



Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin Management

Overview

The Mid-County Groundwater Basin is in critical overdraft. Groundwater levels are too low to prevent seawater intrusion and stream flows are diminished. Since 1995, local agencies have taken steps to reverse the overdraft with water conservation programs, groundwater recharge projects, and groundwater management strategies.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) to eliminate groundwater overdraft by 2040. MGA must develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by January 31, 2020. The plan will likely involve a combination of strategies to improve water conservation, increase groundwater recharge, and develop supplemental water supplies so we have the water we need now and in the future. The plan must also address equitable allocation of costs among groundwater users within the basin.

Basin Boundary

The Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin includes the communities of Live Oak, Capitola, Soquel, Aptos, and La Selva Beach. Its neighboring basins are the West Santa Cruz Terrace to the west, Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin to the northwest, and Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin to the northeast and southeast.

MGA is our Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)

- MGA is a partnership of local water agencies: Soquel Creek Water District, Central Water District, City of Santa Cruz, County of Santa Cruz, and private well representatives.
- The State requires MGA to report on groundwater conditions, groundwater extraction, and groundwater quality.
- MGA must prepare and implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to ensure our region has a reliable water supply now and in the future. Our water supply must meet human and environmental water needs.
- MGA commissioned a groundwater model to evaluate GSP management strategies within our basin.
- MGA commissioned a helicopter survey to identify the offshore saltwater/freshwater interface. Helicopter survey results will be incorporated into the groundwater model to provide greater clarity on saltwater intrusion.
- MGA must submit our GSP to DWR for approval by January 31, 2020.
- MGA can collect fees from basin groundwater users to fund groundwater management activities. Taxpayer approval is required to collect fees under the *Right to Vote on Taxes Act* (Proposition 218).

Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Advisory Committee

- MGA established a GSP Advisory Committee to represent basin water interests as we develop our Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).
- GSP Advisory Committee members will recommend sustainability goals, projects, project funding mechanisms, and plan implementation strategies to the MGA Board.
- The GSP Advisory Committee will consider many methods to achieve sustainability. These may include: managed groundwater pumping, increased water conservation, supplemental water supply development, artificial aquifer recharge, conjunctive use to share surface and groundwater resources between water agencies more effectively.
- GSP Advisory Committee are public meetings developed to include community and stakeholder involvement.

The Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)

- Our GSP must set goals and develop projects to eliminate the adverse impacts of groundwater overdraft by 2040. The State has identified six sustainability indicators that our GSP must control: lowering groundwater levels, reduction of storage, seawater intrusion, degraded water quality, land subsidence, and surface water depletion.
- Our GSP must plan for impacts of climate change: sea level rise, increased evapotranspiration which will result in increased irrigation demand and reduced groundwater recharge.
- Our GSP will evaluate funding mechanism to develop groundwater sustainability projects and allocate the costs of groundwater management among basin water users.
- Our GSP must correspond to a detailed outline prepared by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) in response to SGMA's legal requirements.
- Our GSP will include technical information developed by MGA staff and technical consultants with oversight and policy input from the GSP Advisory Committee and MGA Board.
- Our GSP work will leverage existing information from Groundwater Management Plans prepared for large parts of our groundwater basin by Soquel Creek and Central Water Districts beginning in 1996.

Timeline

Sept. 2014	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) signed into law.
Dec. 2015	10 th Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Community Meeting
March 2016	Joint Powers Agreement approved by member agencies
March 2016	Basin Boundary Modification request submitted to DWR
May 2016	Notice of Intent to become GSA filed with DWR
July 2016	DWR approved Basin Boundary Modification request
August 2016	MGA Declared the GSA for the SC Mid-County Groundwater Basin by DWR
2016-2020	Regular MGA meetings with community and stakeholder groups to develop GSP
Sept. 2017	GSP Advisory Committee established
2017-2019	GSP Plan Preparation
Jan. 2020	State Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) deadline
Every 5 years	GSP implementation progress reports to DWR
Jan. 2040	Basin groundwater sustainability must be achieved

What can individual basin users do right now to reduce our groundwater overdraft?

- Reduce groundwater pumping: practice water conservation, request a water use audit, eliminate unnecessary water use, install a water meter to track water usage and improve water savings.
- Manage your property to increase rainwater capture and percolation to improve groundwater recharge.
- Understand groundwater storage on your property: volunteer your well for groundwater level measurements.
- Stay engaged with MGA: sign up for monthly emails, visiting MGA website, participate in MGA meetings.

Who are the current board members of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency?

The Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) is an 11-member board. The board includes two elected officials from each water agency and three private well representatives.

- Central Water District: John Benich and Robert Marani
- City of Santa Cruz: Cynthia Mathews and David Baskin
- County of Santa Cruz: Zach Friend and John Leopold
- Soquel Creek Water District: Bruce Jaffe and Tom LaHue
- Private Well Representatives: Curt Abramson, Jon Kennedy, and Jim Kerr

Please visit: www.midcountygroundwater.org for more information.

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