



# Management of Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin

## Overview

The Mid-County (Soquel-Aptos area) Groundwater Basin is currently in a state of overdraft with depressed groundwater levels, seawater intrusion and diminished streamflow. Local agencies have been taking steps to address the overdraft since 1995. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 requires a Groundwater Sustainability Agency to be formed for our basin, and gives it authority to eliminate groundwater overdraft by 2040.

The law requires our newly-formed Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA), as the GSA for our basin, to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), which will likely involve a combination of water conservation, increased groundwater recharge and supplemental supply, with equitable allocation of costs among users based on impact on the groundwater basin.

## Basin Boundaries

A boundary modification request has been submitted to the state to define the basin boundaries of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin to reflect the entire local area of concern.

## About the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)

- The GSA will be responsible for developing and implementing a plan to manage use of water within the Basin.
- Our GSA includes the Soquel Creek Water District, the Central Water District, the City of Santa Cruz, the County of Santa Cruz, plus private well representatives.
- We anticipate that that the Mid-County Groundwater Agency will be formally recognized by the State as the GSA by August 2016
- The GSA is required to monitor and report on groundwater extraction and conditions, and develop and implement a groundwater sustainability plan (GSP).
- The GSA can levy assessments on water users to fund its activities, subject to the taxpayer approval process provided for in the Right to Vote on Taxes Act (Proposition 218).

## The Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)

- The Plan must be developed by 2020 and must be fully implemented to eliminate adverse impacts of groundwater overdraft, including long term groundwater depletion, seawater intrusion, reduction in water quality, and reduction in streamflow by 2040.
- The Plan must also take into account projected impact of climate change, including sea level rise, increased irrigation demand and reduced groundwater recharge.
- Methods to achieve sustainability may include managing pumping, increasing water conservation, creating supplemental supplies, and increasing recharge.
- The GSP will also evaluate and recommend a funding mechanism to allocate the costs of management and achieving sustainability among basin water users based on their impact on the basin.
- The GSP will be developed by our MGA, based on technical information and input from all involved stakeholders and water users.
- Work will build on the existing Groundwater Management Plan for the Soquel-Aptos Area, developed in 1996 by Soquel Creek and Central Water Districts, which must be updated and strengthened.
- A detailed groundwater model is being developed to better characterize the effects of groundwater pumping and evaluate the expected benefits of potential management scenarios.
- Stakeholder involvement in GSP development will include water supply agencies, land use agencies, regulatory agencies, environmental interests, private well users, and other water users in the basin.
- Ultimately the GSP must be approved by the MGA, including all member agencies, as well as the State.

## Timeline

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Sept. 2014    | Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) adopted   |
| Dec. 10, 2015 | 10 <sup>th</sup> Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Community Meeting   |
| Jan-May 2016  | New Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) approved by member agencies<br>Basin Boundary Request submitted to State Dept. Water Resources (DWR)<br>Public Hearing on GSA declaration<br>Notice of Intent to become GSA filed with DWR |

### Projected:

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|---------------|--|
| Summer 2016   | DWR approves basin boundary<br>MGA Declared the GSA for the SC Mid-County Groundwater Basin by DWR |
| Fall 2016     | Commence Work Plan development of GSP for Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin                              |
| 2016-2018     | Regular meetings of MGA and stakeholder groups to work on developing the GSP                       |
| 2018          | MGA's Target for Mid-County Basin GSP completion   |
| Jan. 2020     | State deadline for completion and submittal of GSP   |
| Every 5 years | Submit progress report to DWR on GSP implementation  |
| Jan. 2040     | Achieve groundwater basin sustainability with no adverse impacts                                   |

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

- Reduce pumping by practicing water conservation and eliminating any unnecessary water extraction; request a water use audit; install a water meter to track usage and savings
- Manage your property to increase capture, percolation and storage of rainwater
- Volunteer to have your groundwater level measured
- Stay engaged by signing up for monthly emails, visiting the website, attending meetings, & offering comments

## 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 comprised of two elected officials from Central Water District, City of Santa Cruz, County of Santa Cruz, and Soquel Creek Water District and three private well representatives.

- Central Water District: John Benich and Robert Marani
- City of Santa Cruz: Cynthia Mathews and Don Lane
- 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

**For more information on state requirements,  
background information on the issues,  
basin boundary maps, process for GSA formation,  
GSP development, drop-in hours, and future public meetings,  
visit: [www.midcountygroundwater.org](http://www.midcountygroundwater.org)**