

**Roads and Trails-** On January 22, I met with a Forest Service volunteer and we streamlined the locks on the gate, removing old/redundant/unknown locks. Kevin, who resides at Johnson's ranch, later met with me to swap the positions of our two combination locks. The chain is now more organized than it has been in years. The dirt road saw some new moderate ruts after last week's rain event. It is still easily passable. The oak branches hanging over the road were trimmed during recent site work. In general, Red, White, and Green trails are easily passable, and the Blue trail has had some treefall removed from it, but it is still more rustic than the others.



**Buildings/grounds/equipment-** Since our December meeting, our multi-month dry spell was finally broken, relieving some of the moisture deficit onsite. The HDF (plywood) temporary bridge (installed May 2022) that washed away in a rain event (late 2022) has been relocated adjacent to the old site of the wooden bridge. The tipping bucket rain gauge and wind anemometer have both been replaced, and were both operational in time to capture the rain and wind events of the past couple of months. The toilet was anchored prior to the January windstorms, and that appears to improve its likelihood of remaining upright during Santa Ana events.

**Gold Creek Usage-** On January 22, Mike, Vered, and Rob were onsite for work that included repairing the weather station wiring and organizing the block house. On February 3, Mike, Rob, Dustin, Bob, and Beth participated in a work day that included Blue Trail tree removal and solar panel troubleshooting at the block house.



**Abiota-** During the historic January windstorm that fed the Palisades and Eaton Fires, our weather station recorded a wind gust as high as 33mph. In late January, our drought was broken when a total of 1.18" of rain fell. This was followed by another moderate storm (1.74") in the first week of February. The February 13-14 rain event brought 2.8" of rain. None of these storms led to any noticeable erosion onsite. Gold Creek currently has flow throughout the entire site. Our water year total (starting Oct 1) is now nearly 6". Even with this moderate amount of rain, the US drought monitor has just upgraded our area to level D3 (extreme drought). Near-term forecasts are for warm and dry conditions.



**Biota-** Presumably, the recent rains will help restore moisture to the previously parched vegetation. The Sycamore near the start of the Red trail, that previously housed Rob's trail camera, was blown down last month and it also took out a small oak that was nearby. On one recent trip, I noticed more red-tailed hawks than normal, and thought maybe the loss of habitat from nearby fires may have caused their displacement. Mule deer have also been sighted recently.

