd Top-grossing County for Agricultural Production in America



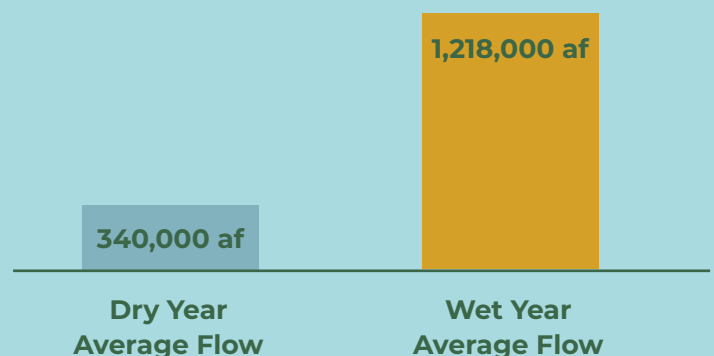
The Kern River: A River Hard at Work for the Hard-Working People of Kern County

Question: Why does the Kern River running through Bakersfield look empty so much of the time?

Answer: The water supply in the Kern River goes through infrequent wet years followed by long periods of drought – and the droughts are only getting longer and more intense with the impacts of climate change. During dry years, there simply isn't enough water to both meet the needs of the people, farmers and disadvantaged communities that depend on it, while also running water down the river for aesthetic reasons.


Kern River Flows (1980-2020)


**At First Point of Measurement*



Every Drop Counts

Unpredictable hydrology, droughts and a growing population have reduced the available water supplies in the Kern River over the years. That is why the region's water users have been working for decades to responsibly implement modern sustainable water management techniques to ensure they can make every drop count. Despite their best efforts to increase water use efficiency and recharge the groundwater basin beneath our feet, public water agencies are still operating at a water deficit because there is less water in the system.

 * Up to 90% average reduction in available Kern River water supplies between wet and dry years (1980-2020)

 Kern River water users are consistently needing to pump groundwater due to highly variable Kern River water supplies. For decades, public water agencies have responded to variable water supplies by responsibly applying the practice of conjunctive use and groundwater recharge.



The Law of the River

Local farmers have relied on Kern River water for decades – nourishing families and creating much needed jobs that would not be possible without their historic rights to the water. Now more than ever, all regional water users must follow the law of the river – over a century of well established water rights laws and court decisions that have enabled Kern County to become the agricultural powerhouse that it is today.

Multiple Choice: What would you do?

Imagine you are one of Kern County's many water users – all of whom depend on the Kern River – and you require more water to meet your needs. Would you:

- Try to take Kern River water away from the people that depend on it by asking the state to come in and make decisions for our community?
- Work collaboratively with all water users to develop solutions that strike a balance to meet the water needs of the people, farms, businesses, communities and environment that depend on it?

Kern County Needs Win-Win Solutions

We need to work together on sustainable water management solutions that will benefit ALL Kern County water users and communities.

Learn more about how Kern County water users are working collaboratively to make the most of the Kern River's limited water resources.

www.SustainableKernRiver.org