

# Millions of dead Sierra trees may have helped save water during the drought

By Ryan Sabalow, Sacramento Bee

The millions of trees that died in the Sierra Nevada during California's five-year drought may have actually helped the state's water supply once the historic dry spell finally ended, according to a study.

Scientists led by UC Merced's Sierra Nevada Research Institute examined how much water was being absorbed by plant life in 1 million acres of Sierra forest along the watershed that feeds into the Kings River east of Fresno. The study, published Friday in the journal *Scientific Reports*, spanned the years before, during and after the drought, which officially ended last year.

Federal forestry officials estimate that during that time, more than 100 million trees in the central and southern Sierra died before the drought ended.

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