

Where We've Been: Drought in the Southern California Paleo Record

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Paleo Drought Workshop: Using the Past to Improve Drought Preparedness Now
April 19, 2018
San Pedro, CA



A Hot, Dry Winter in California. Could It Be Drought Again?

Feb. 14, 2018

Can one monster storm save California from drought?

Mammoth Mountain could get up to five feet of snow March 2, 2018

Late-winter storms ease California's dive back into drought

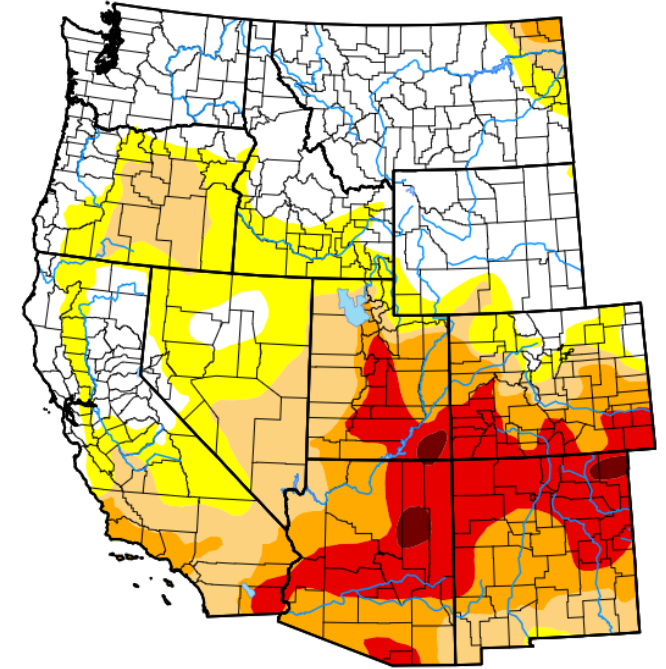
April 2, 2018 by Rich Pedroncelli And Ellen Knickmeyer

Another Atmospheric River Soaks Northern California

FLOOD , WEATHER

APR 12, 2018

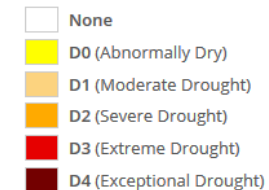
Drought Conditions as of April 12



Map released: Thurs. April 12, 2018

Data valid: April 10, 2018 at 8 a.m. EDT

Intensity:

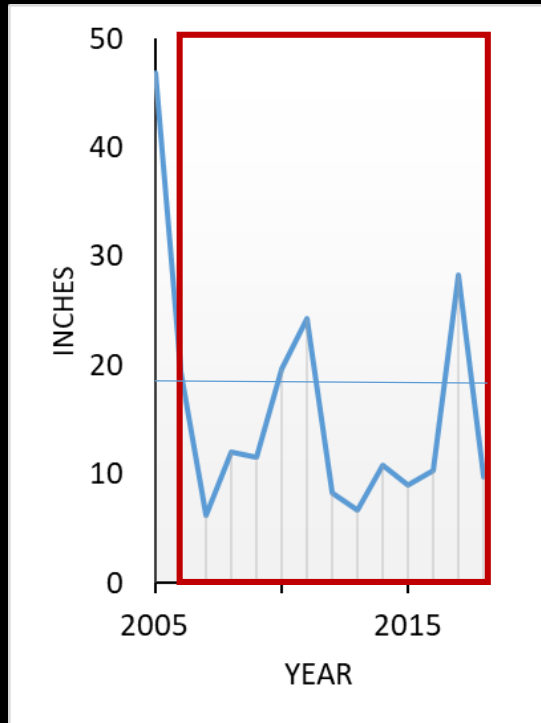


From US Drought Monitor

Why consider the past when
planning for the future?

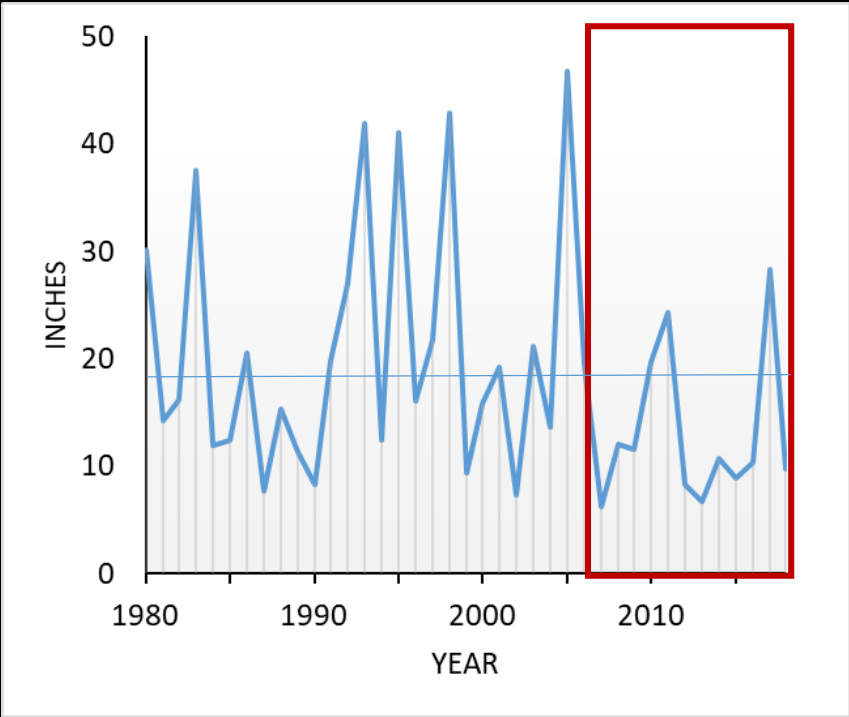
perspective

Ojai, CA
total precipitation
Oct-March 2005-2018



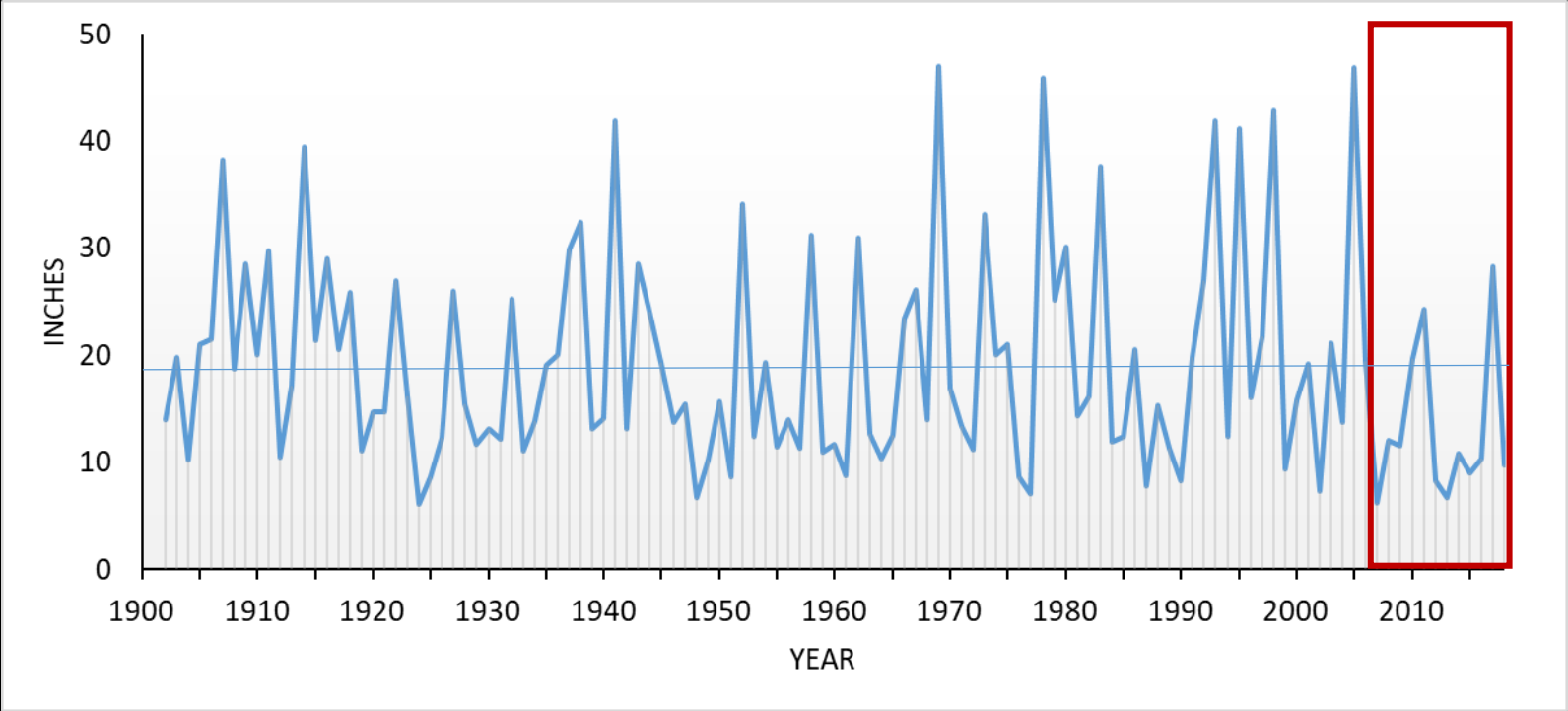
perspective

Ojai, CA
total precipitation
Oct-March 1980-2018

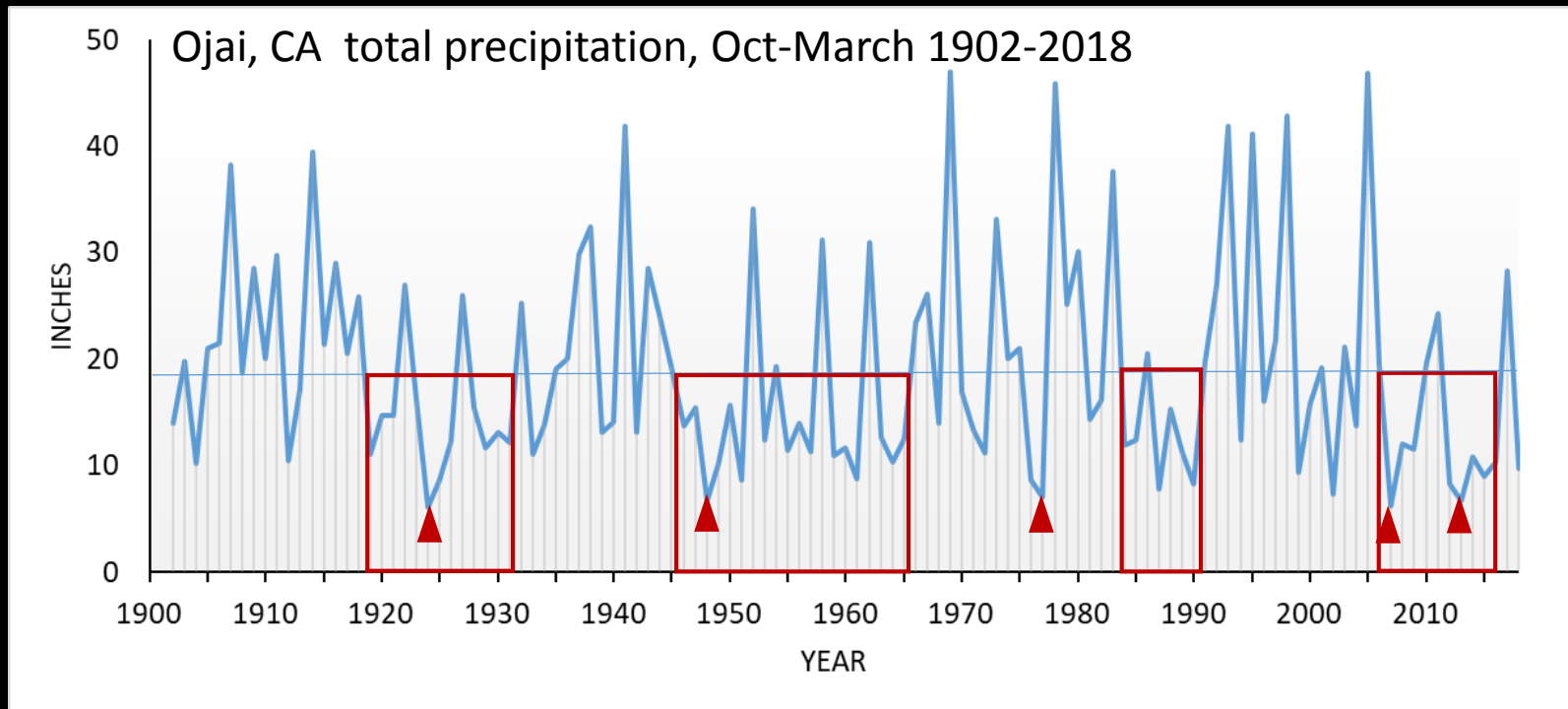


perspective

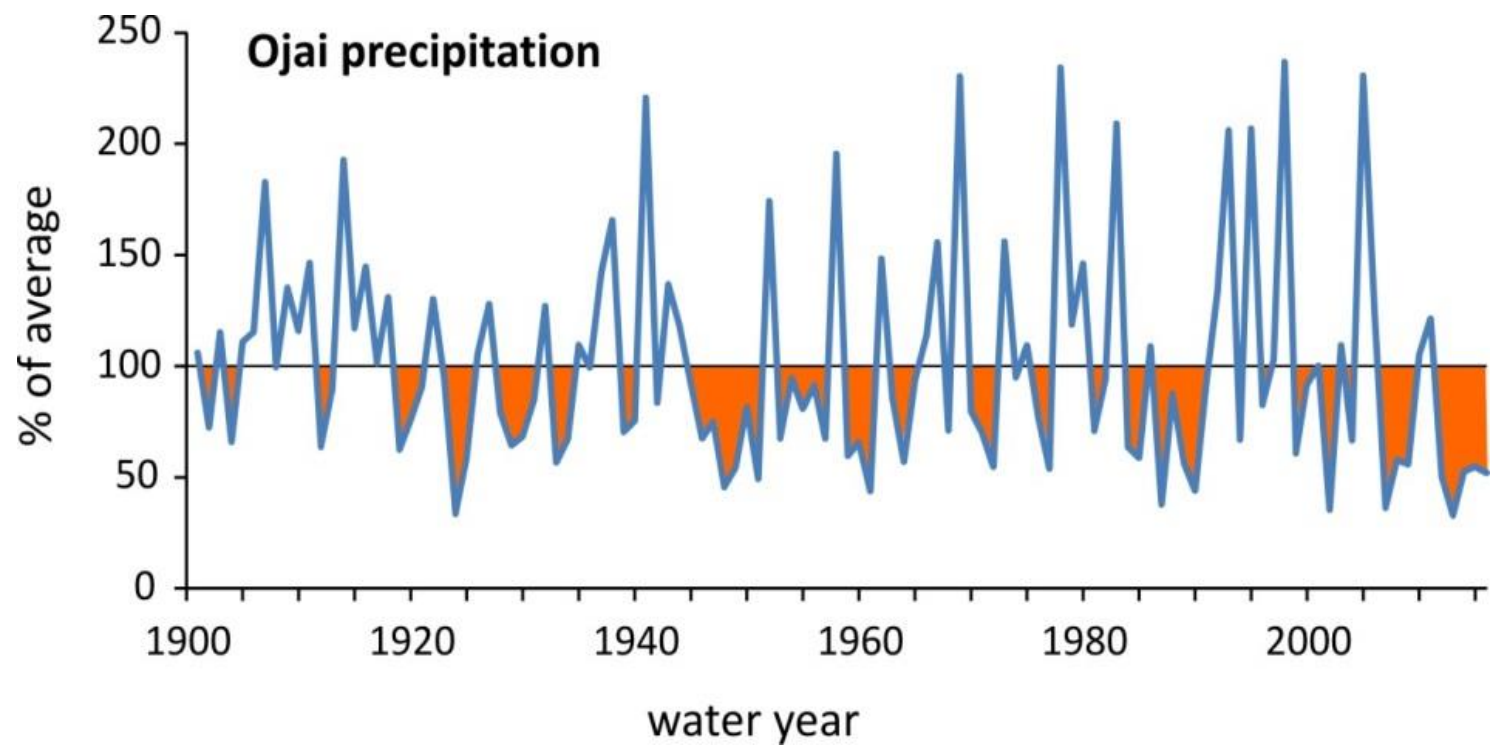
Ojai, CA
total precipitation
Oct-March 1902-2018



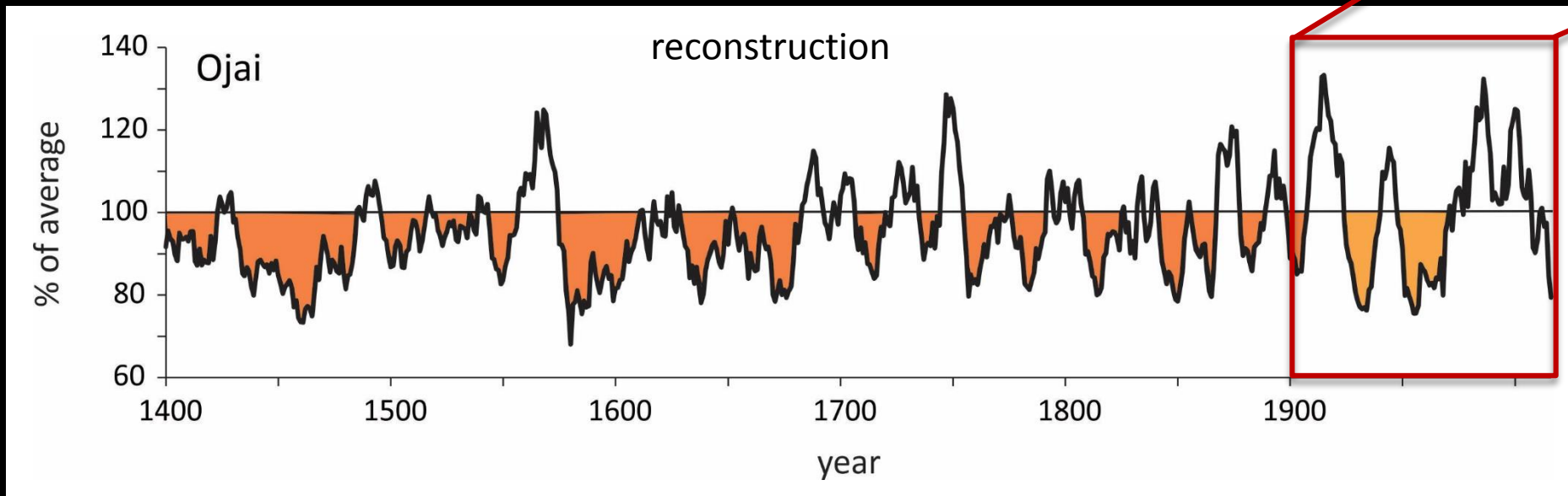
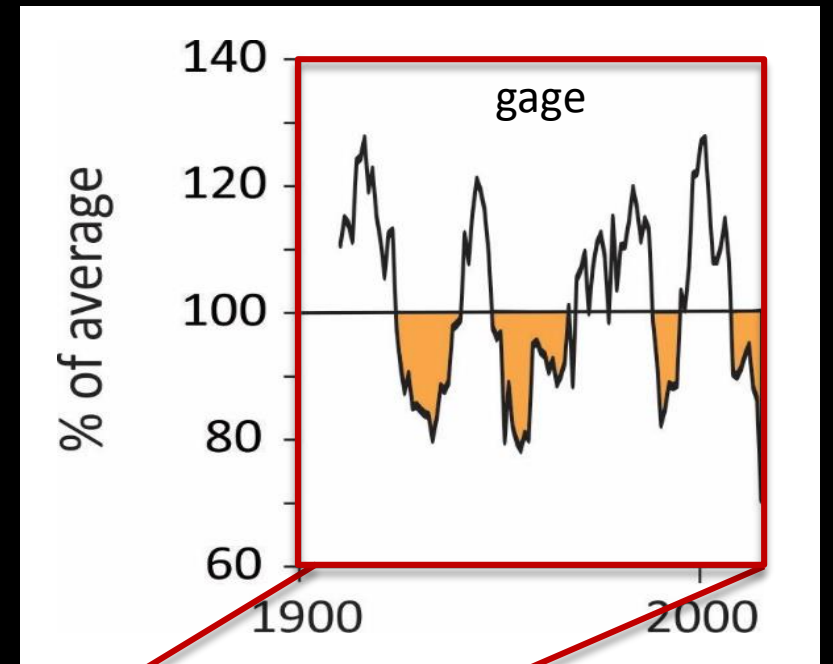
Most gage record extend 100 years or so, at best. These records document extreme dry years and persistent drought.



Are these droughts representative of the past, and a good indication of what we can expect in the future?



Tree-ring records can document droughts over past centuries and place the gage record into a long-term context

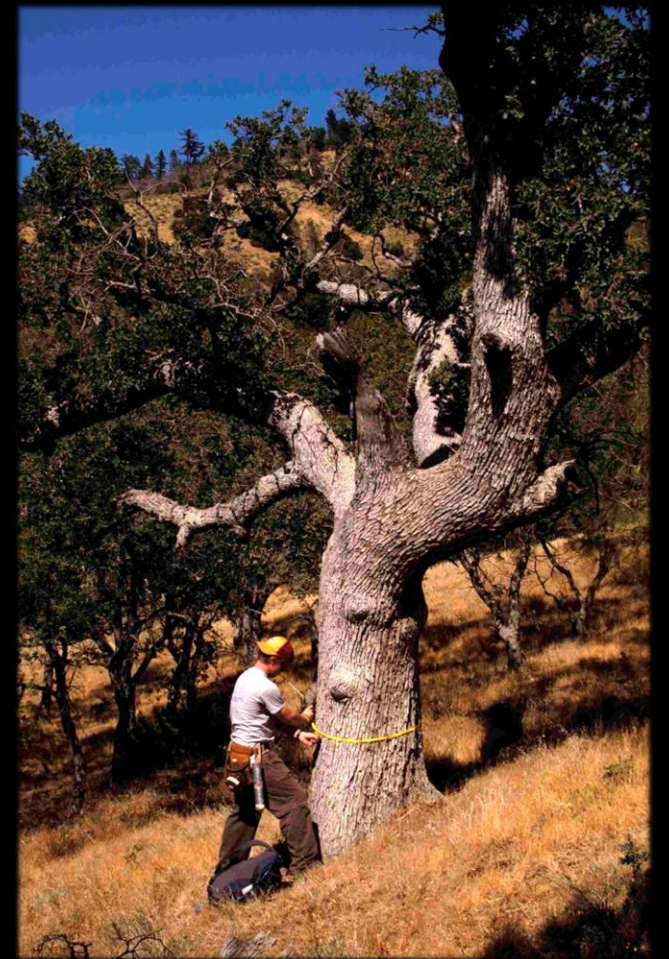


Extending the
instrumental records of
climate using tree rings



What trees are the best recorders of precipitation and drought?

Moisture-sensitive **tree species** growing on open, well-drained sites

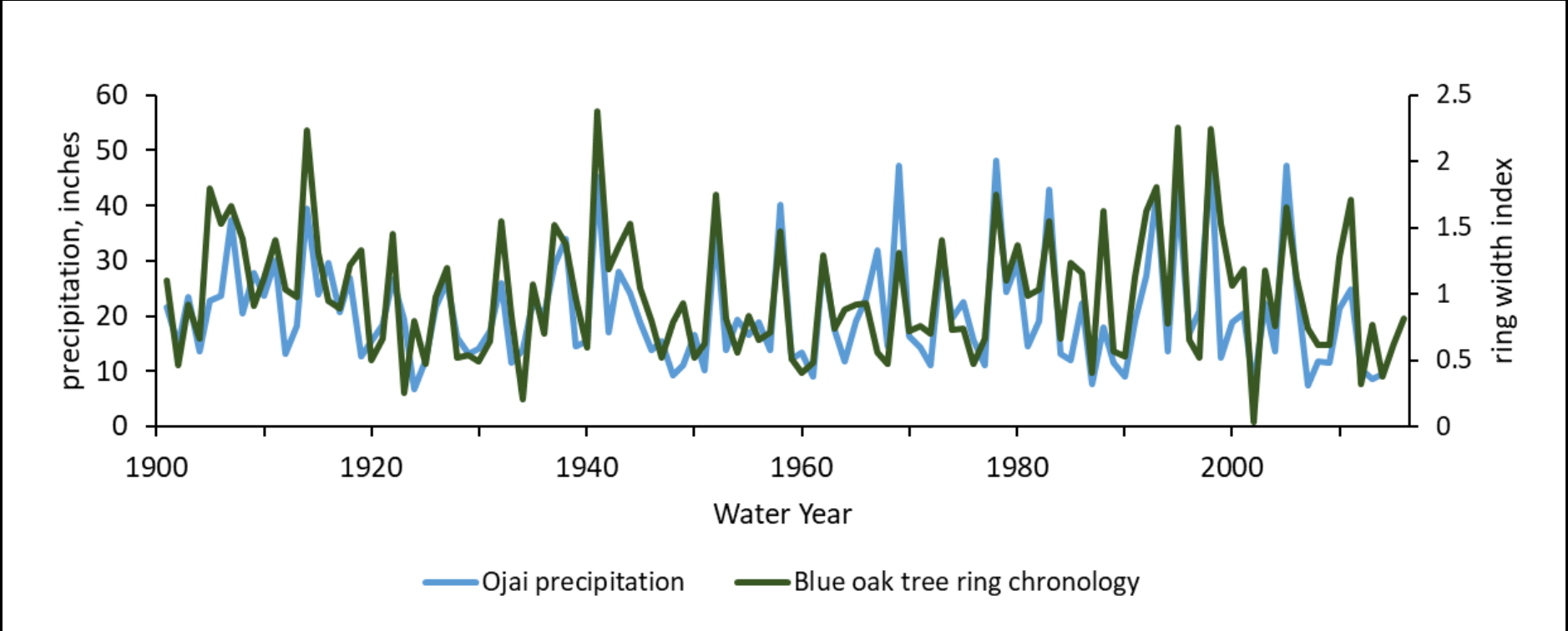
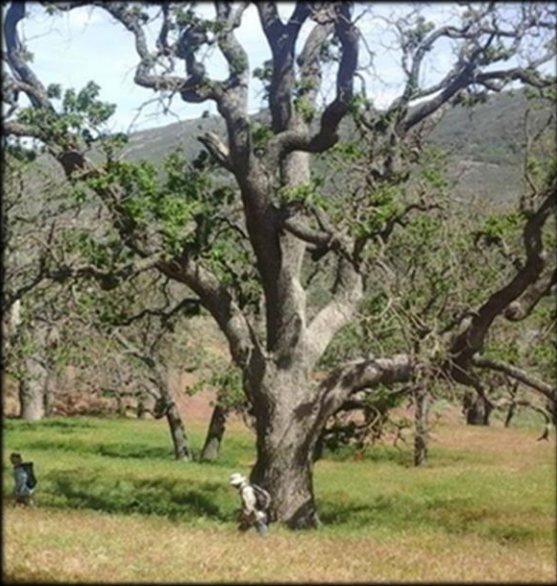


In southern California, these species include:

- bigcone Douglas-fir
- ponderosa pine
- Jeffrey pine
- foxtail pine
- blue oak

Moisture-stressed trees closely track variations in precipitation

Ojai water year precipitation with annual ring widths averaged from a set of trees about 40 miles north of Ojai.



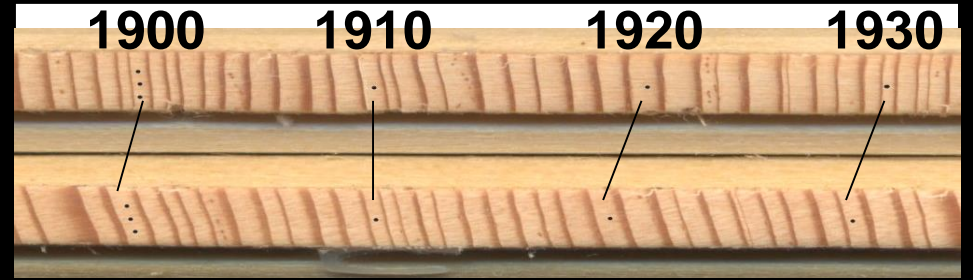
Relationship between streamflow and tree growth



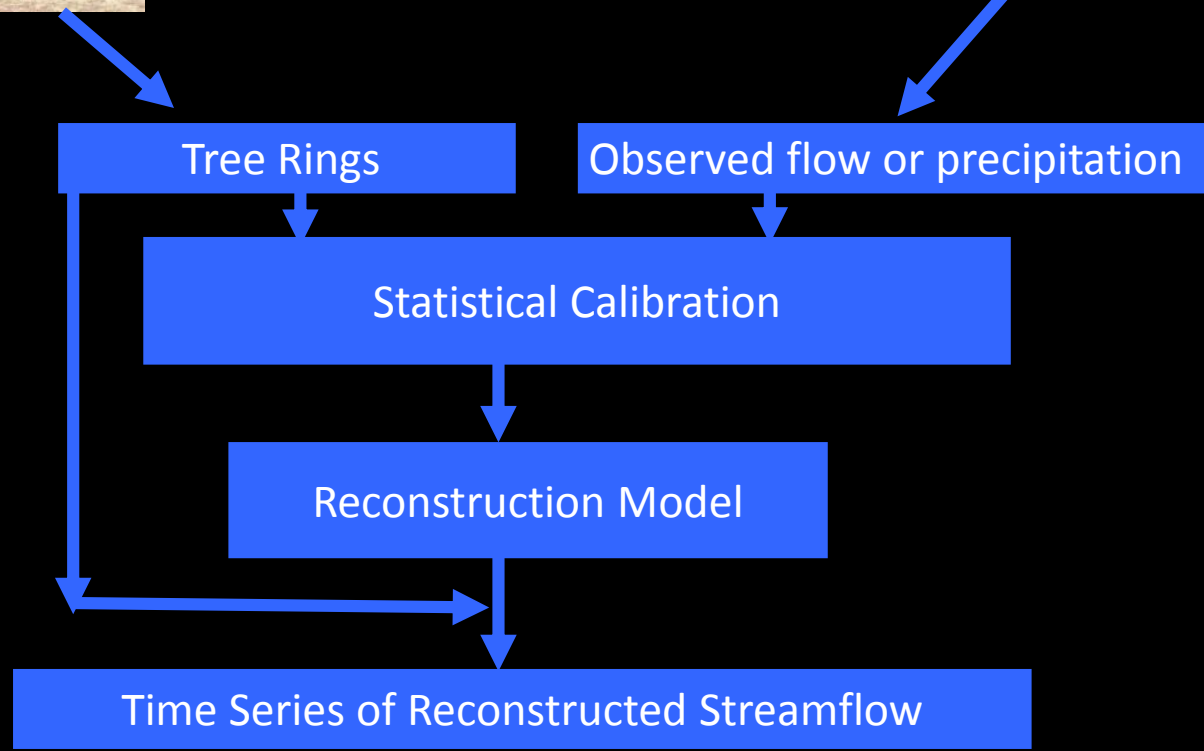
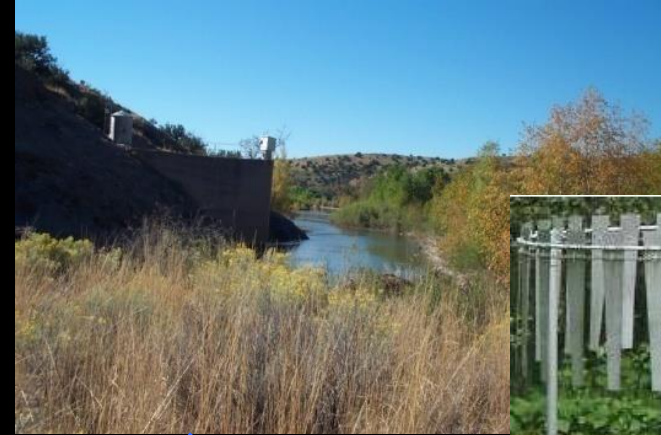
How are trees sampled for climate records?



Back at the lab: Sample preparation, then dating and measuring tree-ring widths



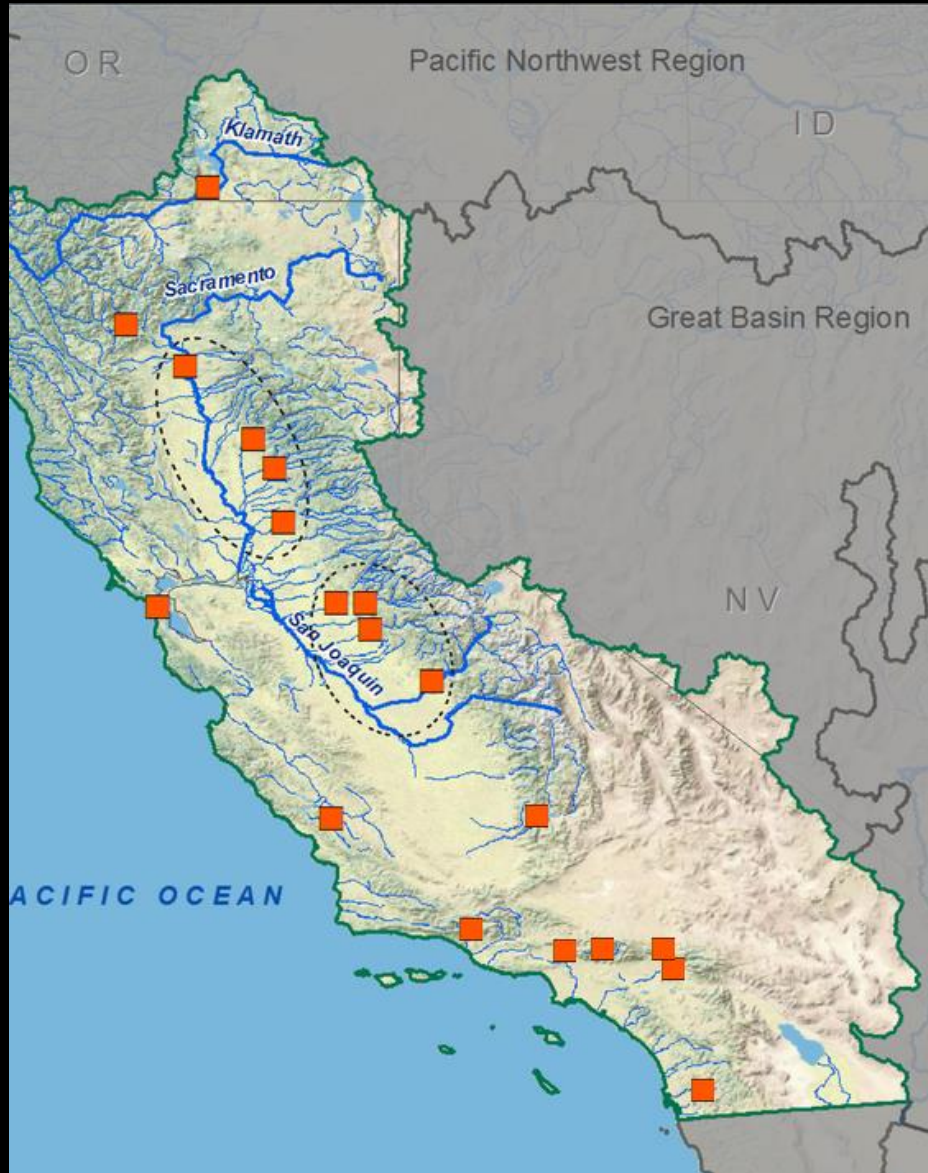
Reconstruction process in a nutshell



California Precipitation and Streamflow Reconstructions



California Precipitation and Streamflow Reconstructions



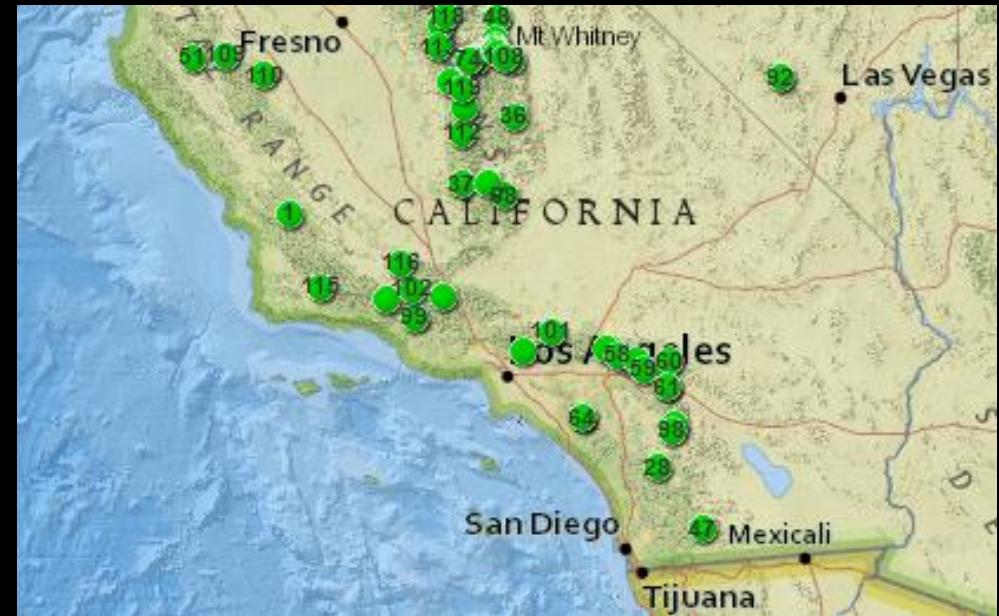
California region tree-ring chronology locations



New Southern California Water Year Precipitation and Streamflow Reconstructions



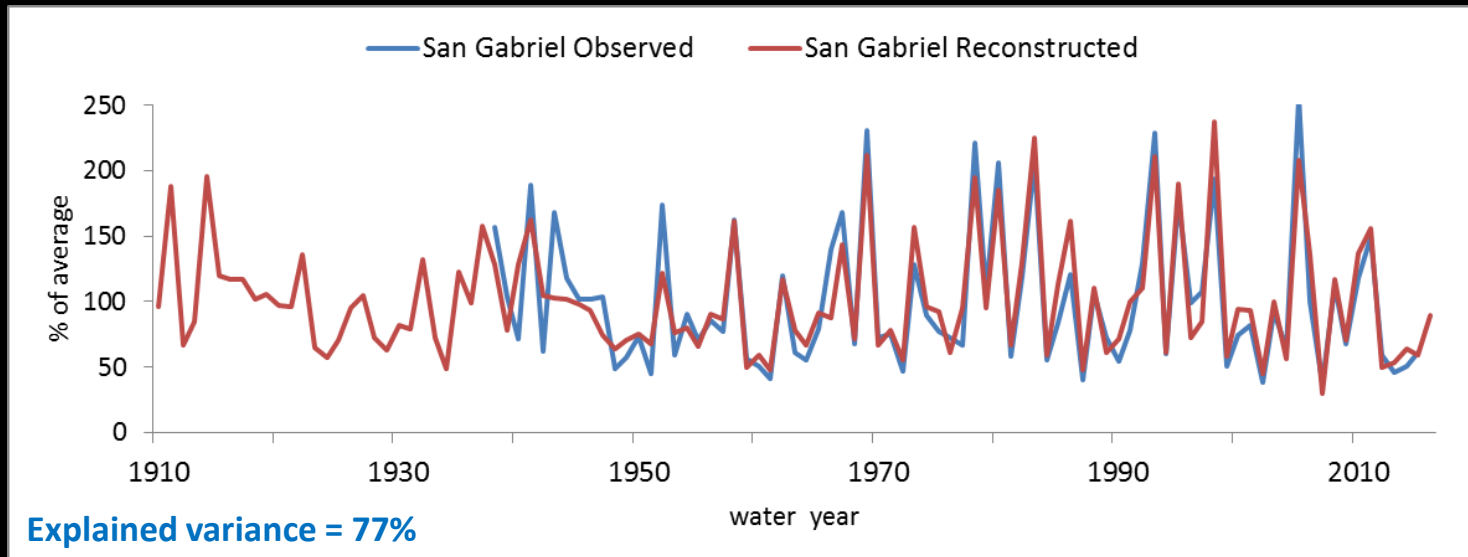
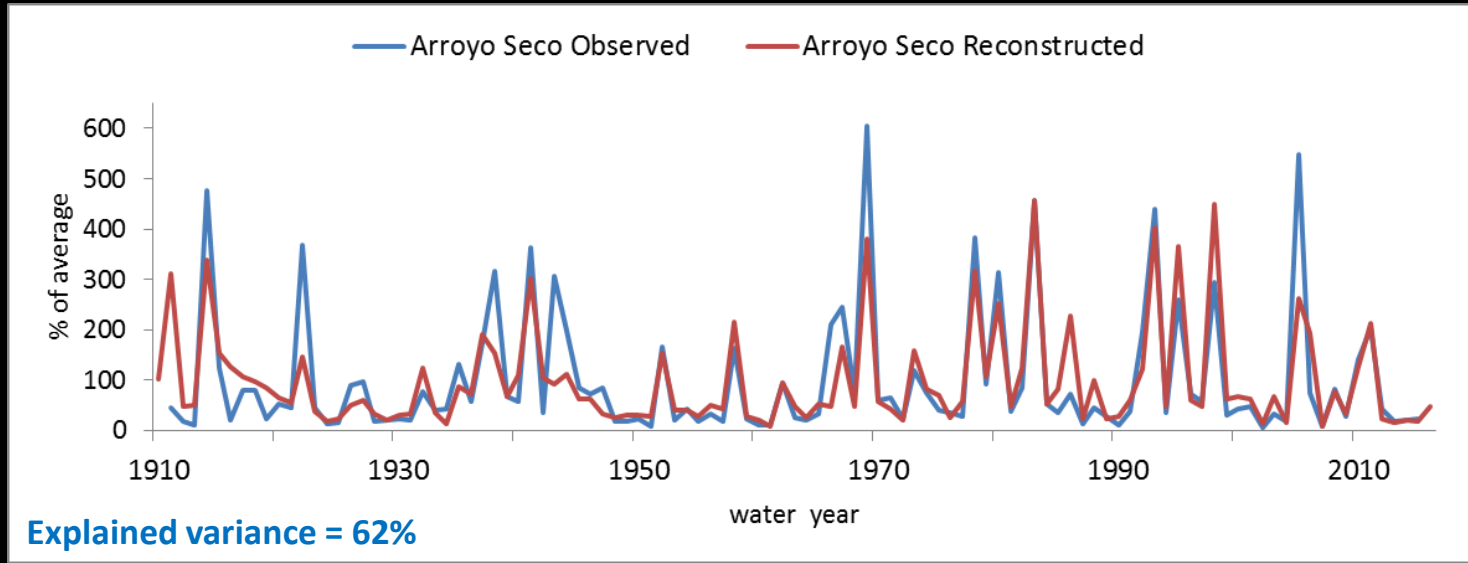
Southern California tree-ring chronology locations



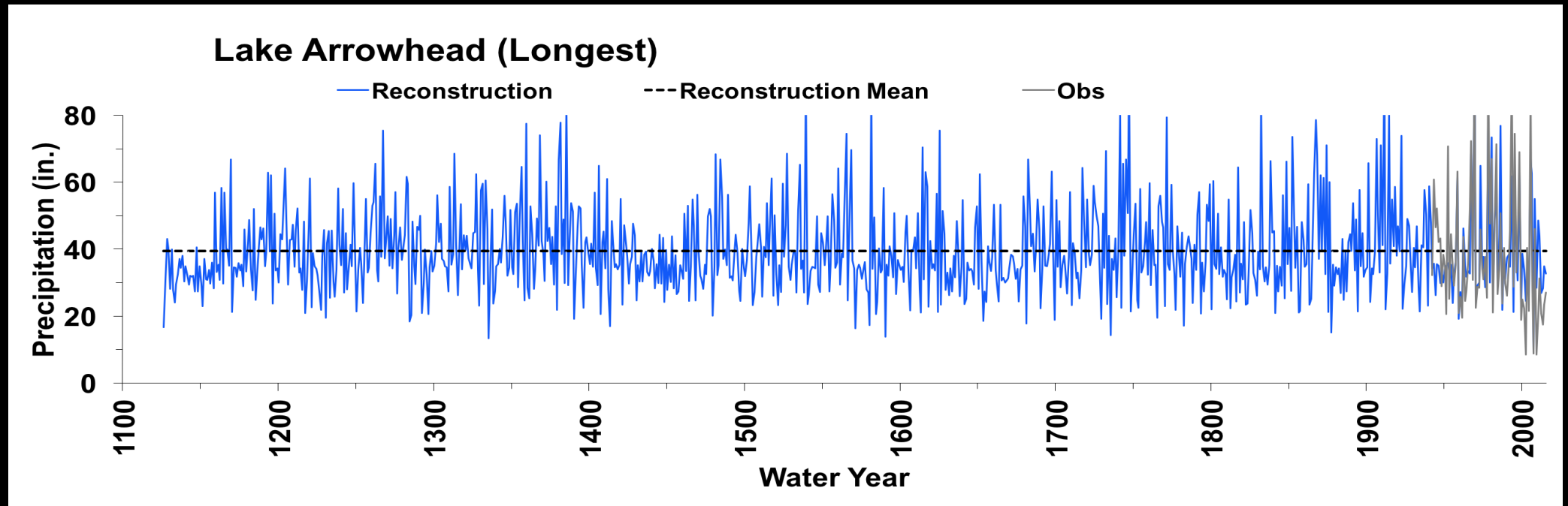
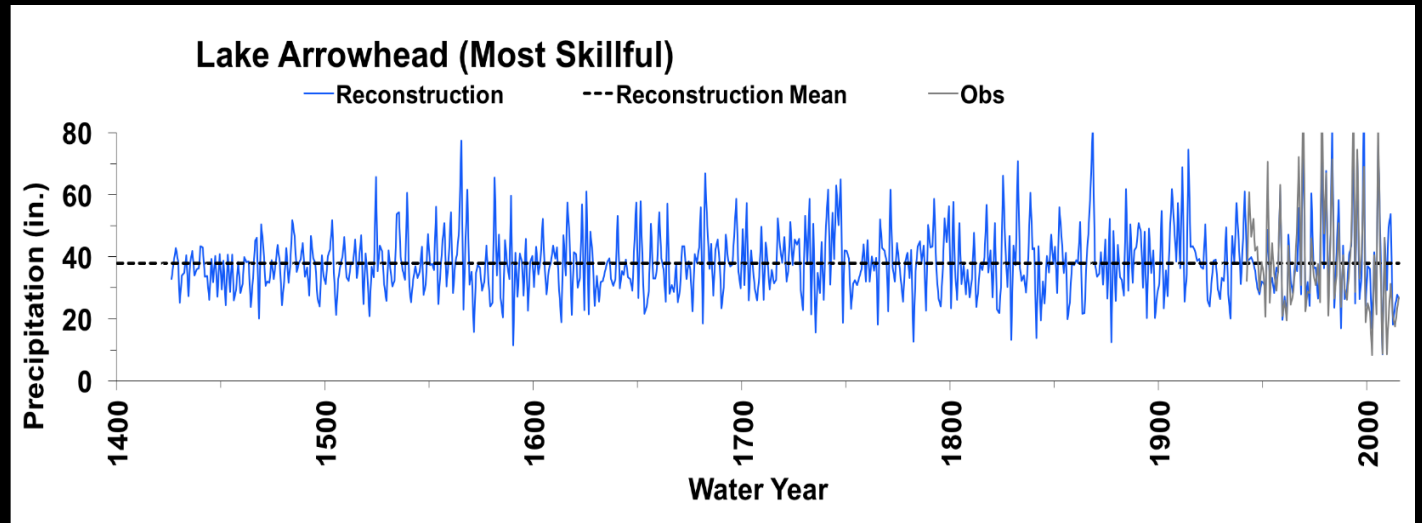
How can tree-ring reconstructions of past flow and precipitation assist in drought planning?

But first, how good are the reconstructions?

Two examples: Arroyo Seco streamflow and San Gabriel Dam precipitation

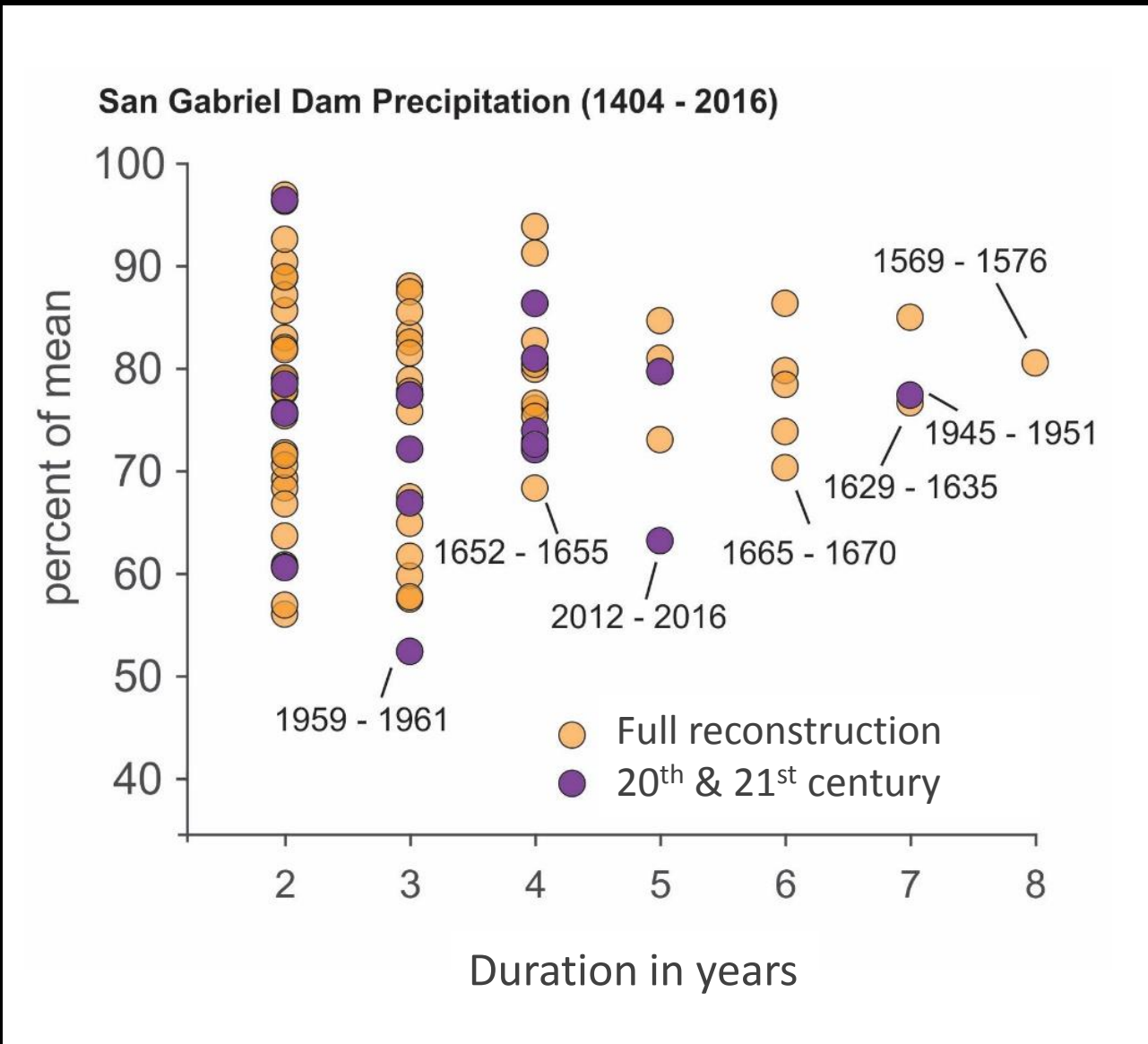


How far back in time do the reconstruction extend?

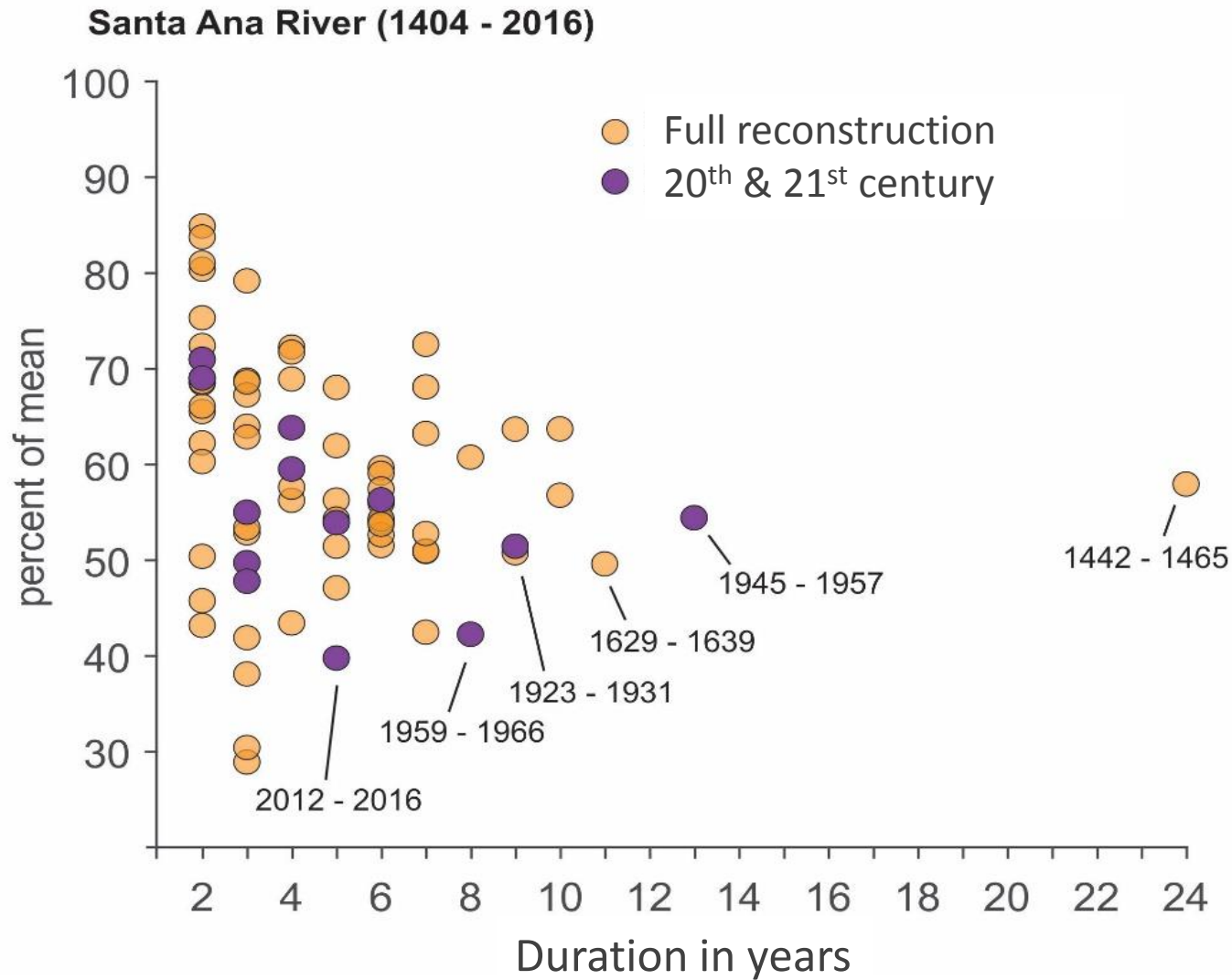


What do these records say about
the risk of drought?

Droughts: how long and how frequent

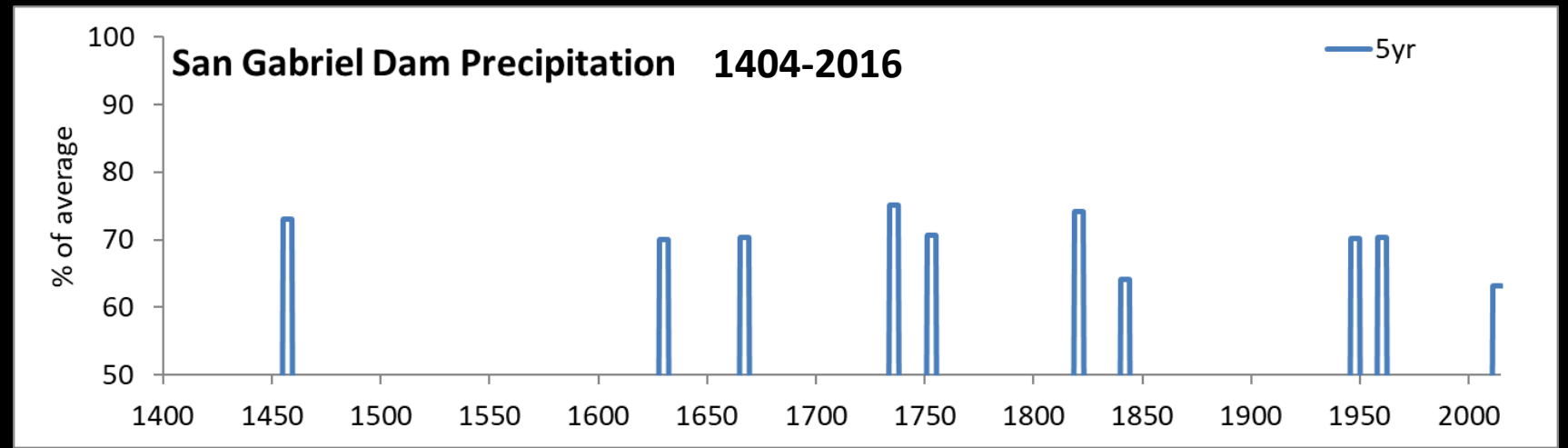


Droughts: how long and how frequent



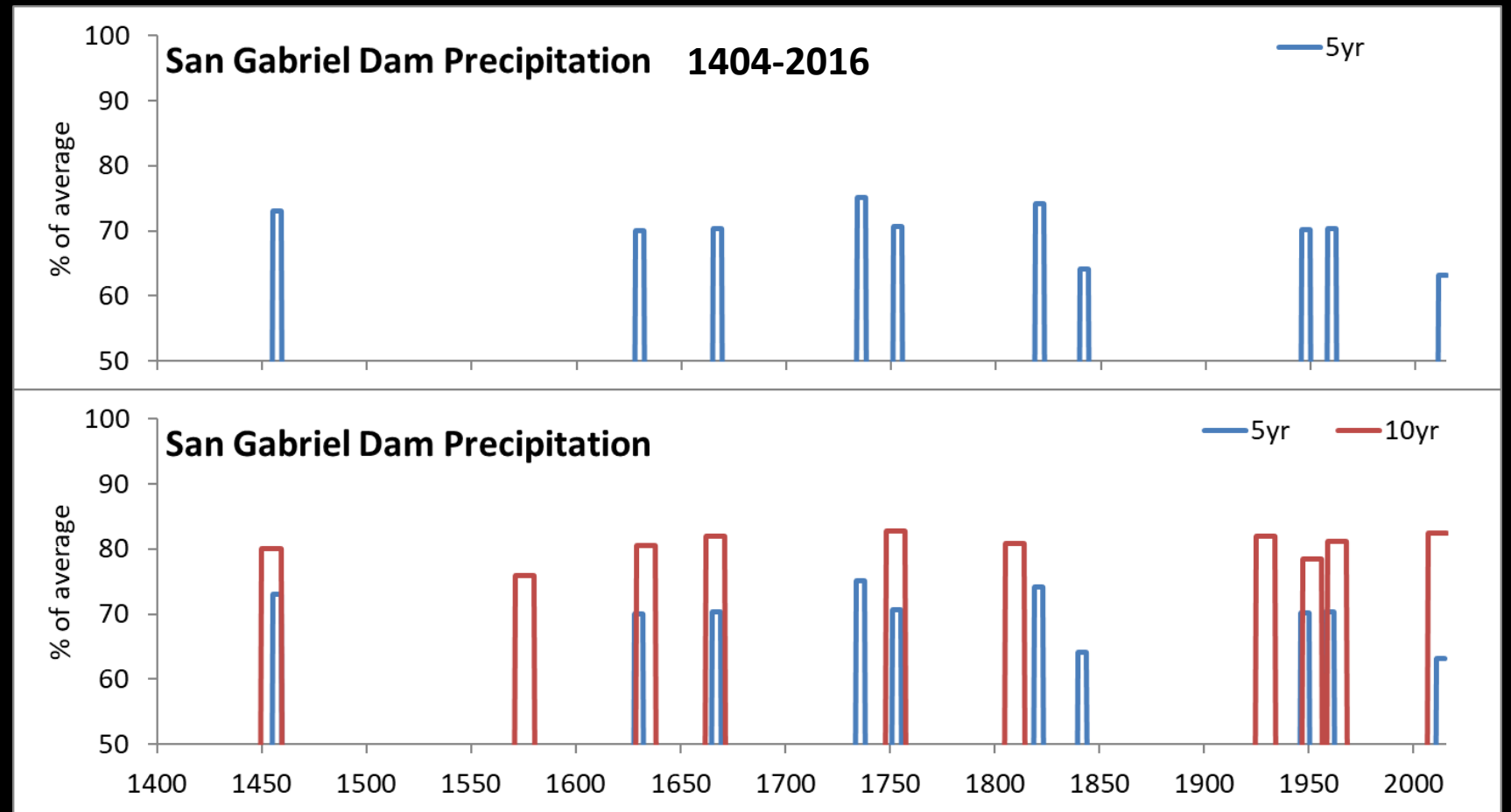
Driest periods

- 5-year periods (non-overlapping)



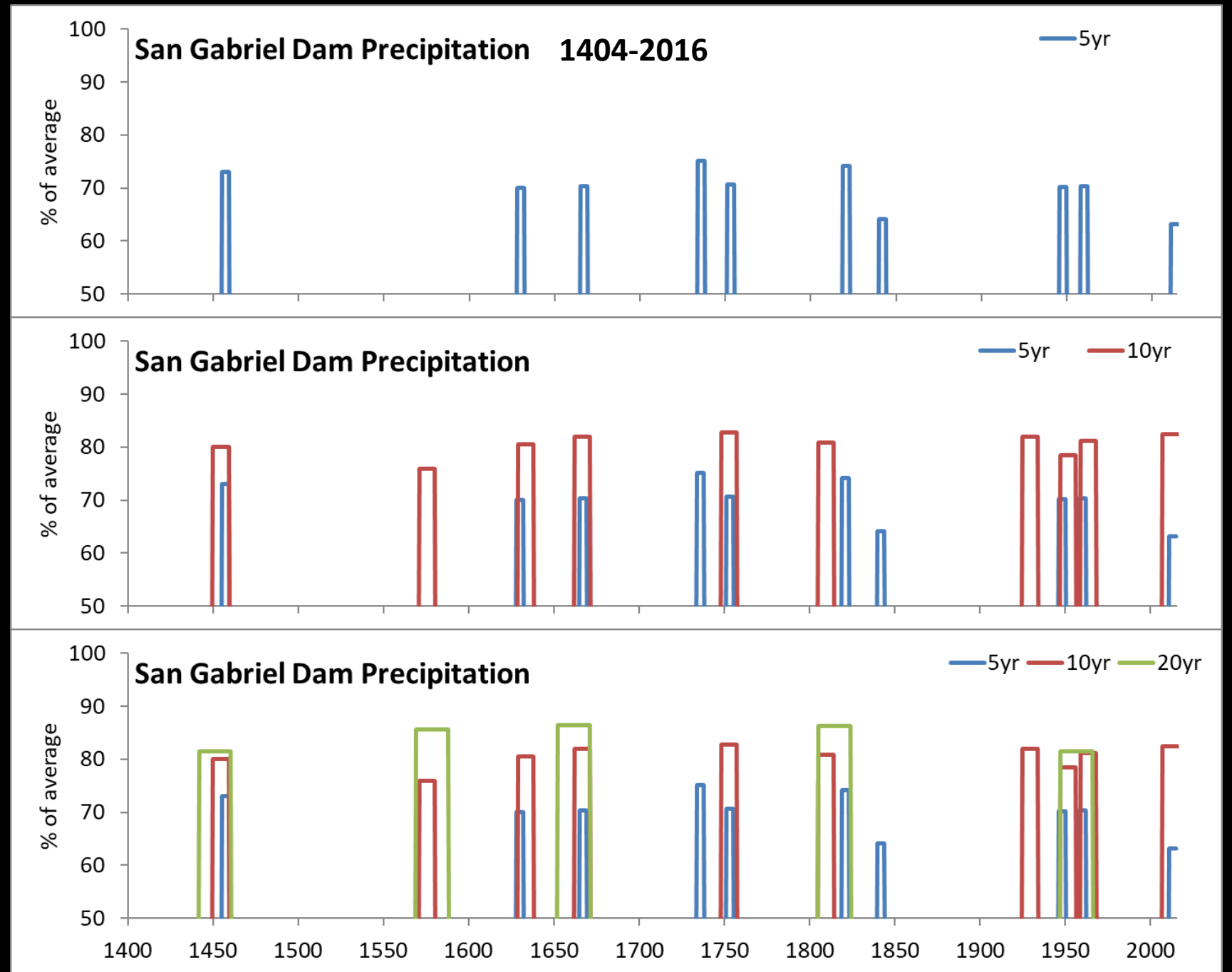
Driest periods

- 5-year periods
- 10-year periods (non-overlapping)



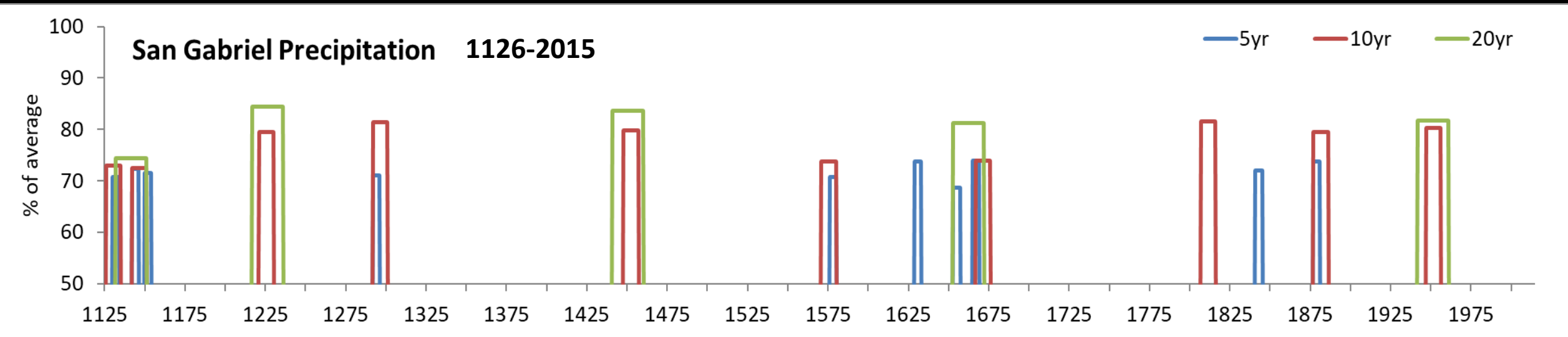
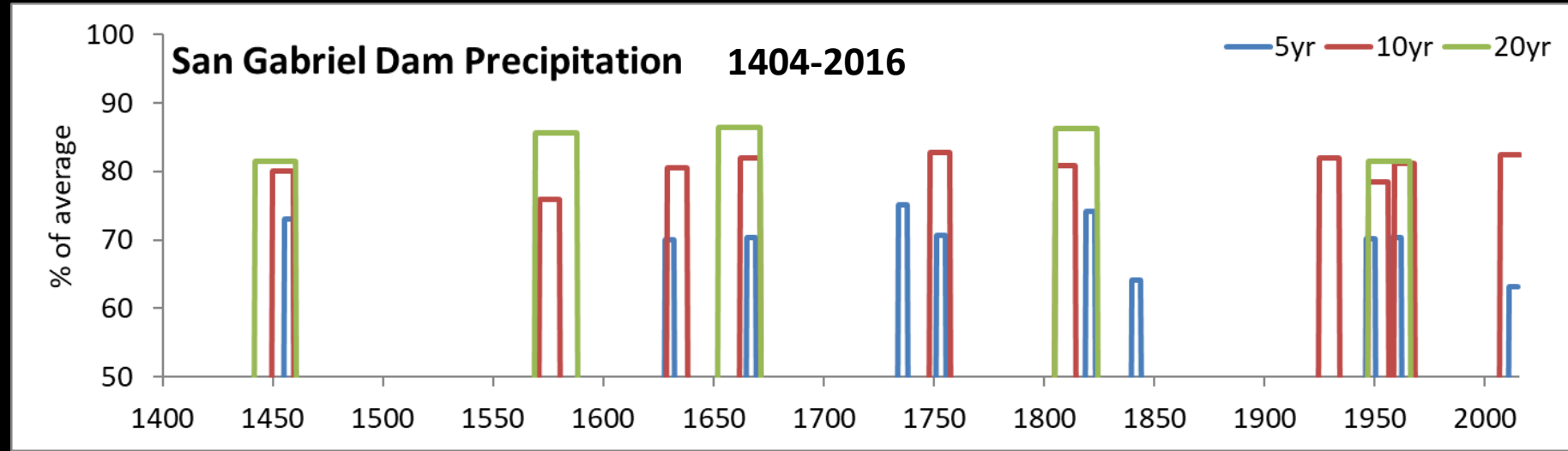
Driest periods

- 5-year periods
 - 10-year periods
 - 20-year periods
- (non-overlapping)



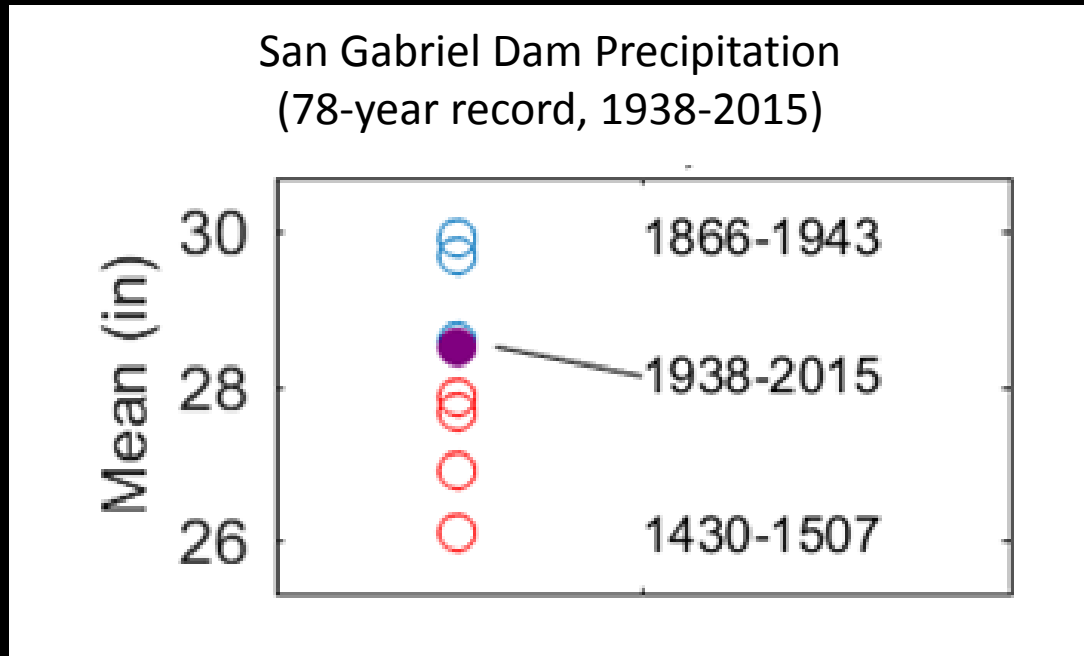
Driest periods

- 5-year periods
- 10-year periods
- 20-year periods
(non-overlapping)

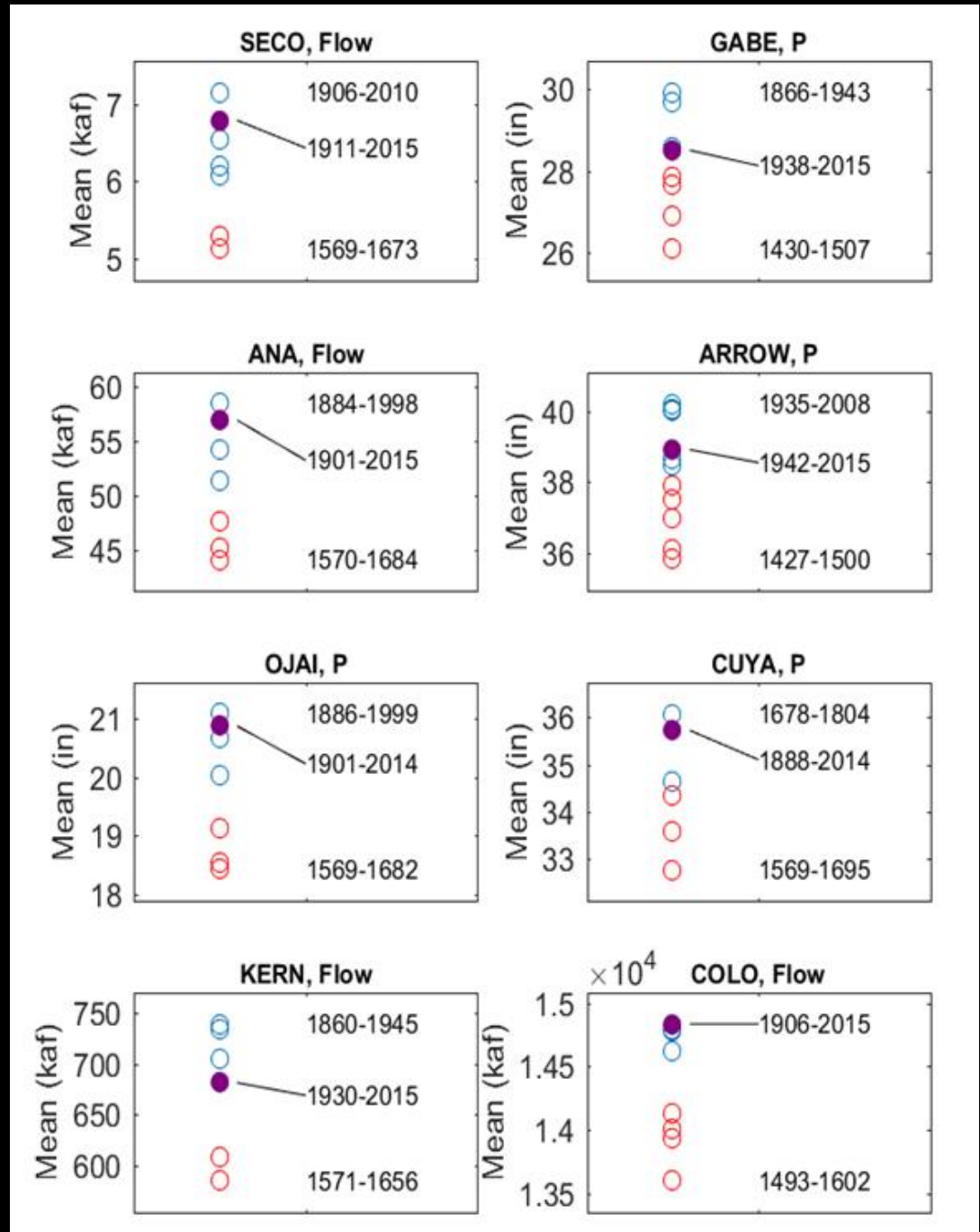
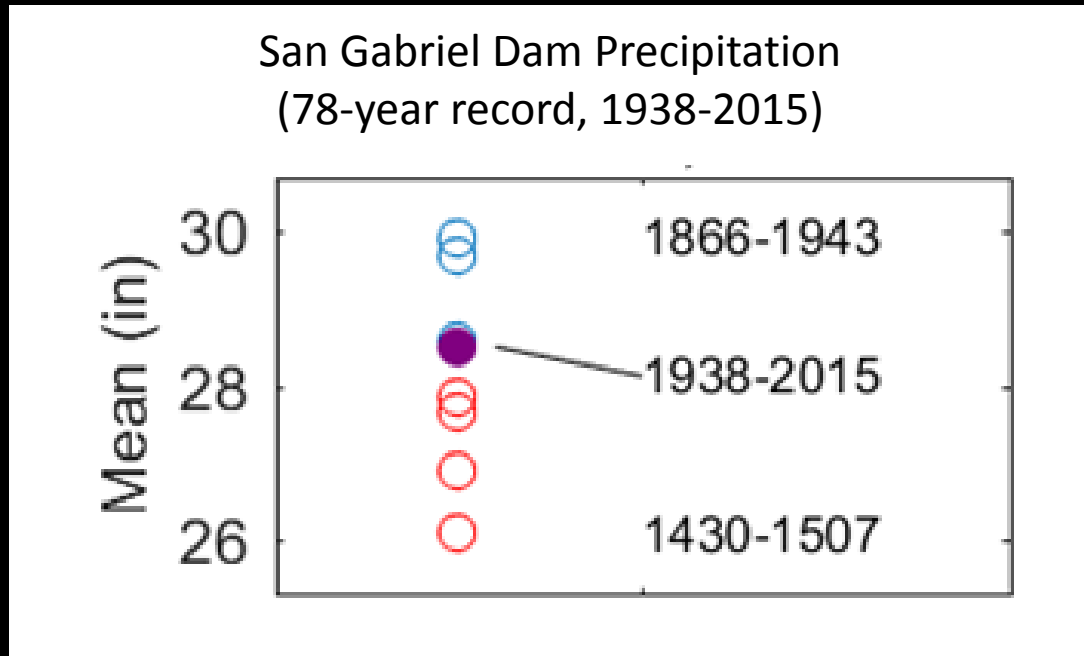


Is the average precipitation or flow over the 20th-21st centuries representative of past centuries?

Gage period average compared to the wettest and driest non-overlapping time periods of the same length, 1404-2016



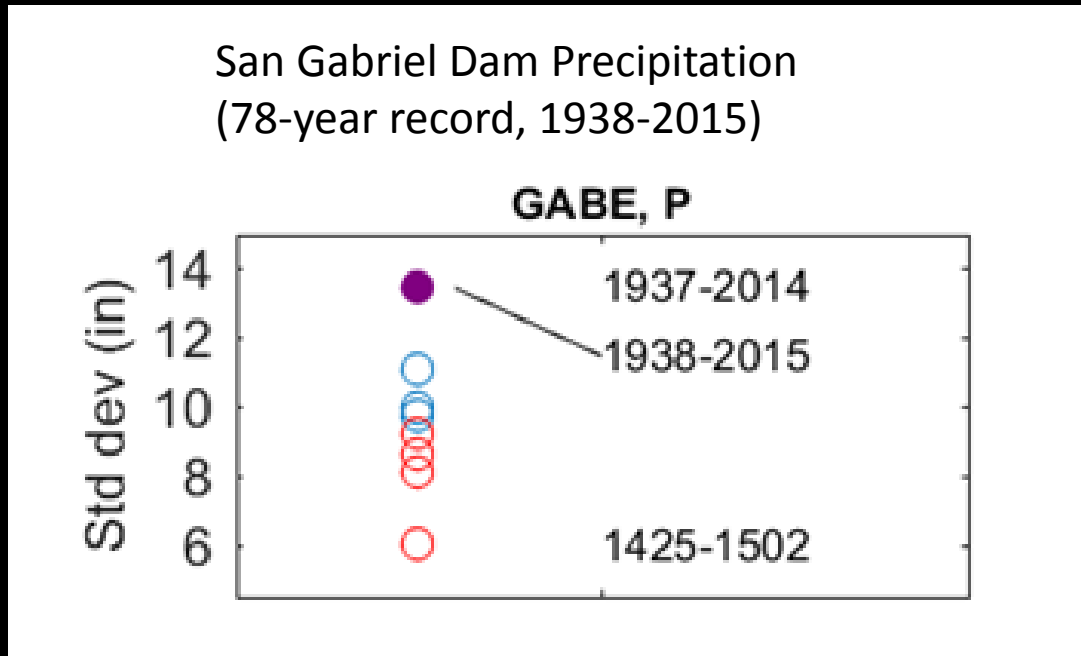
Gage period average compared to the wettest and driest non-overlapping time periods of the same length, 1404-2016



Is the average precipitation or flow over the 20th-
21st centuries representative of past centuries?

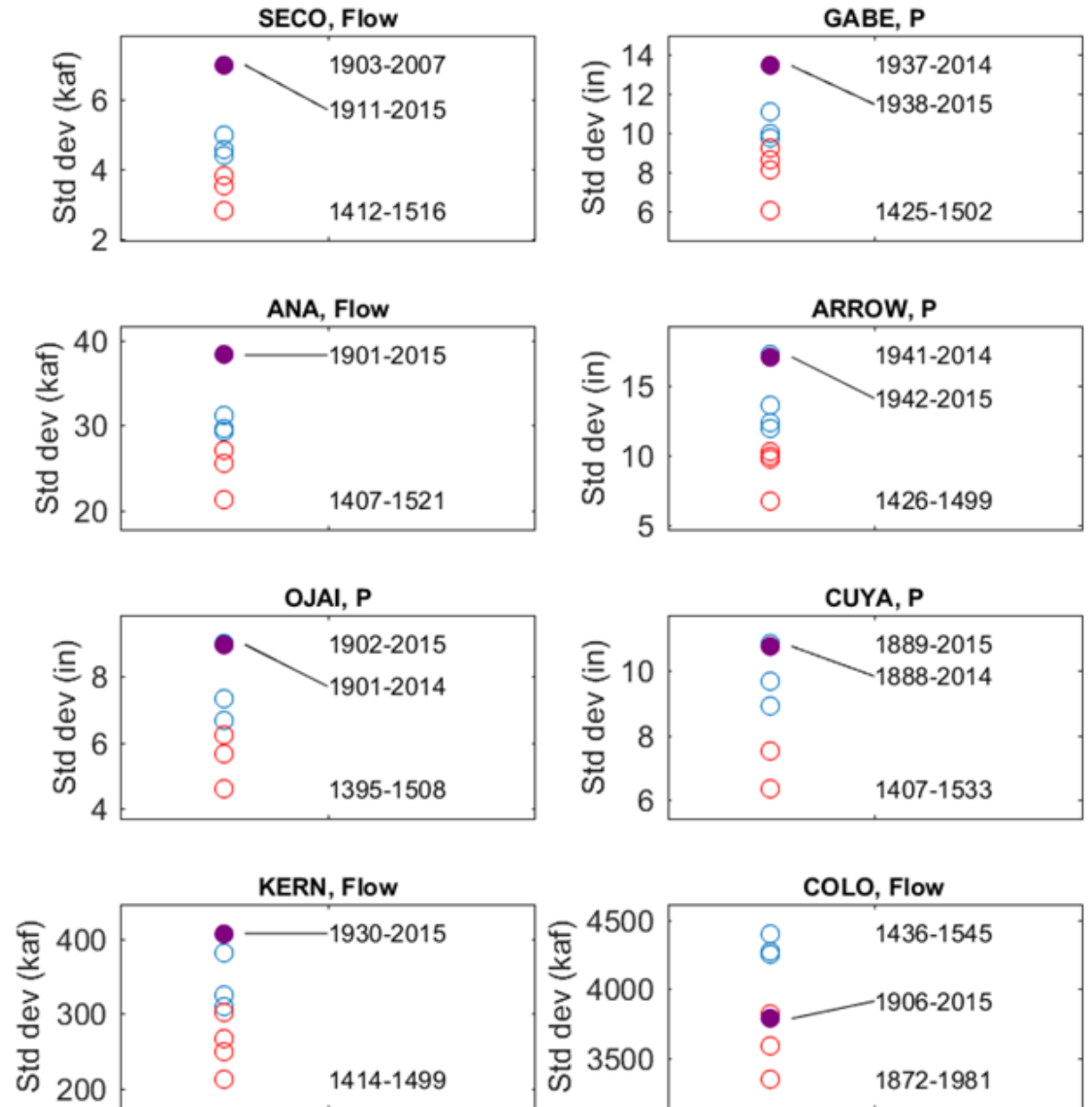
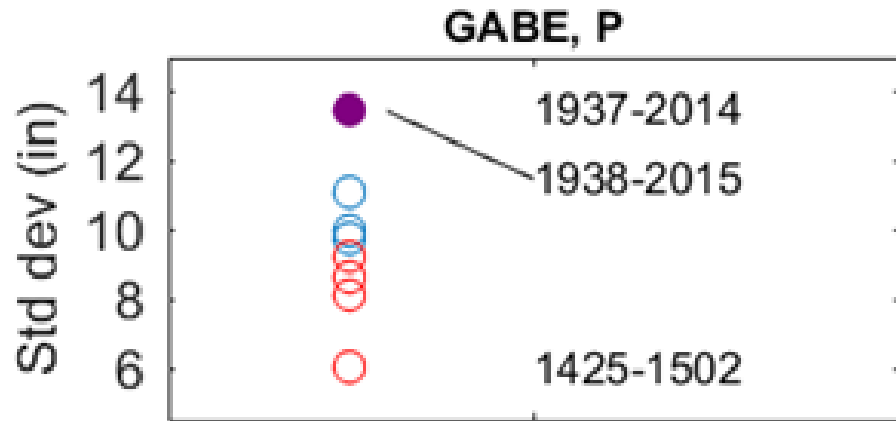
What about the variability?

Gage period variability compared to the most and least variable non-overlapping time periods of the same length, 1404-2016



Gage period variability compared to the most and least variable non-overlapping time periods of the same length, 1404-2016

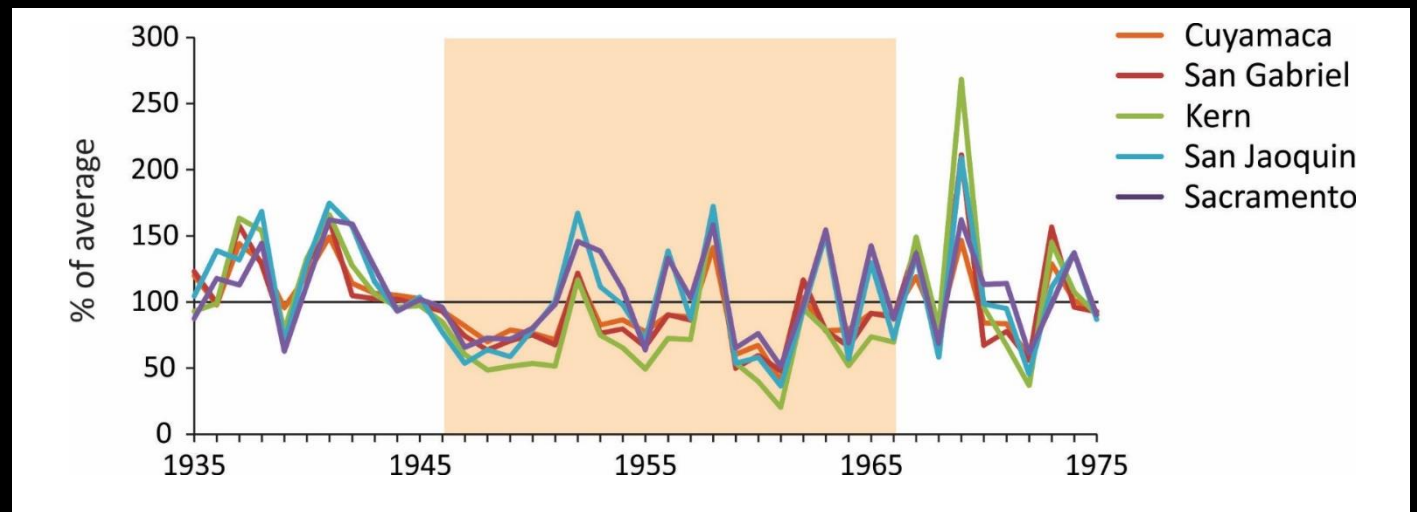
San Gabriel Dam Precipitation
(78-year record, 1938-2015)



What have been some of the worst droughts across California?

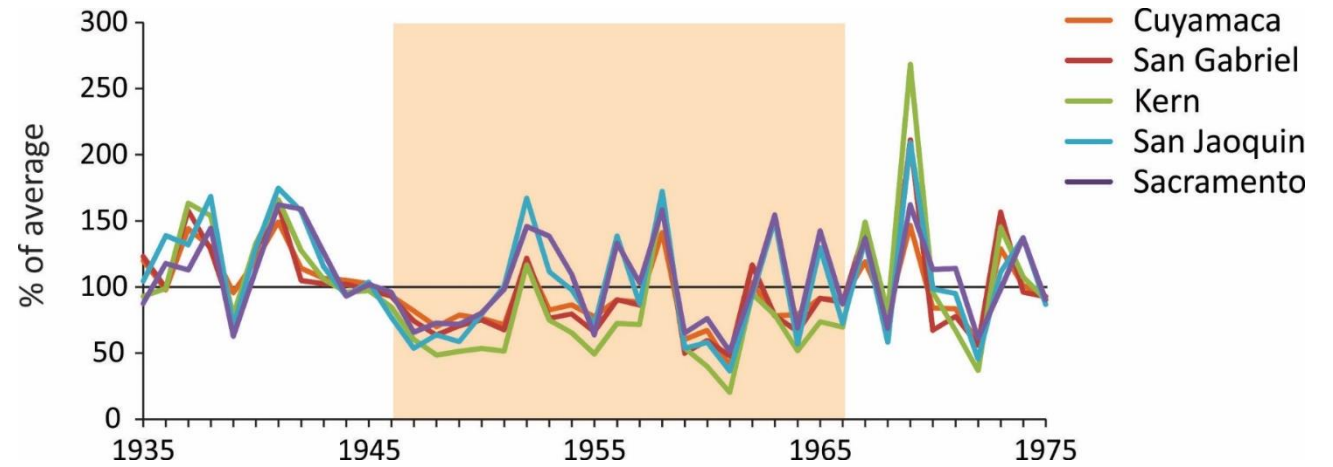
Iconic Droughts of California

1946-1966

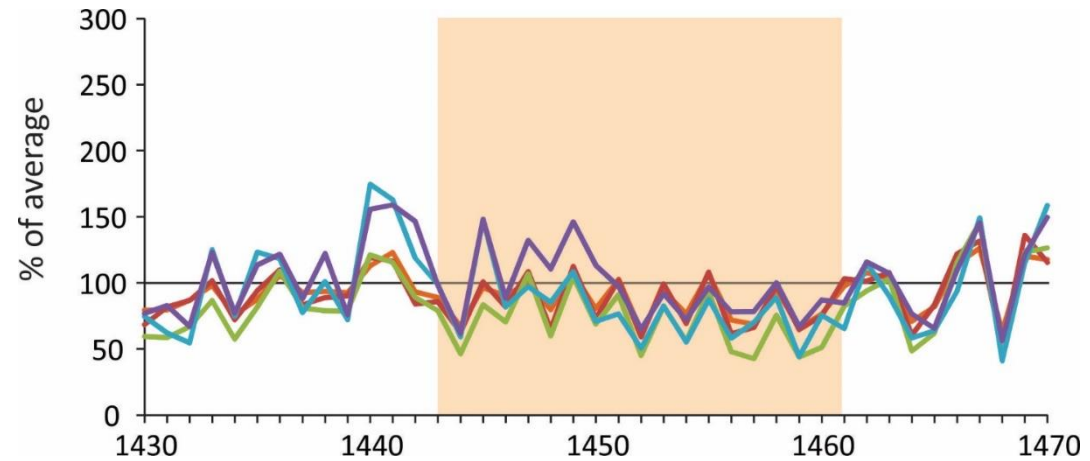


Iconic Droughts of California

1946-1966

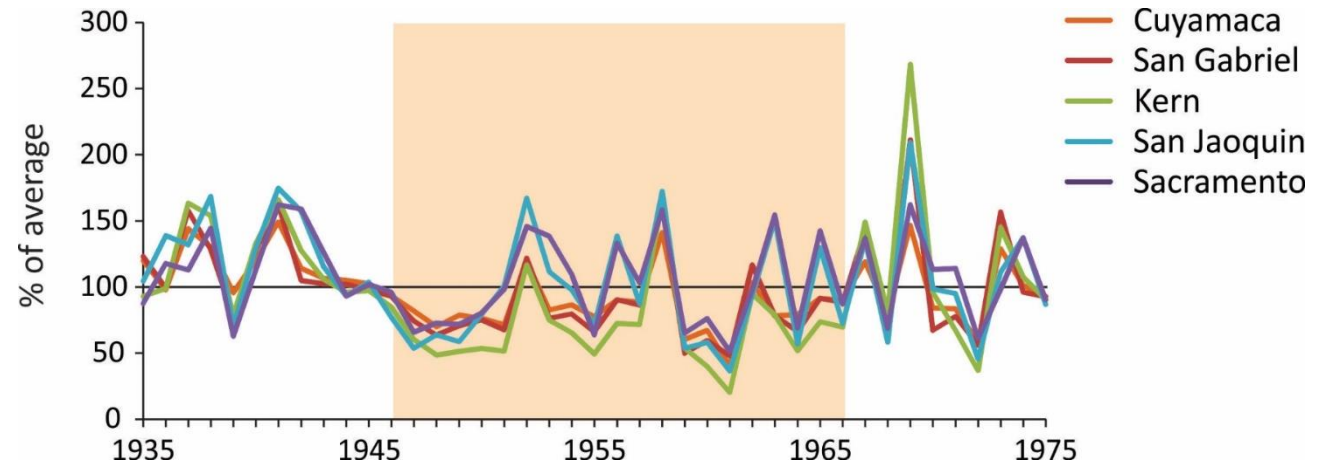


1443-1461

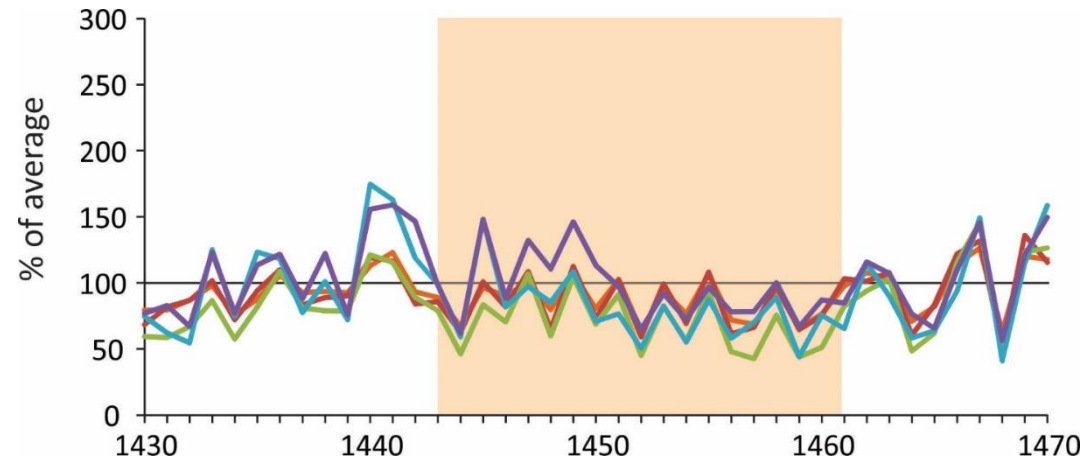


Iconic Droughts of California

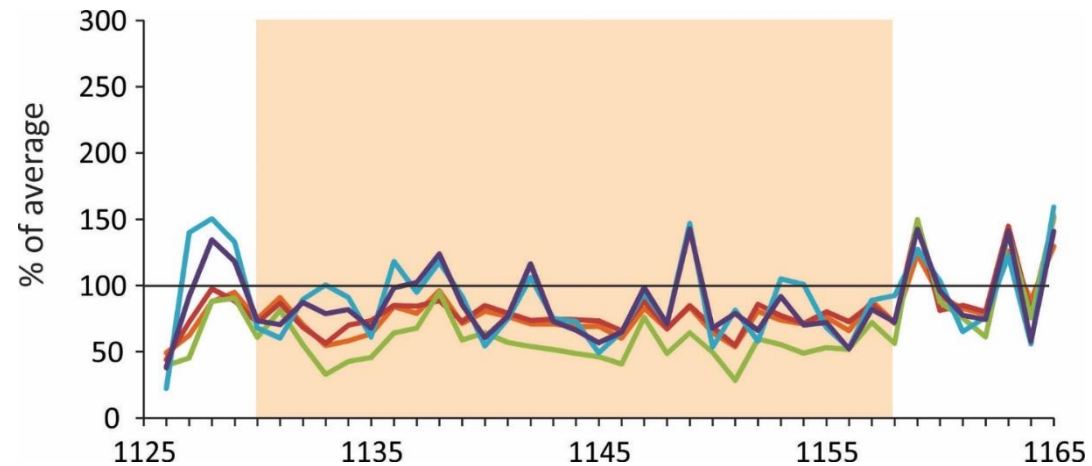
1946-1966



1443-1461

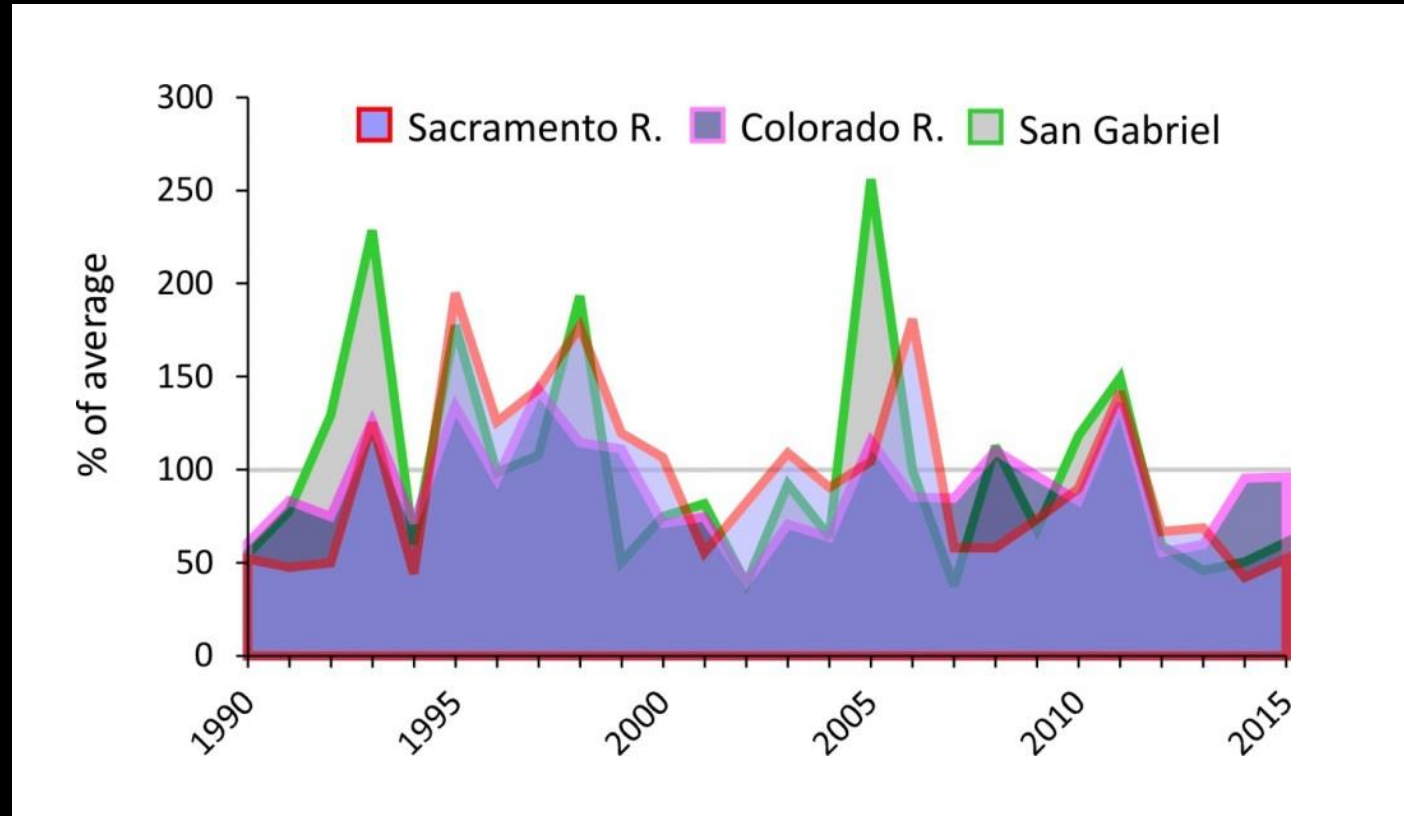


1130-1158

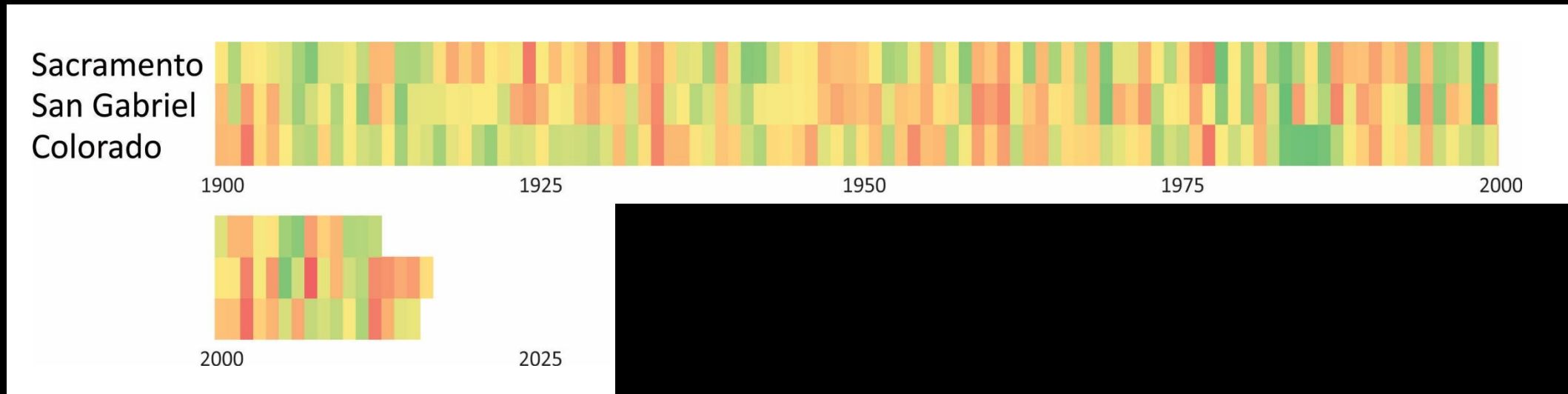


How often does drought impact SoCal, the Sacramento River basin, *and* the upper Colorado River basin?

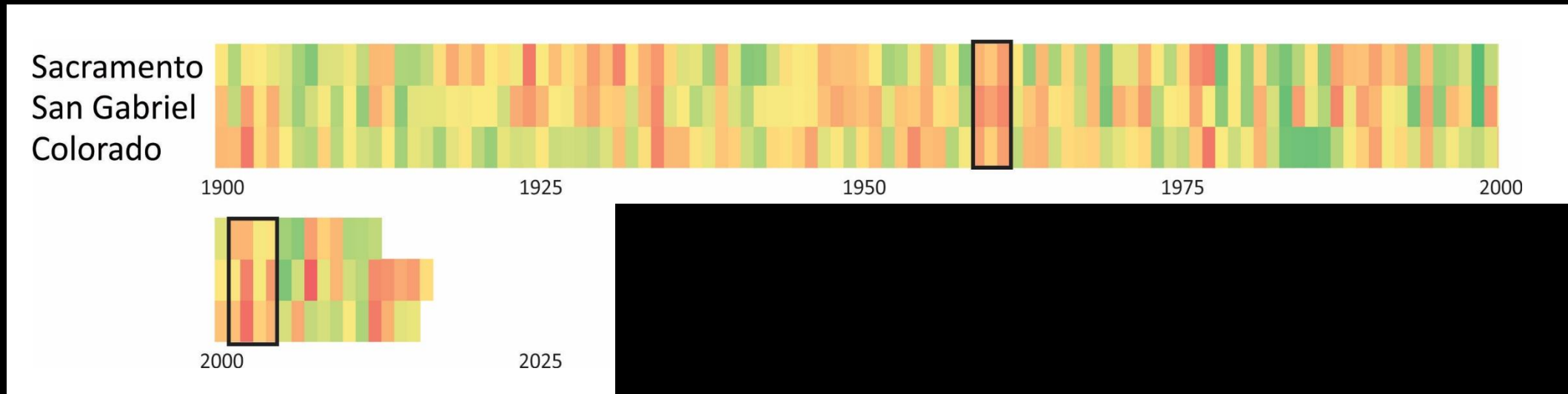
Regional-wide drought since 1999



Concurrent drought across 3 regions 20th and 21st centuries



Concurrent drought across 3 regions 20th and 21st centuries



Are reconstructions of past streamflow and precipitation relevant to future planning?

- The climate of the past will not be replicated in the future, but the range of natural climate variability is likely to continue, underlying warming trends.
- Reconstructions of past conditions cannot be used to predict the future, but can be used to guide expectations for future drought.



2 Resources

Use of Paleo Reconstructions for Drought Risk Management: A Guidebook for Water Managers

TreeFlow: Streamflow reconstructions from tree rings



Using Tree-Ring Records for Understanding Droughts in a Long-Term Context: A Guidebook

Connie Woodhouse, David Meko, Erica Bigio



Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Tree rings as a proxy for past drought	2
Defining drought	3
Organization of the guidebook	4

Introduction

The purpose of this guidebook is to introduce water resource managers to extended records of streamflow and precipitation developed using tree-ring data, and to demonstrate how these data provide insights on drought risk. While streamflow and precipitation gage records show climate and hydrologic variability over the 20th and 21st centuries, the reconstructions document variability over a much longer period of time, from hundreds to thousands of years into the past.

Severe and persistent droughts have been a consistent feature of California's climate. Besides the droughts recorded in the instrumental records (Figure 1), perhaps the most remarked-upon droughts are those documented by tree stumps rooted in the bottom of what are now lakes in the Tahoe Basin. About 5000 years ago, droughts were severe and sustained enough to drain these lakes and allow the establishment and growth of trees below the current shoreline intermittently over a period of several thousand years. Additional lake-bottom stumps indicate similar conditions in the 9th and 12th centuries. These droughts occurred during a period of time called the Holocene which began approximately 10,000 years ago. The predominant natural influence on Late Holocene climate – solar radiation variability due to Earth's orbit – has

changed very slowly over the last several thousand years. Consequently, the overall climate of today is in many respects not so different from the times when trees grew in the bottoms of these Tahoe area lakes. This suggests that the droughts that made the growth of these trees possible could occur today, under natural climate conditions alone, although given how rare these events are, the probability of their occurrence is extremely low.

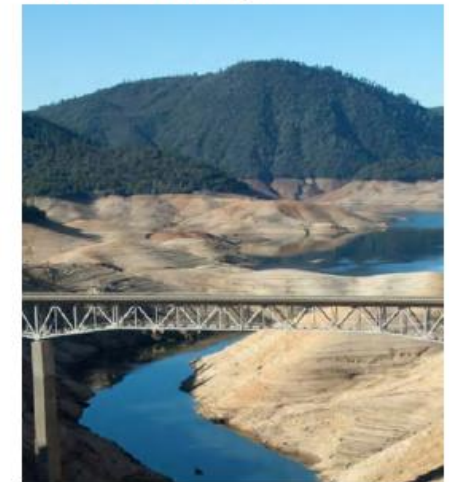


Figure 1. Impacts of drought on Lake Oroville in 2014. From "California's Most Significant Droughts: Comparing Historical and Recent Drought Conditions" February 2016, California Department of Water Resources.

Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Tree rings as a proxy for past drought	2
Defining drought	3
Organization of the guidebook	4

Chapter 2. Extending the modern record of climate using tree rings	5
Why look into the past?	5
How tree rings record variations in climate and hydrology	6
Dendrochronology field and lab methods	7
Using tree-ring data to reconstruct streamflow	10

Extending the modern record of climate using tree rings

WHY LOOK INTO THE PAST?

Records of precipitation and streamflow from gages are typically less than 100 years long. While this may seem like a long interval of time, these records capture only a limited number of extreme events, such as droughts. In addition, records of this length may not contain the full range of variability that has occurred over past centuries under natural climate conditions. Instrumental records of climate and hydrology extended into the past with tree rings providing a much longer record with more occurrences of droughts and wet periods (Figure

3). These extended records can be used to place extreme events, such as the recent (2012-2016) California drought, in a long-term context. Tree-ring records can be used to address questions about a particular drought: Is the drought unprecedented in the extended record and perhaps evidence of climate change? Have droughts of similar severity occurred in the past, but so rarely that the longer record is essential to estimate their frequency? Have even more severe droughts occurred in the distant past?

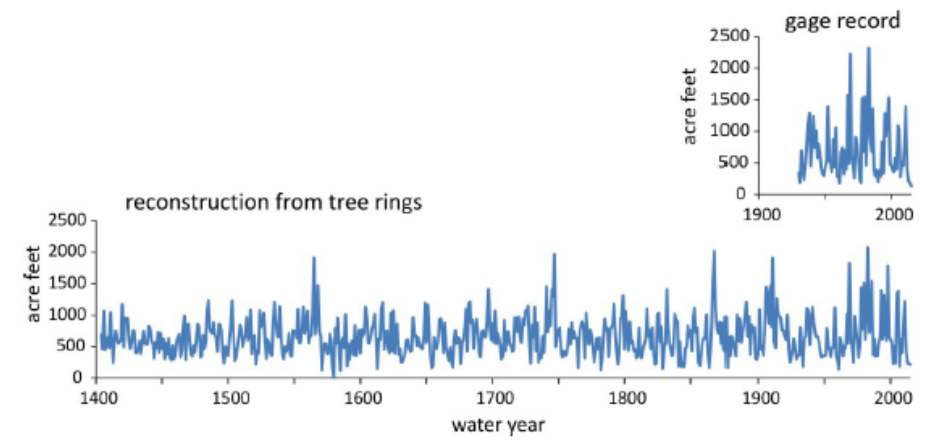


Figure 3. Graph of reconstructed Kern River streamflow, 1404-2015, compared to the much shorter gage record, 1930-2015. Note the severe drought conditions of the late 1500s.

Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Tree rings as a proxy for past drought	2
Defining drought	3
Organization of the guidebook	4
Chapter 2. Extending the modern record of climate using tree rings	5
Why look into the past?	5
How tree rings record variations in climate and hydrology	6
Dendrochronology field and lab methods	7
Using tree-ring data to reconstruct streamflow	10
Chapter 3. Tree-ring reconstructions of precipitation and streamflow in California	13
Obtaining reconstructions: a TreeFlow primer	15
Tree ring data for California	19

Tree-ring reconstructions of precipitation and streamflow in California

In California, the main runoff-producing parts of the state are in the north, while the largest proportion of the population is in the south, and main agricultural areas are in the central and southern parts of the state. The most important sources of surface water for much of the state are the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds, and infrastructure has been developed to convey these water resources to the south via the State Water Project's California Aqueduct. Southern California has municipal and industrial water needs, along with significant agricultural water use that result in a demand for water that far exceeds the supply from local sources. Consequently, southern California relies on three major surface water sources from outside the region:

Sacramento River watershed:

- Sacramento River above Bend Bridge
- Feather River inflow to Lake Oroville
- American River inflow to Lake Folsom
- Yuba River at Smartville
- Sacramento River index

Klamath watershed (not in California, but water resources are diverted into California):

- Klamath River at Keno
- Trinity River at Lewiston

San Joaquin River watershed:

- San Joaquin River at Millerton
- Stanislaus River inflow to New Melones Lake
- Tuolumne River inflow to New Don Pedro Reservoir
- Merced River inflow to Lake McClure
- San Joaquin River index

Southern California/Sierra Nevada watersheds:

- Arroyo Seco, near Pasadena, in the Los Angeles River basin
- Santa Ana River near Mentone
- Kern River below Lake Isabella, draining the southern Sierra Nevada

Southern California (water year precipitation):

- Ojai, in the coastal region near Santa Barbara
- San Gabriel Dam, in the San Gabriel River basin
- Lake Arrowhead, near the Mojave River headwaters
- Cuyamaca, east of San Diego

Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Tree rings as a proxy for past drought	2
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Chapter 2. Extending the modern record of climate using tree rings	5
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Dendrochronology field and lab methods	7
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Obtaining reconstructions: a TreeFlow primer	15
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Chapter 4. Assessing observed droughts in a long-term context	21
How do droughts of the last 120 years compare with droughts documented in the centuries-long reconstructions of precipitation and streamflow?	23

Assessing observed droughts in a long-term context

The recent drought in California (2012-2016) was extremely severe, and the years 2012-2015 were the four driest consecutive years of statewide precipitation on record. Along with the recent drought, the three most severe multi-year statewide droughts were the six-year event of 1929-34, the two-year event of 1976-77 and the six-year event of 1987-92 (for more information, see http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/docs/California_Significant_Droughts_2015_small.pdf) (Figure 23).

Instrumental records of precipitation and streamflow document other significant droughts of the past 100 years, some less severe on an annual basis, but some longer-lasting than the recent drought. Other droughts were more severe than the recent drought, but occurred at a regional scale. For example, in southern California, a number of precipitation and streamflow gages indicate 4-year periods as dry as or even slightly drier than the 2012-2015 period.

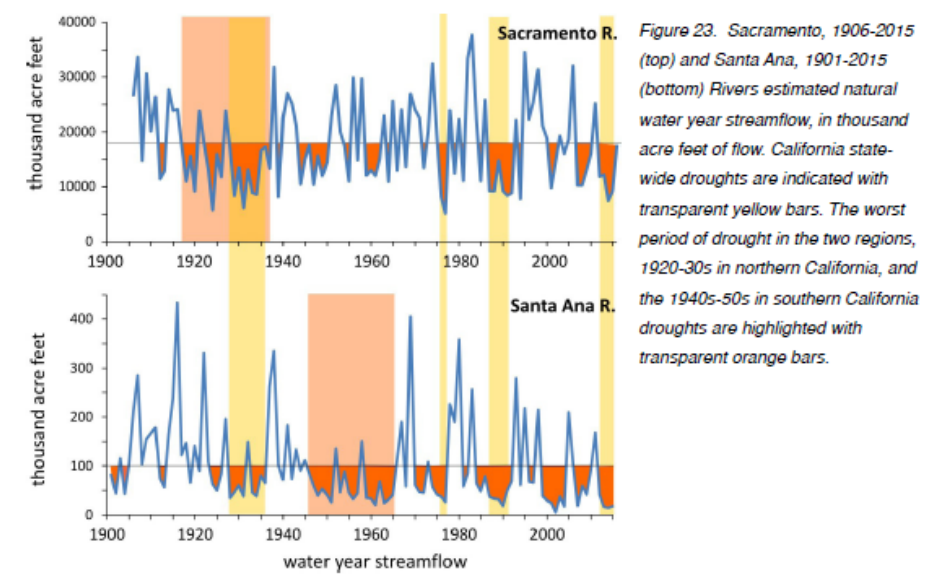


Figure 23. Sacramento, 1906-2015 (top) and Santa Ana, 1901-2015 (bottom) Rivers estimated natural water year streamflow, in thousand acre feet of flow. California state-wide droughts are indicated with transparent yellow bars. The worst period of drought in the two regions, 1920-30s in northern California, and the 1940s-50s in southern California droughts are highlighted with transparent orange bars.

Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Tree rings as a proxy for past drought	2
Defining drought	3
Organization of the guidebook	4

Chapter 2. Extending the modern record of climate using tree rings	5
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Dendrochronology field and lab methods	7
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Obtaining reconstructions: a TreeFlow primer	15
Tree ring data for California	19

Chapter 4. Assessing observed droughts in a long-term context	21
How do droughts of the last 120 years compare with droughts documented in the centuries-long reconstructions of precipitation and streamflow?	23

Chapter 5. Iconic droughts of the past	27
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Chapter 6. Droughts across basins	29
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Iconic droughts of the past

In California, the period that stands out in terms of overall dryness and drought duration over the past six centuries is a two-decade period from the 1440s to 1460s (Figure 28, top). In a number of the southern California reconstructions, these decades mark the driest (Lake Arrowhead, Arroyo Seco, and Cjai) or second driest (San Gabriel and Santa Ana River) 20-year period since 1400. The longest duration drought in southern California over the past six centuries also occurred during this interval of time (Figure 25a). Both the Arroyo Seco and Santa Ana

reconstructions in the early 1460s, but drought conditions then return for a few more years before several years of wet conditions in 1466-67 break this period of persistent dryness.

In the set of longer, but less skillful reconstructions extending back to the 1100s, the 1440s-60s drought appears more moderate compared to an exceptional period of drought in the mid-1100s. This period of drought has long been recognized in the Upper Colorado River basin as the iconic medieval period drought, and it is evident in the

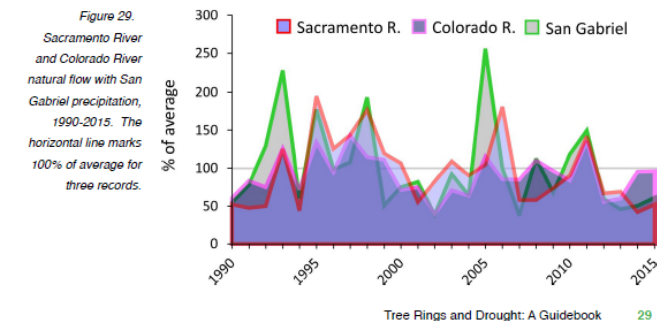
reconstructions of drought in California as well. In fact, a 20-year interval centered in the 1140s is the longest two-decade period across all southern California reconstructions, as well as the Kern River reconstruction (Figure 28, bottom). Persistent low flows are also documented in the San Gabriel and Sacramento River reconstructions, but this is broken by a few above average years. In fact, the San Joaquin River reconstruction shows more frequent breaks in the drought. The longest dry period ends in 1159 at all gages, and conditions then become more variable.

Droughts across basins

Since the turn of the 21st century, drought conditions have plagued watersheds throughout the western US. As mentioned above, in California, a severe statewide drought occurred from 2012-2016. In the Upper Colorado River basin, drought conditions, as reflected by reservoir levels in Lake Mead, have been ongoing since 2000, with the 2000-2015 as the driest 16-year period in the instrumental record. Although this has been a west-wide period of drought, the severity of drought conditions has varied across northern and southern California and the Colorado River basin since 2000, with slight offsets in severity from year to year, and a few intermittent years of recovery (Figure 29).

Have there been periods in the past when severe and persistent drought was synchronous across the entire region – southern and northern California, and the Upper Colorado River basin – similar to, or even worse than the 2000-2016 period of drought?

An examination of reconstructions of streamflow for the Sacramento River and the Colorado River at Lees Ferry, and San Gabriel precipitation (to represent southern California) provides some insight on this question (Figure 30). Periods of drought (consecutive years of near to below average conditions; 110% or less) are evident across the three regions throughout the past six centuries, but most are limited to three or four years. Sets of three



Chapter 1. Introduction	1
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Defining drought	3
Organization of the guidebook	4
Chapter 2. Extending the modern record of climate using tree rings	5
Why look into the past?	5
How tree rings record variations in climate and hydrology	6
Dendrochronology field and lab methods	7
Using tree-ring data to reconstruct streamflow	10
Chapter 3. Tree-ring reconstructions of precipitation and streamflow in California	13
Obtaining reconstructions: a TreeFlow primer	15
Tree ring data for California	19
Chapter 4. Assessing observed droughts in a long-term context	21
How do droughts of the last 120 years compare with droughts documented in the centuries-long reconstructions of precipitation and streamflow?	23
Chapter 5. Iconic droughts of the past	27
Chapter 6. Droughts across basins	29
Chapter 7. Summary and Conclusions	31
Chapter 8. Resources	33

Summary and Conclusions

Tree-ring reconstructions of California streamflow and precipitation, along with the Colorado River reconstruction, provide a basis for assessing the recent drought events in a long-term context. Information presented here suggests that in some cases, depending on how droughts are defined (i.e., a particular duration, or severity), instrumental period droughts may represent worst-case scenarios. Overall, however, these reconstructions clearly illustrate that the droughts of the instrumental period represent just a subset of the droughts that have occurred in the past, and that are likely to occur in the future.

Of particular note, the tree-ring based reconstructions document droughts that have exceeded the duration of the longest drought in

the instrumental periods, in some cases, doubling or more the number of consecutive years of below average flow or precipitation. The longer droughts persist, the greater the impacts, as soils dry, vegetation dies, and aquifer levels drop. The longer drought duration documented in these extended records may provide some insights on potential impacts that future prolonged drought might entail.

What is the best way to use this information in planning for drought? The answer to this question will vary for each water provider, depending on the particular characteristics and underlying considerations of each agency. However, there are some general ways in which these kinds of data have been applied to water resource management

FAQ#7: Can the tree-ring based reconstructions predict future drought in a probabilistic sense?
Reconstructions document the range of conditions, including the dominant external influence on climate – solar activity – only slightly. Consequently, there is no reason to believe that extended droughts, could not occur in the future. Reconstructions provide a guide to the range of conditions that have occurred in the past, but cannot be used to predict the future. In addition, because today's past, the past is not an exact analogue for the future.

Streamflow reconstructions are being used in the western US:

- To provide an awareness of a broader range of hydrologic variability than contained in the gage record
- As the basis for determining a drought “worst-case scenario”
- To test system reliability under a broader range of conditions by incorporating reconstruction data into water supply models
- When used in combination with climate change projections, to assess a range of plausible future scenarios
- To communicate risk or to aid in making recommendations



- Home
- Basin Data Access
- Background
- Applications
- Workshops
- CO River Perspective
- Resources
- About

California

[Basin Map](#) | [Reconstructions](#) | [Workshops](#) | [Applications](#) | [References](#) | [Links](#)

Introduction



The watersheds which collectively make up the California hydrologic unit span a wide range of climatic, ecological, and land-use conditions, from the wet, sparsely settled northwest basins to the arid Los Angeles basin. Many of these disparate watersheds are tied together by the California State Water Project, which supplies water to over 23 million people and nearly one million acres of irrigated agriculture.

The [California Department of Water Resources](#) (DWR) was one of the first water entities to grasp the value of streamflow reconstructions in planning, supporting the development and application of tree-ring data since the 1980s. With the recent development of California blue oak tree-ring chronologies, which are excellent proxies for hydrologic variability, there is even greater potential for the development and use of reconstructions across California. See the [California Tree-Ring Chronologies](#) page for more information about existing tree-ring chronologies that could be used to reconstruct streamflow.



- Home
- Basin Data Access
- Background
- Applications
- Workshops
- CO River Perspective
- Resources
- About

California

[Basin Map](#) | [Reconstructions](#)

Introduction



The watersheds with a wide range of climatic conditions in the northwest basins are tied together by millions of people and...

The California Department of Water Resources provides entities to grasp the development and the development of California for hydrologic variability reconstructions and more information on streamflow.

Basin Map

The map below shows the hydroclimatic reconstructions currently available for California. Place the cursor on a gage icon to view the gage name, and then click to view the page for that reconstruction, and a link to the data. A list of these reconstructions is presented below the map.

Also below the map is a list of other streamflow and precipitation reconstructions for California, not shown on the map.





- Home
- Basin Data Access
- Background
- Applications
- Workshops
- CO River Perspective
- Resources
- About

California

[Basin Map](#) | [Reconstructions](#)

Introduction



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Basin Map

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Also below the map is a list of other streamflow and precipitation reconstruction



California Basin Reconstructions

Reconstruction Page	Period	Data File
Sacramento River - Four Rivers Index Update	900-2012	sacramentofourupdate.txt
Sacramento River - Four Rivers Index	901-1977	sacramentofour.txt
Feather River Inflow to Lake Oroville Update	900-2012	featherorvilleupdate.txt
Feather River Inflow to Lake Oroville	901-1977	featherorville.txt
San Francisco Bay Salinity	1604-1997	sfbaysalinity.txt
Salinas River at Paso Robles	1409-2003	salinas.txt
Klamath R. at Keno, OR (natural flows)	1507-2003	Klamath.txt
Trinity R. at Lewiston, CA	1584-2003	Trinity.txt
Yuba River at Smartville	900-2012	Yuba.txt
American River inflow to Lake Folsom	900-2012	American.txt
Sacramento River above Bend Bridge	900-2012	Sacramento.txt
Stanislaus River inflow to New Melones	900-2012	Stanislaus.txt
Tuolumne River inflow to New Don Pedro	900-2012	Tuolumne.txt
Merced River inflow to New Exchequer	900-2012	Merced.txt
San Joaquin River inflow to Millerton	900-2012	San Joaquin.txt
San Joaquin River Four Rivers	900-2012	San Joaquin.txt
Arroyo Seco River, Pasadena	1125-2016	Arroyo Seco River.txt
Kern River below Lake Isabella	1125-2016	Kern River.txt
Lake Arrowhead Precipitation	1125-2016	Lake Arrowhead.txt
San Gabriel Dam Precipitation	1126-2016	San Gabriel Dam.txt
Ojai Precipitation	1126-2016	Ojai.txt
Cuyamaca Precipitation	1126-2016	Cuyamaca.txt
Santa Ana River nr. Mentone	1125-2016	Santa Ana River.txt
CO River at Lees Ferry	1116-2014	CO River at Lees Ferry.txt

Lake Arrowhead

[Metadata](#) | [Calibration & Validation](#) | [Most Skillful Reconstruction](#) | [Longest Reconstruction](#) | [Data File](#)

Background

The Lake Arrowhead precipitation gage (NOAA co-op station 044671) is located on the northern side of the San Bernadino Mountains at 5230 ft. Precipitation at Lake Arrowhead reflects the northern and more arid side of the Transverse ranges, which contribute runoff to the Mojave River basin. The gage record extends from 1942 to 2010, with some missing data (mostly individual months). To estimate missing values and extend this record to 2015, neighboring co-op stations, Squirrel Inn 2 California (048479) and Big Bear Lake, California (040741) were used. Squirrel Inn 2 was used to fill in missing months, and Big Bear was used to extend the record from 2011 to 2015. The ratio between the total monthly precipitation averaged over a common period of years, along with the precipitation value for the missing year/month at Squirrel Inn 2 or Big Bear was used to estimate the value for that year/month at Lake Arrowhead. No record contained a value for Aug 1980, so the average August precipitation value from Lake Arrowhead was used.

The reconstruction of water year precipitation at Lake Arrowhead was generated as part of a project supported by the California Department of Water Resources (CADWR). This project includes reconstructions of water year precipitation (San Gabriel Dam, Lake Arrowhead, Ojai, and Cuyamaca) and streamflow (Arroyo Seco and Santa Ana River) for southern California and the Kern River in the southern Sierras. This set of reconstructions was developed by Dave Meko, Erica Bigio, and Connie Woodhouse in 2017, based on updated and new collections of tree-ring data in California sampled for this project.

Metadata

Observed Record	Observed Precipitation	Reconstructed Precipitation: Most Skillful Model	Reconstructed Precipitation: Longest Model
Location: Lake Arrowhead, CA			
Source: NOAA Cooperative Station Network	Period: 1942-2015	Period: 1426-2016	Period: 1126-2015
Adjustment: Missing data estimated using Squirrel Inn 2 station. Record extended to 2015 using Big Bear station	Mean precipitation: 38.71 in. Median precipitation: 34.11 in. Minimum: 8.40 in. Maximum: 98.24 in.	Mean precipitation: 37.99 in. Median precipitation: 36.83 in. Minimum: 8.54 in. Maximum: 87.95 in.	Mean precipitation: 39.46 in. Median precipitation: 35.54 in. Minimum: 9.81 in. Maximum: 95.95 in.
Type: water year total precipitation			

Lake Arrowhead

[Metadata](#) | [Calibration & Validation](#) | [Most Skillful Reconstruction](#)
[Data File](#)

Background

The Lake Arrowhead precipitation gage (NOAA co-op station 044671) is located on the eastern slope of the Bernadino Mountains at 5230 ft. Precipitation at Lake Arrowhead reflects the north-south Transverse ranges, which contribute runoff to the Mojave River basin. The gage has a record with some missing data (mostly individual months). To estimate missing values, we used data from neighboring co-op stations, Squirrel Inn 2 California (048479) and Big Bear Lake California (048479). Squirrel Inn 2 was used to fill in missing months, and Big Bear was used to extend the record. The ratio between the total monthly precipitation averaged over a common period and the total monthly precipitation for the missing year/month at Squirrel Inn 2 or Big Bear was used to estimate the value for Lake Arrowhead. No record contained a value for Aug 1980, so the average August precipitation for Lake Arrowhead was used.

The reconstruction of water year precipitation at Lake Arrowhead was generated by the California Department of Water Resources (CADWR). This project includes reconstructions of precipitation (San Gabriel Dam, Lake Arrowhead, Ojai, and Cuyamaca) and streamflow (San Gabriel River) for southern California and the Kern River in the southern Sierras. This project was led by Dave Meko, Erica Bigio, and Connie Woodhouse in 2017, based on updates to the reconstruction in California sampled for this project.

Metadata

Observed Record	Observed Precipitation	Reconstructed Precipitation
Location: Lake Arrowhead, CA		Most Skillful Model
Source: NOAA Cooperative Station Network	Period: 1942-2015	Period: 1426-2015
Adjustment: Missing data estimated using Squirrel Inn 2 station. Record extended to 2015 using Big Bear station	Mean precipitation: 38.71 in. Median precipitation: 34.11 in. Minimum: 8.40 in. Maximum: 98.24 in.	Mean precipitation: 37.99 in. Median precipitation: 36.83 in. Minimum: 8.5 in. Maximum: 87 in.
Type: water year total precipitation		

Calibration & Validation

Methods

Total water year (October-September) precipitation at Lake Arrowhead was reconstructed using a two-stage regression procedure. Tree-growth at each site was first converted into an estimate of precipitation by stepwise regression of precipitation using tree-ring width indices, from the current year and lagged one year, as predictors. Squared terms on the tree-ring predictors were also included in the regression to allow for possible curvature in relationships between tree-growth and precipitation. In the second step, the gage reconstruction was generated by averaging an appropriate set of single site reconstructions. Final estimates of precipitation were interpolated from a piecewise-linear smoothed scatter plot of the observed precipitation values and the precipitation estimates averaged over the individual tree-ring sites. The procedure was repeated for subsets of tree-ring chronologies with different periods of common time coverage to build a "most-skillful" reconstruction, starting in the early 1400s, and a "longest" reconstruction, starting in the early 1100s. Details of the reconstruction method can be found [here](#).

Statistic	Most Skillful: Calibration	Most Skillful: Validation	Longest Model: Calibration	Longest Model: Validation
Explained variance (R ²)	0.73		0.60	
Reduction of Error (RE)		0.71		0.57
Standard Error of the Estimate	10.114 in.		12.453 in.	
Root Mean Square Error (RMSE)		10.914 in.		13.240 in.

Lake Arrowhead

[Metadata](#) |
 [Calibration & Validation](#) |
 [Most Skillful Reconstruction](#) |
 [Data File](#)

Background

The Lake Arrowhead precipitation gage (NOAA co-op station 044671) is located on the Bernadino Mountains at 5230 ft. Precipitation at Lake Arrowhead reflects the north-south Transverse ranges, which contribute runoff to the Mojave River basin. The gage has some missing data (mostly individual months). To estimate missing values, we used neighboring co-op stations, Squirrel Inn 2 California (048479) and Big Bear Lake. Squirrel Inn 2 was used to fill in missing months, and Big Bear was used to estimate the ratio between the total monthly precipitation averaged over a common period. The value for the missing year/month at Squirrel Inn 2 or Big Bear was used to estimate the value for the missing year/month at Lake Arrowhead. No record contained a value for Aug 1980, so the average August precipitation at Lake Arrowhead was used.

The reconstruction of water year precipitation at Lake Arrowhead was generated by the California Department of Water Resources (CADWR). This project includes reconstructions of precipitation (San Gabriel Dam, Lake Arrowhead, Ojai, and Cuyamaca) and streamflow (San Gabriel River) for southern California and the Kern River in the southern Sierras. This project was led by Dave Meko, Erica Bigio, and Connie Woodhouse in 2017, based on updates to the California sampled for this project.

Metadata

Observed Record	Observed Precipitation	Reconstructed Precipitation
Location: Lake Arrowhead, CA Source: NOAA Cooperative Station Network Adjustment: Missing data estimated using Squirrel Inn 2 station. Record extended to 2015 using Big Bear station Type: water year total precipitation	Period: 1942-2015 Mean precipitation: 37.99 in. Median precipitation: 36.83 in. Minimum: 8.40 in. Maximum: 98.24 in.	Period: 1426-2016 Mean precipitation: 37.99 in. Median precipitation: 36.83 in. Minimum: 8.5 in. Maximum: 87 in.

Calibration & Validation

Methods

Total water year (October-September) precipitation at Lake Arrowhead was reconstructed using a regression procedure. Tree-growth at each site was first converted into an estimate of precipitation using tree-ring width indices, from the current year and the following year. Squared terms on the tree-ring predictors were also included in the regression to account for non-linear relationships between tree-growth and precipitation. In the second step, the gage record was reconstructed by averaging an appropriate set of single site reconstructions. Final estimates of precipitation were generated using a piecewise-linear smoothed scatter plot of the observed precipitation values and the reconstructed values over the individual tree-ring sites. The procedure was repeated for subsets of tree-ring periods of common time coverage to build a "most-skillful" reconstruction, starting in the early 1100s. Details of the reconstruction method can be found in the report.

Statistic	Most Skillful: Calibration	Most Skillful: Validation	Longest Model: Calibration	Longest Model: Validation
Explained variance (R ²)	0.73		0.60	
Reduction of Error (RE)		0.71		0.57
Standard Error of the Estimate	10.114 in.		12.453 in.	
Root Mean Square Error (RMSE)		10.914 in.		13.240 in.

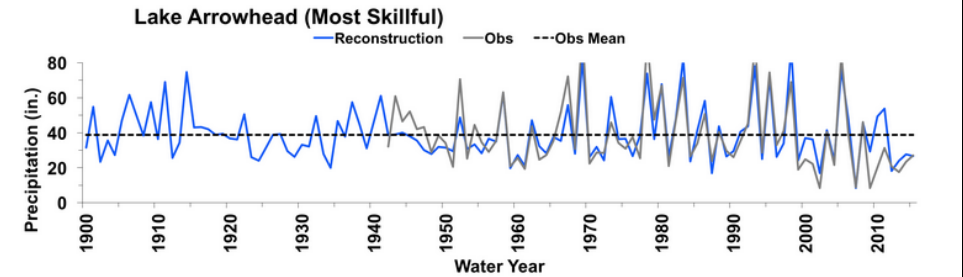


Figure 2. Observed (gray) 1942-2015, and reconstructed (blue) 1900-2016, Lake Arrowhead annual precipitation. The observed mean is illustrated by the black dashed line.

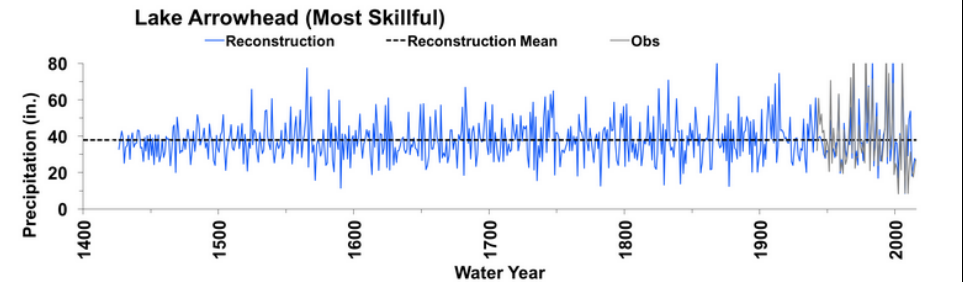
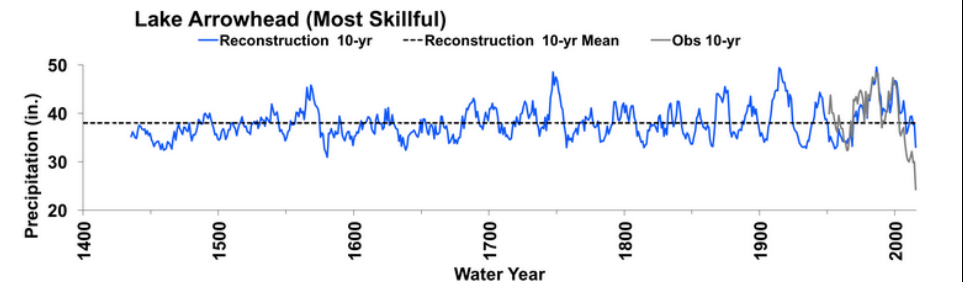


Figure 3. Reconstructed annual precipitation for Lake Arrowhead (1426-2016) is shown in blue. Observed flow is shown in gray and the long-term reconstructed mean is shown by the black dashed line.



Guidebook and Project Report:

<https://www.water.ca.gov/News/News-Releases/All-News-Articles/Tree-Ring-Study-Reveals-Historical-Drought-Record-in-Southern-California>

TreeFlow web site:

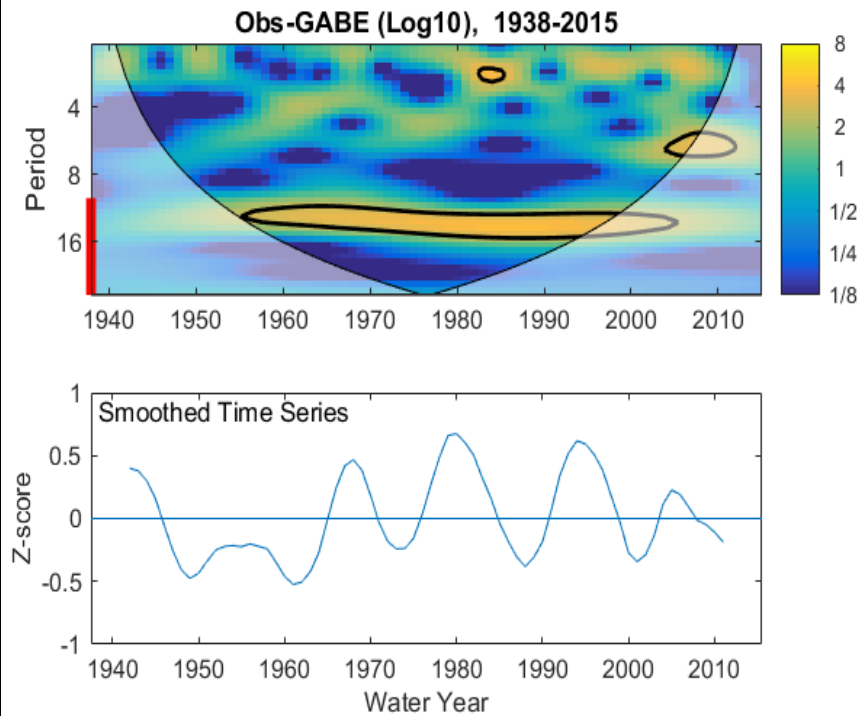
<https://www.treeflow.info/>

Questions comments, suggestions?

What about cycles?

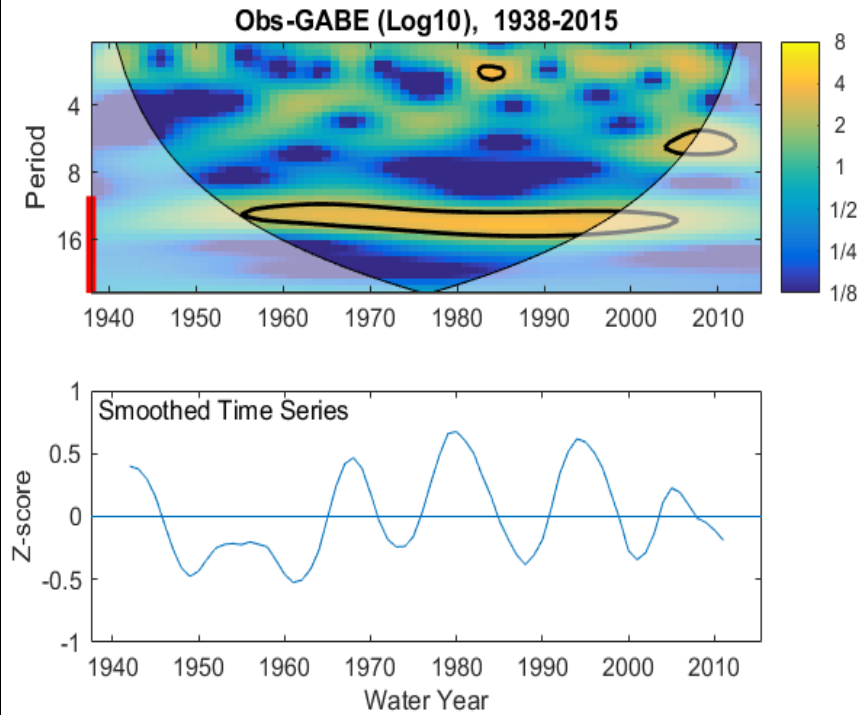
Variations in cyclicity over time: instrumental period

San Gabriel Dam precipitation, observed

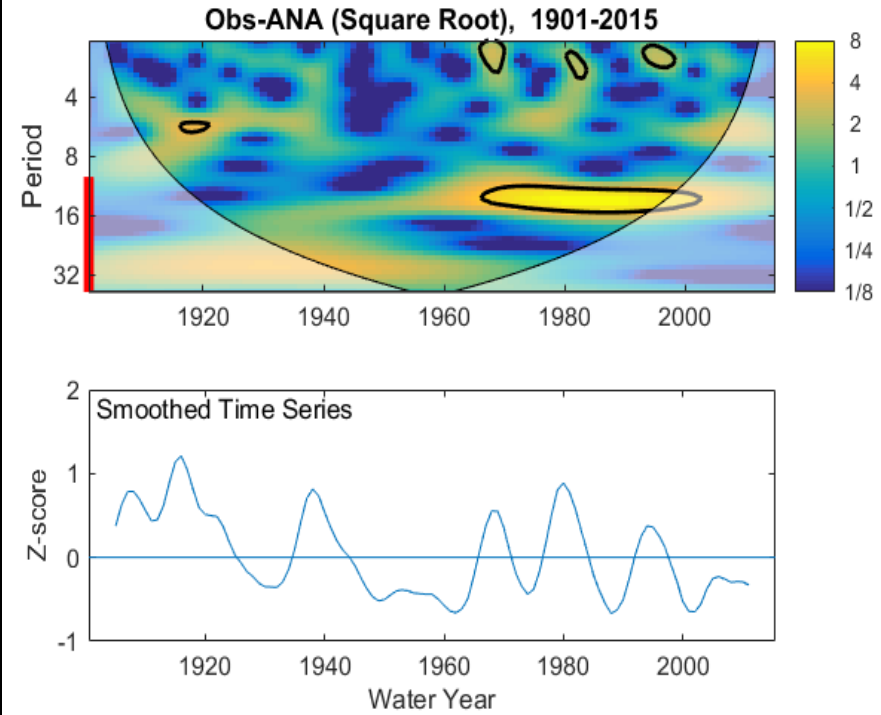


Variations in cyclicity over time: instrumental period

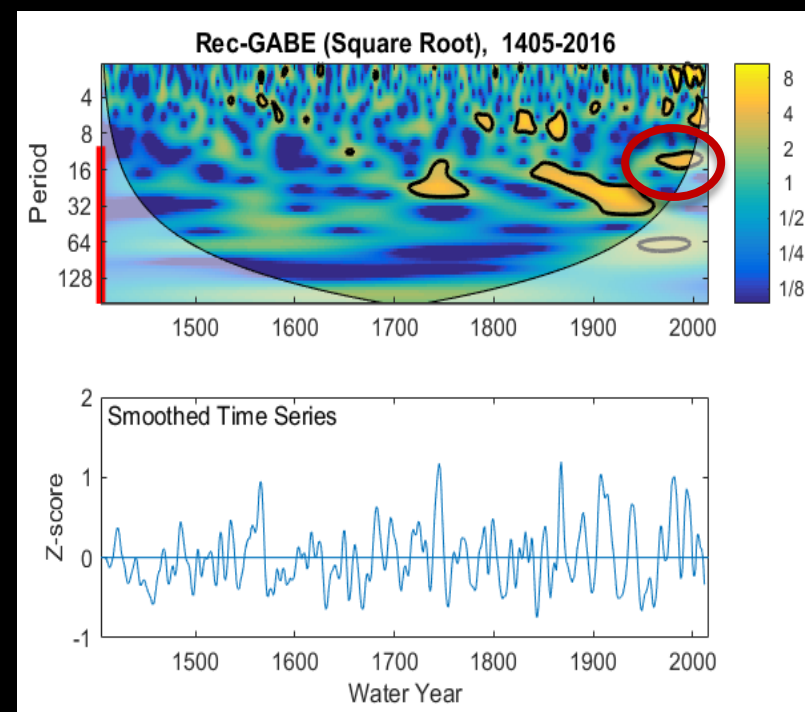
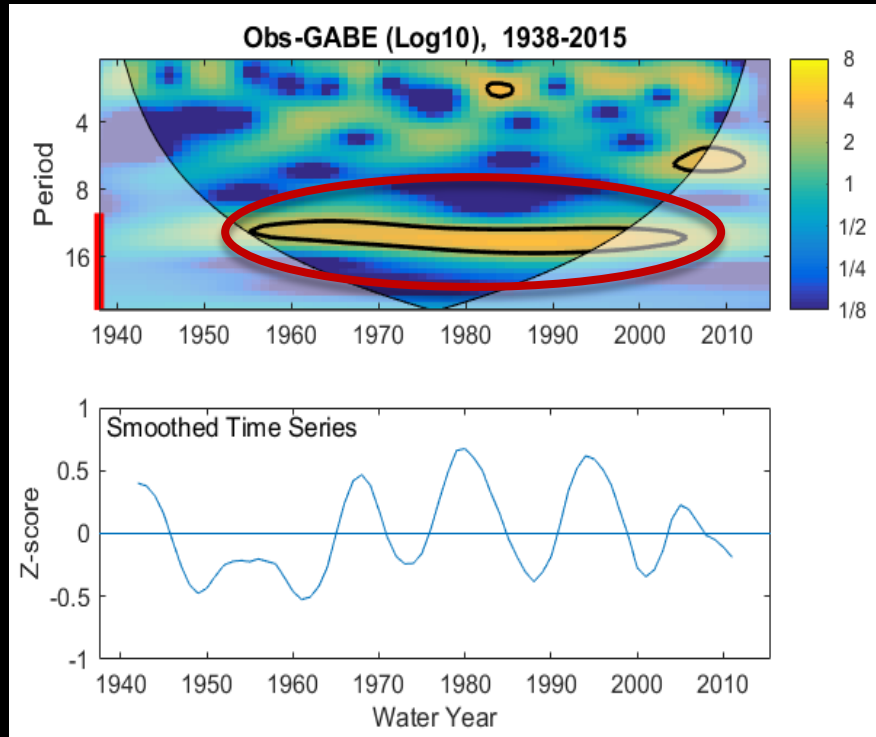
San Gabriel Dam
precipitation, observed



Santa Ana River flow,
observed



Variations in cyclicity over time: the paleo period context



Variations in cyclicity over time: the paleo period context

