

Looking at Two Droughts, Models Suggest That News Media Coverage Is a Driver of Water Conservation

Stanford researchers found that high media coverage contributed to water conservation during the recent historic drought in California. The team used a novel search algorithm to discover that while California’s 2007-2009 drought received little attention from the news, the recent drought received unprecedented coverage and correspondingly high public interest, especially during prominent events. By incorporating news reports in water-demand modeling, they were able to demonstrate the triangular relationship between media coverage, public awareness, and water conservation.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

USA TODAY

The New York Times

Los Angeles Times

San Francisco Chronicle

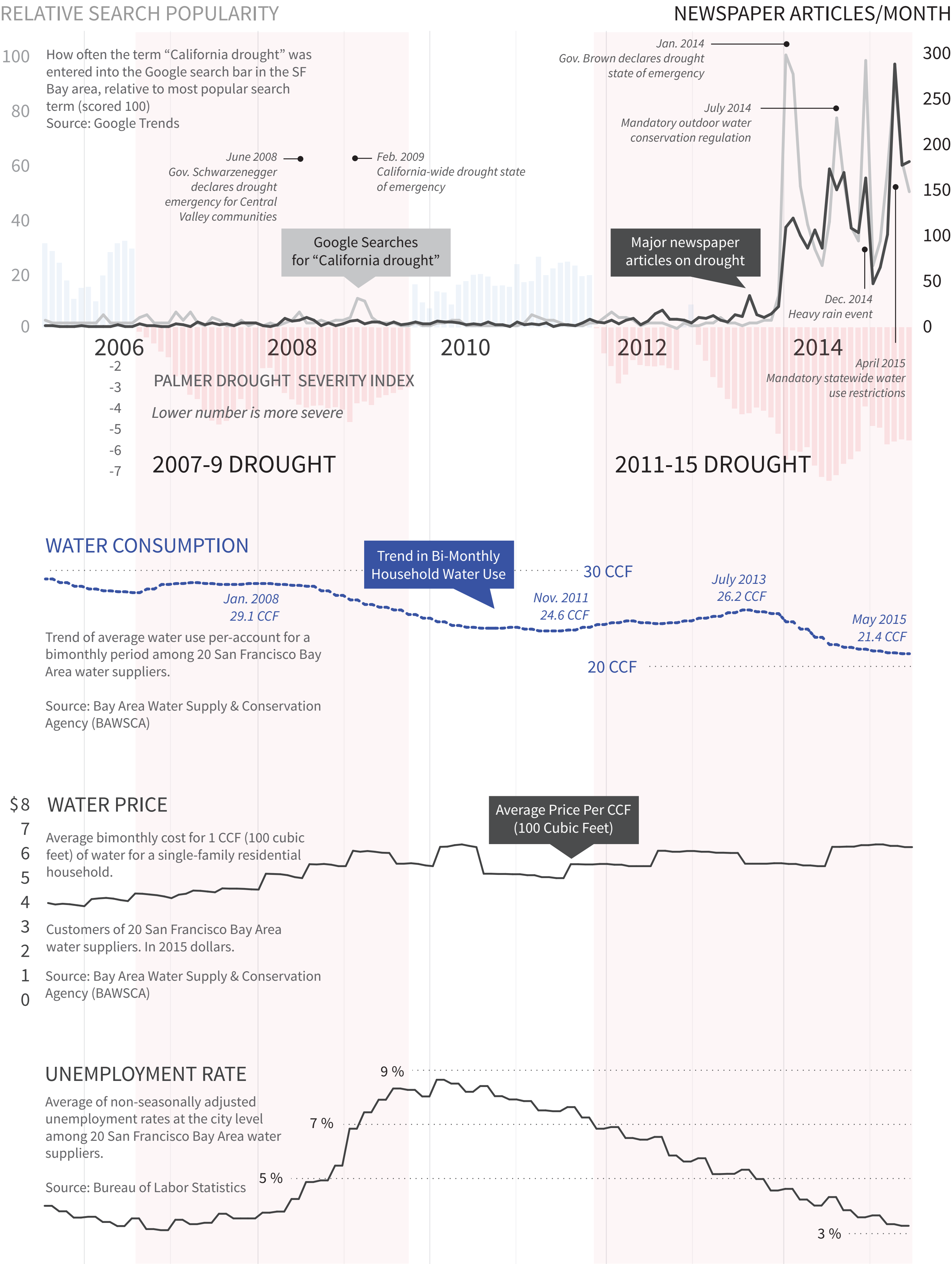
San Jose Mercury News

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

UT San Diego

Researchers searched nine large-circulation national and state newspapers for articles mentioning or discussing drought or water-related issues in California.



Source: K. J. Quesnel, N. K. Ajami, Changes in water consumption linked to heavy news media coverage of extreme climatic events. *Sci. Adv.* 3, e1700784 (2017).