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SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. Capitola Library, 2005 Wharf Road, Capitola

AGENDA

The public may attend and provide public comment in person.

The meeting will also be publicly streamed (viewing only) via Zoom webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82425050935

Webinar ID: 824 2505 0935; Webinar audio by phone (669) 444-9171

- 1. Call to Order
- 2. Roll Call
- 3. Oral Communications Related to Items Not on the Agenda

Issues within the purview of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency. Guidelines attached.

- 4. Consent Agenda (Page 4)
 - 4.1 Approve December 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes
 - 4.2 Acknowledge 2024 MGA Board of Directors
- 5. General Business (Page 10)
 - 5.1 Approve Submittal of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin Water Year 2023 Annual Report to the Department of Water Resources
 - 5.2 Receive Update and Provide Direction on the Periodic Evaluation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan
 - 5.3 Receive Update and Provide Direction on a Groundwater Well Registration and Metering Policy for Non-De Minimis Users
 - 5.4 Review Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and Provide Direction on Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25
 - 5.5 Consider Establishing a Reserve Policy
 - 5.6 Conduct Annual Election of Officers
- 6. Informational Updates (Page 80)
 - 6.1 Treasurer's Report
 - 6.2 Annual Streamflow Monitoring Report Presentation by Trout Unlimited
 - Soquel Creek and Aptos Creek Streamflow Monitoring Report WY2023

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency Board Meeting Agenda – March 21, 2024 Page 2 of 2

6.3 Staff Reports

- GSP Implementation Status Update
- SGMI Grant Update

7. Future Agenda Items

8. Written Communications and Submitted Materials

Written communications received by 4:00 p.m. on the Tuesday of the week prior to a regularly scheduled (Thursday) Board meeting will be distributed to the Board and made available on the MGA website at the time the Agenda is posted.

9. Adjournment

Next Board Meeting: June 20, 2024

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GUIDANCE FOR ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS AND DISABILITY ACCESS

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

MGA Board meeting agendas set aside time for oral communications regarding items not on the agenda but within the purview of the MGA. Oral communications are also heard during the consideration of an agenda item.

Anyone wishing to provide public comment should come to the front of the room to be recognized by the Board Chair. Individual comments are limited to three (3) minutes; a maximum time of 15 minutes is set aside each time for oral communications. The time limits may be increased or decreased at the Board Chair's discretion. Speakers must address the entire Board; dialogue is not permitted between speakers and other members of the public or Board members, or among Board members.

While the Board may not take any action based upon oral communications, an issue raised during oral communications may be placed on the agenda for a future Board meeting.

Organized groups wishing to make an oral presentation to the Board may contact Laura Partch at 831-662-2053 or admin@midcountygroundwater.org, preferably at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Written communications to the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) Board may be submitted as follows:

- Via email: <u>comment@midcountygroundwater.org</u>
- Via mail or hand delivery: MGA Board of Directors, c/o Emma Olin, 5180 Soquel Drive, Soquel, CA 95073

Deadlines for Submittal:

- Written communications received <u>by</u> 4:00 p.m. on the Tuesday of the week prior to a regularly scheduled (Thursday) Board meeting will be distributed to the Board and made available on the MGA's website at the time the Agenda is posted.
- Written communications received <u>after</u> the 4:00 p.m. deadline will be posted on the MGA <u>website</u> and Board members informed of the communications at the earliest opportunity.
 Please note, communications received after 9:00 a.m. the day before the Board Meeting may not have time to reach Board members, nor be read by them prior to consideration of an item.
- Written communications received at a Board meeting will be distributed to Board members and posted on the MGA <u>website</u> at the earliest opportunity.

Any written communication submitted to the Board will be made available on the MGA website at http://www.midcountygroundwater.org/committee-meetings and constitutes a public record. Please do not include any private information in your communication that you do not want made available to the public.

DISABILITY ACCESS: Please contact Laura Partch at <u>admin@midcountygroundwater.org</u> or 831-662-2053 for information or to request an accommodation.

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SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. Capitola Library, 2005 Wharf Road, Capitola

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by Chair Kennedy.

2. Roll Call

Directors present: Curt Abramson, Carla Christensen, Jon Kennedy, Jim Kerr, Tom LaHue and Alternate Directors Doug Engfer, Allyson Violante, Frances Whitney.

Directors absent: David Baskin, Zach Friend, Fred Keeley, Manu Koenig, Rob Marani, and Marco Romanini.

Staff present: Ralph Bracamonte, Rosemary Menard, Sierra Ryan and Leslie Strohm. Ron Duncan joined remotely for Agenda Item 3.

Consultants present: Tim Carson, Rob Swartz, and Laura Partch, Regional Water Management Foundation (RWMF); Georgina King, Montgomery & Associates (remote),

Others: Several members of the public.

3. Appreciation for Service by Rosemary Menard

Directors and staff acknowledged that Ms. Menard's understanding of complex water issues and sophisticated management skills informed the framework of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) and have been significant factors in its success. Ms. Menard was appreciated for her strategic thinking, collaborative approach to problem solving, and her recognition of the importance of relationships between agencies and the public to solve the issues facing the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin (Basin). Ms. Menard's ability to make complex water issues understandable, her advocacy for the Basin, and her role as a mentor, were also greatly appreciated.

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency Board Meeting Draft Minutes – December 14, 2023 Page 2 of 5

4. Oral Communications Related to Items Not on the Agenda

Issues within the purview of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency. Guidelines attached.

Director LaHue was thanked for his work on the MGA Board since its inception.

5. Consent Agenda

- 5.1 Approve September 21, 2023, Meeting Minutes
- 5.2 Approve 2024 Board Meeting Schedule
- 5.3 Approve Submission of Application under Library Community Use Policy

In response to a Board question, staff noted that the location for any additional Board meetings required in 2024 would be either the Capitola Branch Library or the Community Foundation.

MOTION: Director Kerr; Second, Alternate Director Engfer. To approve the consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously; Director LaHue and Alternate Director Whitney abstained from Item 5.1.

6. General Business

6.1 Resolution on the Appointment of Private Well Owner Representatives

MOTION: Director LaHue; Second, Director Christensen. To approve Board Resolution No. 23-01 which appoints Private Well Owner Director Kerr and Alternate Director Schultz to four-year terms effective January 1, 2024. Motion passed by roll call vote of a majority of the Member Agency Directors: Carla Christensen, Tom LaHue, Alternate Directors Doug Engfer, Allyson Violante, Frances Whitney.

6.2 Presentation and Acceptance of Annual Independent Audited Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2022-23

MGA Treasurer Leslie Strohm presented the auditor's unmodified opinion attesting to clean financial statements conducted pursuant to generally accepted auditing standards. Net positions increased by approximately \$32,000 due to revenues from Sustainable Groundwater Management Implementation grant (SGMI Grant) projects. Internal controls were reviewed and found sufficient.

In response to a Board question regarding the use of a non-interest bearing account, it was noted that an investment policy may be pursued in the coming year. If approved by the Board, the policy would allow the movement of certain funds to interest bearing accounts.

MOTION: Director Abramson; Second, Director LaHue. To accept the audited Financial Report for the period ending June 30, 2023. Motion passed unanimously.

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency Board Meeting Draft Minutes – December 14, 2023 Page 3 of 5

> 6.3 Ratify Selection of Legal Counsel on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Implementation Actions and Approve Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget for Legal Services

Following previous Board discussions, in October the MGA released a Request for Qualifications for Legal Counsel on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Four firms responded and following an evaluation of the qualifications of each firm, a decision was made to interview three firms. Based on both the qualifications and interviews the selection committee unanimously decided to proceed with Best Best & Krieger (BBK).

The fiscal budget legal services for 2022-23 previously approved by the Board is \$20,000. Staff is requesting that the Board ratify the selection of BBK and approve an increase in the stand-alone budget category by \$30,000, for a total of \$50,000. Under the MGA Procurement Policy, the Executive Team is authorized to approve items up to \$50,000. The Executive Team approved the decision to move forward with BBK.

BBK currently provides services to Soquel Creek Water District (District) and the City of Santa Cruz. MGA legal counsel has reviewed the selection of BBK and did not find significant issues. Both member agencies have signed conflict waivers, and the BBK attorneys working with the MGA will not be involved in services to those member agencies.

In response to a Board question, staff responded that MGA legal counsel accepted the proposed language change requested by BBK.

Public Comment: Becky Steinbruner asked regarding potential legal challenges the MGA may be anticipating and noted that BBK also represents the Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission.

The Board Chair noted prior Board discussions on the MGA's need for outside legal expertise under SGMA pertained to a proposed metering program for non-de minimis users.

MOTIONS: Director Engfer; Second, Director Kerr. To 1) ratify the selection of Best Best & Krieger, LLP to provide legal services support on SGMA matters, 2) approve an increase of \$30,000 to the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget for legal services, and 3) authorize the Board Chair to execute the related conflict waiver letters between the MGA and Soquel Creek Water District and the City of Santa Cruz. The motions were voted on together and passed unanimously.

6.4 Receive Information and Provide Direction on the Periodic (5-Year) Evaluation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Georgina King of Montgomery and Associates provided a presentation on the Periodic (5-Year) Evaluation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan. Ms. King's presentation and following discussion by the Board, staff, and public comment at minutes 33:09 to 1:46:52 of the meeting recording on the MGA website.

Issues raised during the Board discussion included: Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) surveys and the possibility of additional flight patterns; Department of Water Resources review of existing annual reports; questions regarding updates to the climate model, and preliminary results from the optimization study.

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Public comment: Becky Steinbruner raised questions including regarding land use and new housing, future AEM surveys, chloride issues, requested the use of recycled water at the Seascape golf course and managed aquifer recharge in that area.

Staff noted that regarding preliminary results of the optimization study (SGMI Grant Component 4) preliminary results, that work is not yet done, including an evaluation of alternatives. As additional data becomes available, additional meetings could be scheduled to inform future decision-making.

6.5 Receive Information and Provide Direction on Well Metering Program for Nonde minimis Users

A Non-De Minimis Groundwater Extraction Metering Program Update was provided by staff at minutes 1:47:50 to 1:58:05 of the meeting recording.

Staff reported that the past few months have been focused on hiring SGMA legal counsel to consider program possibilities such as nonparticipation, enforcement, meter installation, the possible use of the SMGI grant funds to assist with that cost, and ongoing reporting.

At the March 2024 Board meeting, staff anticipates bringing for Board approval a Non-De Minimis Well Registration, Meter Installation, Reporting Policy. Following approval, staff will begin reaching out to engage with non-de minimis users to better understand their parcels and water usage and will work on the financial assistance component. Staff noted that Santa Barbara County, which includes multiple basins, began a rebate program over a year ago but has not yet received any rebate requests.

In response to Board questions: 1) it is anticipated that meter reading would require the homeowner to take a picture of the meter reading and submit it to the MGA, and 2) staff would like to engage in discussions with members of the earlier Board metering subcommittee to get additional background on past efforts.

Public Comment: Becky Steinbruner appreciated the update and had questions on existing pumping at Seascape and how that might be influenced by a recent rezoning for additional residences on that property. She also suggested an informational town hall meeting as a first step in reaching out to non-de minimis users.

Staff clarified that work performed and expenses incurred prior to April 30, 2025 may be eligible for reimbursement from the SGMI Grant.

7. Informational Updates

7.1 Treasurer's Report

A Board request was made for a breakdown of MGA administrative expenses paid by the District and grant reimbursement to the District, rather than a total paid to the District. Staff will report back to the MGA Treasurer.

Public Comment: Becky Steinbruner inquired about the financial report.

7.2 Staff Reports

• GSP Update:

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency Board Meeting Draft Minutes – December 14, 2023 Page 5 of 5

Work is progressing on the Olive Springs Road shallow monitoring well. Dry season monitoring has concluded, and the loggers have been removed to avoid potential damage or loss from high streamflow events during the winter. Data downloads are expected by the end of December.

- SGMI Grant Update
 - Staff reviewed a chart on each of the grant components: Component 1, Cunnison Lane Groundwater Well (completed Request for Qualifications and issued Notice to Proceed on engineering design; grant funded activity not yet underway); Component 2, Aquifer Storage & Recovery, Beltz Wellfield (design is underway); Component 3, Park Avenue Transmission Main Improvements (construction almost completed); Component 4, Technical Developments of GSP projects (four subtasks underway); and Component 5, Sustainable Groundwater Management Evaluation and Planning (multiple implementation activities underway, many of them reported on earlier in the meeting).
- 7.3 Annual Status Report on Fair Political Practices Commission Compliance
- 8. Future Agenda Items
- 9. Written Communications and Submitted Materials
 - 9.1 Email communication from Becky Steinbruner dated November 4, 2023
- **10.** Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Next Board Meeting: The next Board meeting is March 21, 2024

March 21, 2024

MEMO TO THE MGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subject: Agenda Item 4.2

Title: Acknowledge 2024 Board of Directors

Below are the members of the 2024 MGA Board of Directors. Changes from the 2023 Board are italicized.

Soquel Creek Water District

- Carla Christensen
- Rachél Lather
- Jennifer Balboni (Alternate)

City of Santa Cruz

- Fred Keeley
- David Baskin
- Doug Engfer (Alternate)

Central Water District

- Robert Marani
- Marco Romanini
- Francis Basich Whitney (Alternate)

County of Santa Cruz

- Zach Friend
- Manu Koenig
- Allyson Violante (Alternate)

Private Well Owners

- Curt Abramson
- Jon Kennedy
- Jim Kerr
- Robert Schultz (Alternate)

Recommended Board Action:

1. Informational, no action necessary.

Submitted by: Tim Carson

Program Director

Regional Water Management Foundation

March 21, 2024

MEMO TO THE MGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subject: Agenda Item 5.1

Title: Approve Submittal of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin Water Year

2023 Annual Report to the Department of Water Resources

Attachments:

1. Weblink: Draft WY2023 Annual Report

- 2. Submittal Letter to DWR
- 3. Montgomery & Associates Presentation on the 2023 Annual Report

Recommended Board Action: Approve the submittal of a transmittal letter and the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin Water Year 2023 Annual Report from the MGA Basin Point of Contact to DWR in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Tit. 23, secs. 353.4 and 356.2.

Background

The Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin (Basin) was approved by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on June 3, 2021.

Following adoption of a GSP, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to submit an Annual Report to DWR by April 1 of each year. The Annual Report provides data on groundwater conditions and a narrative description of the progress made toward implementing the GSP in the prior water year.

Annual Reports for Water Years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 were prepared by Montgomery & Associates and are available on the MGA website and on the DWR SGMA portal. The Annual Report for Water Year 2023 (WY 2023), which covers October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023, was also prepared by Montgomery & Associates.

Discussion

As described in the GSP, DWR lists the Basin as a high priority basin in critical overdraft. A high priority designation indicates that water users in the Basin have high dependence on groundwater. The Basin is listed in critical overdraft principally

because active seawater intrusion impacts its productive aquifers due to overpumping. The MGA's sustainability goal is to manage groundwater to ensure beneficial uses and users have access to a safe and reliable groundwater supply that meets current and future Basin demand without causing undesirable results in order to:

- Ensure groundwater is available for beneficial uses and a diverse population of beneficial users
- Protect groundwater supply against seawater intrusion
- Prevent groundwater overdraft within the Basin and resolve problems resulting from prior overdraft
- Maintain or enhance groundwater levels where groundwater dependent ecosystems exist
- Maintain or enhance groundwater contributions to streamflow
- Ensure operational flexibility within the Basin by maintaining a drought reserve
- Support reliable groundwater supply and quality to promote public health and welfare
- Account for changing groundwater conditions related to projected climate change and sea level rise in Basin planning and management
- Do no harm to neighboring groundwater basins in regional efforts to achieve groundwater sustainability

WY 2023 was a wet water year influenced by a series of atmospheric rivers that occurred late December through March. While precipitation readily recharges groundwater in unconfined aquifers, coastal groundwater levels in the semi-confined to confined Purisima aquifers do not typically show a clear response to annual changes in recharge from precipitation because recharge areas are some distance from the coast. Instead, groundwater levels respond more directly to changes in groundwater extraction than precipitation. Even though WY 2023 groundwater extraction was the second lowest on record, groundwater levels at most monitored wells increased only slightly or remained similar to the previous year. The wet year, however, did result in a substantial 5,229 acre-feet (AF) Basin-wide increase of groundwater in storage, primarily in unconfined areas away from the coast.

Total water used in WY 2023 is 8,255 AF; 4,880 is supplied by groundwater and 3.375 is from surface water. Usage by sector is: 86% municipal use (7,057 AF), 8% private domestic use (662 AF), 3% intuitional use (271 AF), and 3% agricultural use (265 AF). Groundwater supplies 59% of total water use with the remaining water coming from surface water sources outside of the Basin. The distribution of usage is similar to previous years.

The Basin continues to be in a state of overdraft thereby presenting a significant and unreasonable risk of seawater intrusion. There are undesirable results for seawater intrusion because 7 coastal representative monitoring points (RMPs) have 5-year moving average groundwater elevations below their respective minimum threshold (MT) groundwater elevation proxies. For these 7 RMPs, the 5-year moving averages remained similar to the previous year. Chloride concentrations at 5 RMP for seawater intrusion, all screened in the Purisima F-unit, in the southeastern portion of the Basin exceeded MTs for seawater intrusion. Of these 5 RMPs, 4 exceeded the MT in 2 or more of the last 4 consecutive samples, which constitutes an undesirable result for seawater intrusion. Increasing chloride trends in the RMPs indicate advancing movement of seawater intrusion. This condition has triggered early management action of reducing nearby municipal pumping, which has been in place for several years with little effect. Based on recommendations from last year's annual report, the MGA is investigating potential causes of increasing chlorides in the Seascape area. Preliminary findings are that private irrigation and municipal wells extracting groundwater from the overlying Aromas Red Sands may be causing vertical migration of seawater in the Purisima F unit. Further work will be needed to sample private wells in the area to expand understanding of chloride distribution and to conduct a land-based electromagnetic survey to delineate the inland extent of seawater intrusion to better inform actions to protect the Basin from seawater intrusion.

In WY 2023, groundwater elevations at 1 of 5 RMPs are below groundwater elevation proxies for depletion of interconnected surface water. This is the same well where exceedances have occurred for the previous 2 years. Since undesirable results are defined as any depletion of interconnected surface water RMP having groundwater elevations below its MT, undesirable results for surface water depletion are occurring.

There are no MT exceedances or undesirable results for the chronic lowering of groundwater levels and groundwater quality degradation sustainability indicators.

Net groundwater extraction remains greater than sustainable yields in 2 of 3 aquifer groups: Aromas Red Sands and Purisima F aquifer group and Purisima DEF, BC, A, and AA aquifer group.

Projects included in the GSP that recharge water or provide for alternative supplies, are expected to reduce net groundwater pumping below sustainable yield and reduce undesirable results once they are implemented. Work to plan and implement these projects continued in WY 2023. The projects include the following:

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- Pure Water Soquel (PWS) Construction of treatment plant, pipelines, and Seawater Intrusion Prevention (SWIP) wells by Soquel Creek Water District (SqCWD) is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.
- Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) The City of Santa Cruz Water Department (SCWD) expects to receive California State Water Resources Control Board action early in calendar year 2024 on water rights petitions for change that will lead to phased implementation of full-scale ASR at the SCWD's existing Beltz wells. The SCWD is currently in the design phase for permanent modifications to convert 2 existing wells to permanent ASR wells and begun pilot testing a third existing extraction well for potential ASR.
- Water Transfers / In-Lieu Groundwater Recharge an extension of the pilot project agreement between the SCWD and SqCWD runs through May 1, 2026.

Georgina King from Montgomery & Associates will provide an overview presentation to the MGA Board and request authorization to submit the report to the DWR SGMA Portal.

Recommended Board Action:

1. By MOTION, approve the submittal of a transmittal letter and the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin Water Year 2023 Annual Report from the MGA Basin Point of Contact to DWR in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Tit. 23, secs. 353.4 and 356.2.

Submitted by:

Rob Swartz

Senior Planner Regional Water Management Foundation On behalf of the MGA Executive Staff

> Ron Duncan, General Manager, Soquel Creek Water District Ralph Bracamonte, District Manager, Central Water District Heidi Luckenbach, Water Director, City of Santa Cruz Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Manager, County of Santa Cruz



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April 1, 2024

To: California Department of Water Resources

From: Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency

Subject: Submittal of the Fifth Annual Report for the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency

The Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) is the Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin, Number 3-001 (Basin). The Basin is classified by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as a high priority basin in a state of critical overdraft.

The MGA formed in March 2016 as a Joint Powers Authority, with four member agencies: Central Water District, City of Santa Cruz, County of Santa Cruz, and Soquel Creek Water District. The MGA Board of Directors includes two representatives from each member agency and three private well owner representatives. The MGA initiated development of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in 2017 to guide ongoing management of the Basin with a goal to achieve and maintain groundwater sustainability over a 50-year planning and implementation horizon. GSP development was a collaborative effort among the member agencies and technical consultants, and was informed by input from resource management agencies, community members, and stakeholders.

The GSP was adopted by the MGA Board on November 21, 2019, and approved by DWR in June 2021. The following annual reports have been submitted to DWR: First Annual Report for Water Year 2019 (submitted April 1, 2020); Second Annual Report for Water Year 2020 (submitted April 1, 2021); Third Annual Report for Water Year 2021 (submitted April 1, 2022), and Fourth Annual Report for Water Year 2022 (submitted April 1, 2023).

The MGA is pleased to submit the Fifth Annual Report to the Department of Water Resources, for Water Year 2023, as required by the California Code of Regulations for Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions,

Sierra Ryan

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency Basin Point of Contact

(831) 454-3133

BasinPOC@midcountygroundwater.org

jeen Ryan

Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin 5th Annual Report Water Year 2023



Presented by: Georgina King, PG, C.Hg
March 21, 2024

Presentation Content

- 1. Santa Cruz Mid-County GSP Overview
- 2. WY2023 Annual Report
 - Water Year Type/Water Use
 - Sustainability Indicators Results
 - Progress on GSP Implementation
- 3. Key take aways for WY2023



Santa Cruz Mid-County GSP Overview



GSP Overview

- Basin is classified as a high-priority groundwater basin in critical overdraft due to the ongoing threat of further seawater intrusion into Basin groundwater supplies
- 59% of the Basin's water supply to residents, businesses, industry, and agriculture is from groundwater
 - ~ 4,700 5,600 AF of groundwater pumped per year in the Basin since 2015
 - ~ 2,900 4,000 AF of surface water sourced per year outside of the Basin used to supplement Basin demand since 2015

GSP Summary document:

https://www.midcountygroundwater.org/sites/default/files/uploads/MGA2019-GSP-Public-final.pdf



SGMA Sustainability Indicators

GSP addresses applicable sustainability indicators (5 of 6)



Lowering **GW** Levels



Seawater Intrusion



Reduction of Storage



Degraded Quality



Subsidence



Surface Water Depletion



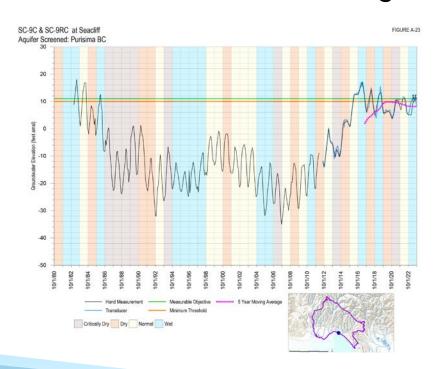
Basin Issues – Seawater Intrusion



 In mid 1980s to early 1990s, groundwater levels were 40 – 120 feet below sea level → seawater intrusion

Seawater Intrusion

Levels have recovered significantly but seawater intrusion still occurs







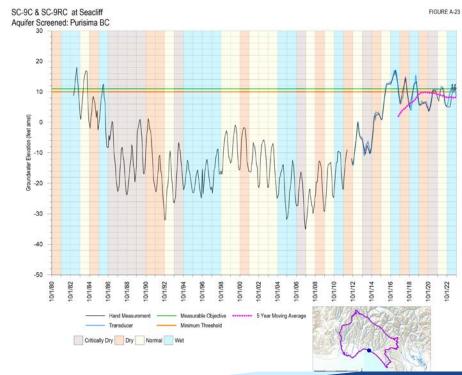
Basin Issues – Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels



 Groundwater levels have not completely recovered even though there have been basin-wide improvements due to increased water conservation and strategic groundwater

Lowering **GW** Levels

- management
- Need to plan for climate change and its impacts on groundwater recharge
- Additional water supplies are needed to meet demands while achieving groundwater sustainability





Other Basin Issues Resulting from Lowered Groundwater Levels



Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water

- Some creeks in the Basin are partially dependent on inflows from groundwater
- Without those groundwater inflows, some aquatic plants and animals may be impacted, including priority species

Reduction of Groundwater in Storage



 Groundwater in storage needs to be at volumes that can support long-term water use, preserve or enhance ecological resources, and provide for a drought reserve when local rainfall is below normal

GSP Lays out Path to Sustainability

Sustainability Goals

Desired Basin conditions for all beneficial uses and users

Monitoring Network

To measure basin conditions in response to groundwater management and use

Sustainable Management Criteria

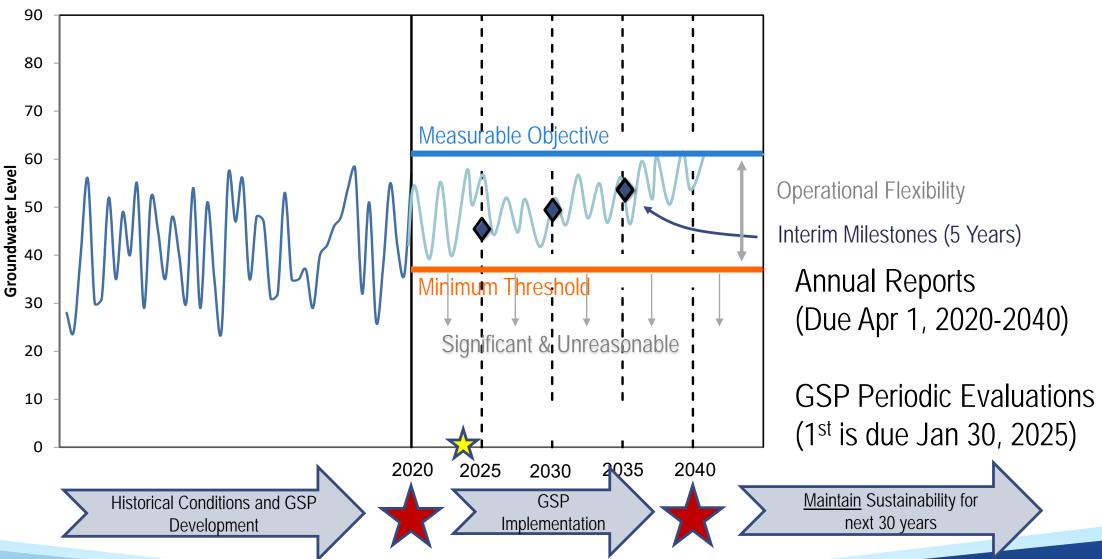
Metrics against which to measure progress of groundwater management and implementing projects & management actions

Projects & Management Actions

Needed to achieve Sustainability Goals



MGA's SGMA Timeline





WY2023 Annual Report



Precipitation

- October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023
- Above average precipitation
- Wet water year classification

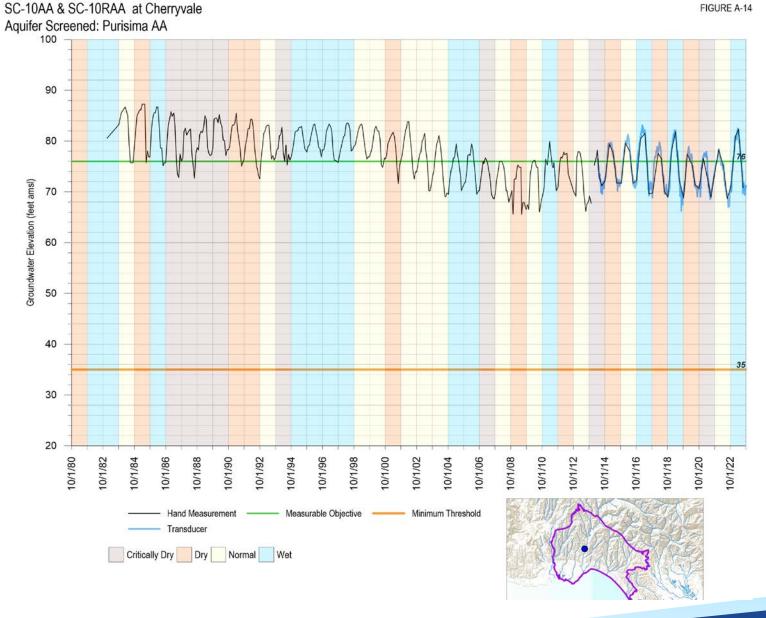


Water Use

- Groundwater is 59% of basin supply
- Second lowest groundwater usage on record (WY2019 was lowest at 4,726 AF)

Water Use Sector	Groundwater Usef	Surface Water Use ^a	Total Water Use	Percentage of	
		Basin Water Use			
Private Domestic ^b	662	Unknown but minimal	662	8%	
Agricultural ^c	265	0	265	3%	
Institutionald	271	0	271	3%	
Municipale	3,682	3,375	7,057	86%	
Total	4,880	3,375	8,255		

Compare Basin Conditions to Sustainable Management Criteria at Representative **Monitoring Points**





Seawater Intrusion – Chloride Concentrations

Measurable Objective 2013-2017 average chloride concentration for all intruded wells, 100 mg/L for unintruded inland wells

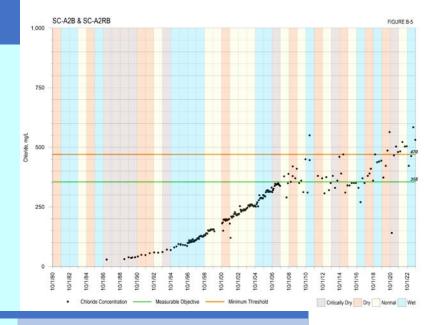
Many wells have

than MO (24/32)

Minimum Threshold

Historical maximum concentration for intruded wells, 250 mg/L for unintruded coastal wells, 150 mg/L for unintruded inland wells

Undesirable Result Consecutive MT exceedances at any RMP well





Seawater Intrusion





SC-A2RA, SCconcentrations lower A2RB, SC-A5B, SC-A5A and SC-A8A

There are **Undesirable Results** at SC-A8A, SC-A2RB, SC-A5A, SC-A5B have consecutive MT

exceedances

KEY FINDING:

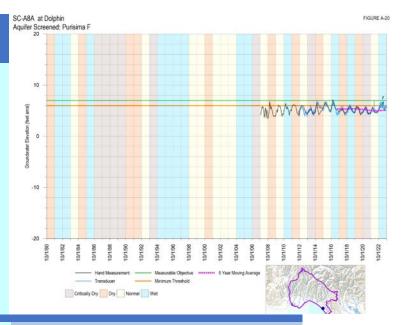
Undesirable results (UR) continue to occur SC-A2RB and SC-A5B have MT exceedances during past 2 water years; SC-A8A now has UR

Seawater Intrusion – Proxy Groundwater Elevations

Measurable Objective Conservative groundwater elevation proxies for seawater intrusion prevention

Minimum Threshold Groundwater elevation proxy for protection against seawater intrusion

Undesirable Result Any RMP wells have 5-year moving average elevations below MT





Seawater Intrusion

MO are met at several RMPs screened in the Purisima F, DEF, and A units.



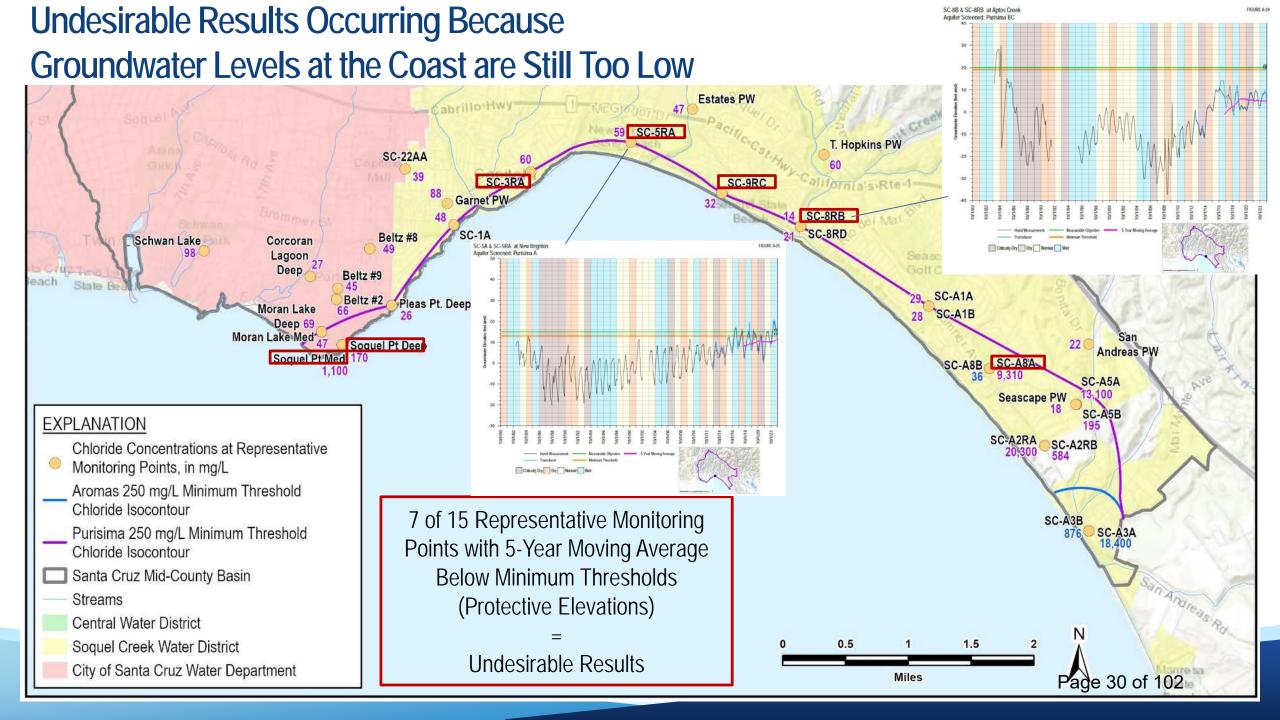
7 of 15 RMP have 5year moving average elevations below MT Purisima F (1/3), Purisima BC (2/2), Purisima A (2/6), Purisima AA (1/3) Tu (1/1)



There are **Undesirable Results** because some elevations are below MT

KEY FINDING:

Undesirable results continue to occur All aquifers have at least 1 RMP with 5-year average elevations below MT



Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels

Lowering **GW** Levels

Measurable Objective 75th percentile historical groundwater elevation

Minimum Threshold Based on levels that sufficiently supply overlying land use

Undesirable Result Any RMP's average monthly elevation falls below MT







MO was met at 0 **RMP**

No RMP wells exceeded MT

There are no **Undesirable Results** as no RMP has elevations below MT

KEY FINDING:

Groundwater elevations remain above MTs

Reduction of Groundwater in Storage

Measurable Objective

Net extraction that allows for 4 subsequent years of maximum projected extraction without causing undesirable results

Minimum Threshold

Pumping volumes that avoid undesirable results in projected Basin simulations

Undesirable Result

5-year net extraction exceeds sustainable yield (MT) in any aquifer group

Aquifer Unit Group	Minimum Threshold	Interim Milestone 2025	WY 2019- 2023		
	Five-Year moving average Net Extract acre-feet per year				
Aromas Red Sands and Purisima F	1,740	1,930	1,982		
Purisima DEF, BC, A and AA	2,280	2,110	2,311		
Tu	930	720	827		



Reduction of Storage

None of the 3 aquifer groups met their MOs

2/3 aquifer groups exceeded their MTs (Aromas Red Sands/Purisima F, **Purisima** DEF,BC,A,AA). The Tu did not exceed MT

There are **Undesirable Results** as pumping was higher than MT for 2 aquifer groups

KEY FINDING:

Undesirable results continue to occur; this pattern is ongoing since at least 2019

Degradation of Groundwater Quality

Measurable Objective 2013-2017 average concentrations

MO are met at

several RMPs

Minimum Threshold

Based on drinking water standards for several constituents of concern

Undesirable Result Any RMP exceeds MT as a result of an MGA project or management action

Aquifer	Representative Monitoring Point	Total Dissolved Solids mg/L	Chloride mg/L	lron µg/Lª	Manganese µg/Lª	Arsenic μg/L	Chromium (Total) µg/L	Nitrate as Nitrogen mg/L	Organic Compound Detects µg/L	
	Minimum Threshold	1,000	250	300	50	10	50	10		
		Water Year 2023 Maximum Concentration								
	Aptos Creek PW	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
	Ledyard PW	346.0	37.7	96.0	12.0	ND	1.2	ND	ND	
	SC-23A	286.0	20.1	ND	ND	NA	NA	ND	NA	
	SC-8RB	500.0	14.4	23.0	ND	NA	NA	ND	NA	
	SC-9RC	410.0	31.6	ND	ND	NA	NA	ND	NA	
Purisima	30th Ave Shallow	790.0	53.0	120.0	1,200.0	NA	NA	ND	NA	
Α	Pleasure Point Shallow	270.0	34.0	110.0	100.0	NA	NA	ND	NA	
	Estates PW	460.0	46.9	177.0	91.0	ND	1.1	ND	ND	
	Garnet PW	648.0	87.9	1,390.0	418.0	0.7	0.9	ND	ND	
	Tannery 2 PW	558.0	63.6	230.0	152.0	0.7	1.0	ND	ND	
	Rosedale 2 PW	464.0	46.8	749.0	280.0	0.6	1.5	ND	0.8 (MTBE)	
	Beltz #8 PW	440.0	48.8	860.0	220.0	1.9	ND	ND	ND	
	Beltz #9 PW	490.0	44.9	1,100.0	240.0	ND	0.3	ND	ND	
	SC-3RC	434.0	48.9	60.0	40.0	NA	NA	ND	NA	
	SC-5RA	506.0	58.7	74.0	182.0	NA	NA	ND	NA	
	SC-9RA	378.0	15.0	336.0	14.0	NA	NA	ND	NA	
	SC-10RA	430.0	30.8	608.0	544.0	NA	NA	ND	NA	
	SC-22A	372.0	17.9	473.0	535.0	NA	NA	ND	NA	
Purisima A/AA	Beltz #10 PW	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	





Several RMPs exceeded MT for iron, manganese, TDS, and chloride

There are no **Undesirable Results** because these MT exceedances result from existing natural conditions



While concentrations above drinking water standard exist, they are not a result of Basin management



Degraded Quality

Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water

Measurable Objective
Groundwater
elevations higher than
the creek bed

Minimum Threshold
Highest seasonal-low
groundwater elevation
during below-average
rainfall years from the
start of monitoring
through 2015

Undesirable Result
Any RMP has
minimum monthly
groundwater elevation
below MT

Minimum Average
Monthly
Groundwater
Elevation, feet
amsl

28.8

22.4

12.1

8.9

69.0







One RMP (Wharf Road) met its MO

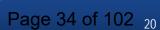
One RMP (Balogh)
has elevations
below MT

There are
Undesirable Results
because there are
elevations below MT

KEY FINDING:

While Undesirable Results continue, only 1 RMP has elevations below MT





Surface Water

Depletion

Summary of Sustainability Status for WY2023



Lowering GW Levels





Seawater Intrusion





Reduction of Storage





Degraded Quality





Surface Water Depletion



MGA has until January 2040 to Achieve Sustainability



Progress on GSP Implementation in WY2023

- 1. Filled data gaps in monitoring deep coastal aquifers and interconnected surface water (complete)
- 2. Data Management System
- 3. Implementation grant award of \$7.6 million
- 4. Continued water conservation & demand management
- Pure Water Soquel
- 6. City of Santa Cruz Aquifer Storage & Recovery (ASR)



Monitoring Features Added - Filling Data Gaps Identified in GSP

WY 2020 SP-5 in Tu unit 2022 • SC-3AA in AA unit

 6 of 7 shallow interconnected surface water monitoring wells

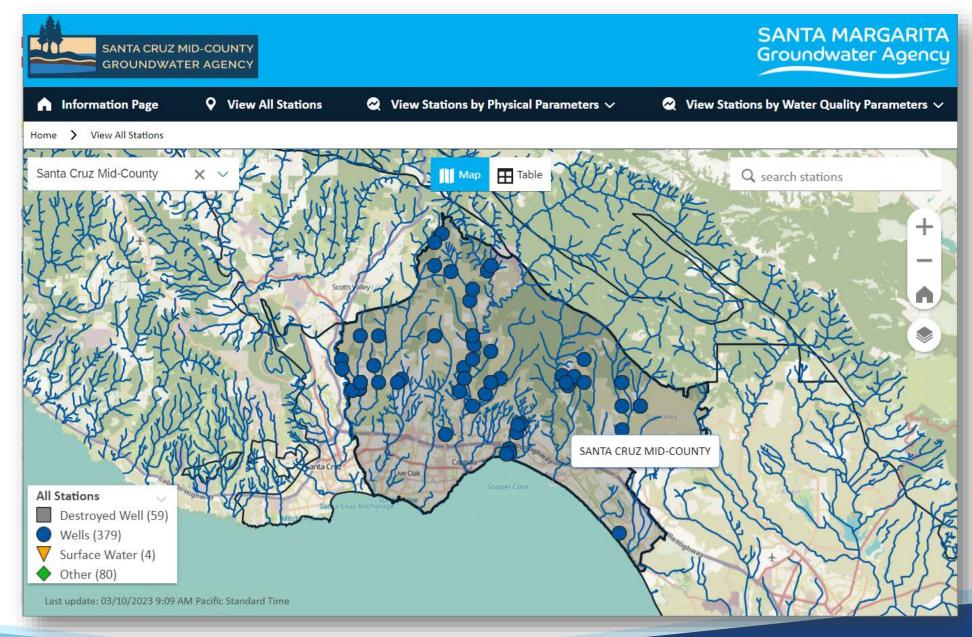
• 6 stream gages

WY 2023 Olive Springs
 Monitoring
 Well installed
 in January
 2024

Stream gage ratings curves



Regional WISKI





Groundwater Sustainability Management Implementation Grant

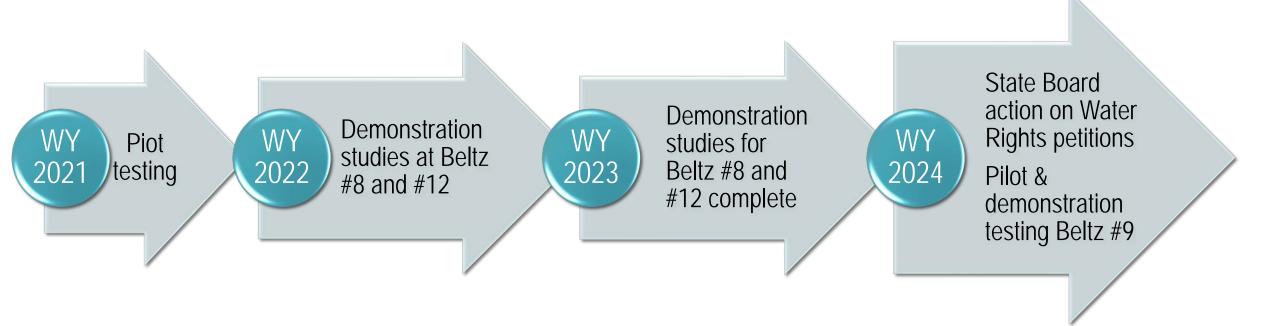
\$7.6 million awarded to MGA in May 2022 to assist in implementing various projects aimed to improve basin sustainability:

- Regional optimization study to be completed April 2025
- Redistribute coastal pumping to inland locations and add a new inland production well
- Increase the intertie capacity between SqCWD's subarea 1 and subarea 2
- Added an existing production well to the City of Santa Cruz Water Department's (SCWD's) aquifer, storage, and recovery (ASR) program in WY2023





City of Santa Cruz ASR





Key Take Aways for WY2023

Chloride Increases in Seascape Area

- Continued chloride increases are occurring in the Seascape area (SC-A5A, SC-A2RB)
- Undesirable Results occurring for first time SC-A8A and SC-A5A
- Preliminary study of causes of increasing chloride indicates vertical migration caused by wells extracting from overlying Aromas Red Sands is increasing chloride in upper Purisima F aquifer



Seawater Intrusion

Coastal Protective Groundwater Flevations

- Undesirable results occurring in 7 of 15 representative monitoring wells with 5-year moving average groundwater elevations below MTs
- A project like Pure Water Soquel is needed to raise coastal groundwater levels to reduce the risk of seawater intrusion



Seawater Intrusion

Groundwater Extraction 2nd Lowest since 1985

- WY2023 was a wet water year (rainfall 153% of average)
- Net groundwater extraction remains greater than sustainable yield in Aromas/Purisima F and remainder of Purisima units. Tu unit extraction is below sustainable yield
- Coastal groundwater levels remained similar or only slightly increased





Questions

March 21, 2024

MEMO TO THE MGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subject: Agenda Item 5.2

Title: Receive Update and Provide Direction on the Periodic Evaluation of

the Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Attachment(s): 2025 Periodic Evaluation & Seascape Seawater Intrusion

Recommended Board Action: Provide direction on the Periodic Evaluation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Background

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act requires Periodic Evaluation that is due at least every five years after submittal of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP or Plan). The Periodic Evaluation is intended to be a thorough assessment of how a GSP is performing and whether modifications are needed.

In June 2023, the MGA Board approved a contract amendment with Montgomery & Associates (M&A) to conduct a Periodic Evaluation of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin GSP. Work on the Periodic Evaluation by M&A commenced in July 2023.

In October 2023, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) released anticipated guidance: A Guide to Annual Reports, Periodic Evaluations, & Plan Amendments.

Discussion

M&A continues to make good progress with the Periodic Evaluation. Georgina King of M&A will provide a presentation on the Periodic Evaluation progress and a recommendation for not needing a Plan Amendment; update on the Periodic Evaluation Schedule; and an update on the evaluation of elevated chloride concentrations in groundwater in the Seascape area.

Recommended Board Action:

1. Receive information and provide direction on the Periodic Evaluation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

Board of Directors March 21, 2024 Page 2 of 2

Submitted by:

Georginia King

Principal Hydrogeologist Montgomery & Associates

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency 2025 Periodic Evaluation & Seascape Seawater Intrusion



Board of Directors March 21, 2024

Periodic Evaluation & Plan Amendment



Tasks Worked On

Address Recommended Corrective Action

Tech Memo almost complete

Complete

MGA Staff helping with this

Describe:

- **GSA** Authorities and Enforcement Actions
- Outreach, Engagement, and Coordination with Other Agencies

New information collected

> **Groundwater Conditions** Relative to SMC

Using WY2023 Annual Report



Status of Projects and **Management Actions**

Will need input from member agency staff

Changes in Understanding of **Basin Setting** No changes



Monitoring Network

Tech Memo review

No amendment needed as there is no new information or different groundwater conditions that change the way the Basin will be managed of 102 3



SMC = sustainable management criteria

What Warrants Plan Amendment?

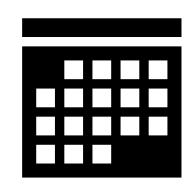
- Changes made to the overall management of the basin
 - Sustainable Management Criteria or sustainability goal No changes
 - addition or removal of management areas No changes

Minor

- wholesale modifications to the representative monitoring sites network **changes**
- Revisions made to Project & Management Actions (PMAs), including addition or removal of PMAs that could affect the projected water budget, sustainable yield, or achievement of Measurable Objectives, or impact the ability to mitigate overdraft Group 1 (Conservation & Demand Management) & Group 2 (PWS and ASR) are on track as incl. in GSP Modifications made to the administrative management of the basin,
- including addition or removal of GSAs, or the addition or removal of a GSP from a basin, etc. No changes



Periodic Evaluation Schedule



- April 30: staff draft completed
- May 1 15: staff review of Periodic Evaluation
- May 16 May 31: prepare Board draft
- June 1: Board Draft available for review
- June 20: Board meeting to provide feedback on Periodic Evaluation
- September Board meeting: Board approves Periodic Evaluation



Seascape Area Seawater Intrusion



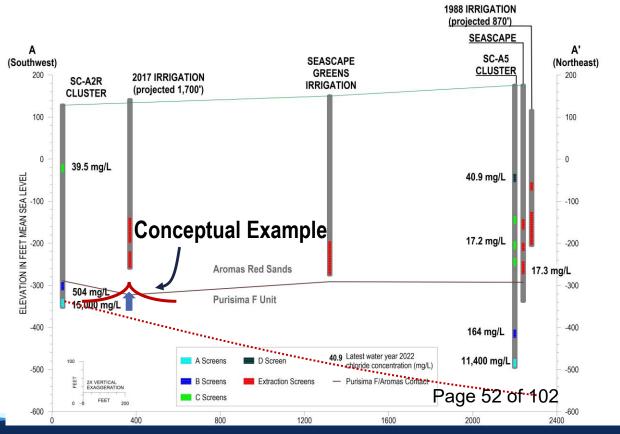
Preliminary Findings

The Seascape area has 2 ag irrigation wells

- 1 landscape irrigation well
- 1 active municipal well

EXPLANATION SC-A6 Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin Seascape Irrigation Wells Country Club Well Monitoring Well(s) Municipal Production Well San Andreas Well SC-A8 SC-A9 SC-A5 Scascape Well Seascape Greens SC-A2 2017 Irrigation

Upward gradient of flow from Purisima F unit to overlying Aromas aquifer likely bringing higher salinity water to the upper part of Purisima F unit

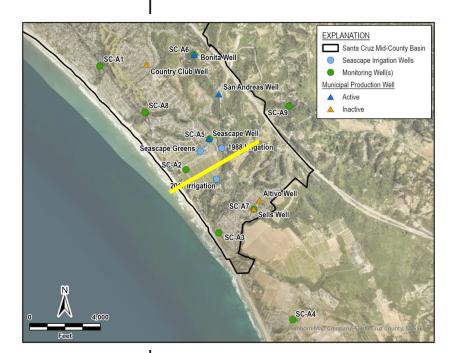


Planning Further Work on Evaluating Increasing Chlorides

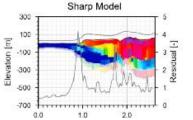
- Better characterize the lateral extent of SWI with geophysics to fill in gaps where AEM could not go
 - Plan geophysical survey
 - Select geophysical consultant
- Sample and test private wells' water quality
- Evaluate if there is a tidal influence on chloride concentrations
- Improve estimates of private well pumping
- Use this information to manage groundwater pumping in areas with seawater intrusion

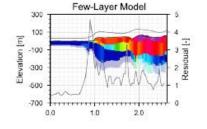


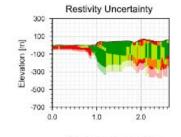


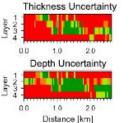


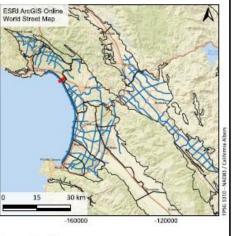
WO10 Line 400100 0-3 km



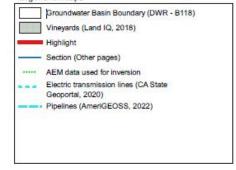




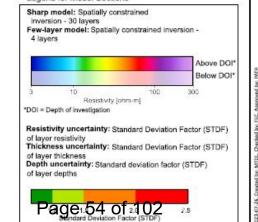








Legend for Model Sections





Airborne EM (AEM) vs Land-Based EM

AEM

- Pros can cover a lot of ground in a short amount of time
- Cons cannot survey over urban areas, highways, transmission lines, railroads, vineyards, structures containing people or livestock

Land-Based EM

- Pros not as limited as AEM in terms of excluded survey areas. May be able to survey around actively pumping wells to map potential upconing
- Cons more time-consuming, cannot survey near buildings or transmission lines, need natural open space



Why Use sTEM Rather than Planned 5-Year AEM Surveys for Current Investigation?

- AEM is used for regional large-scale applications
 - 2017 (MGA-led, DWR grant funded) and 2022 (DWR-led & funded) AEM data are consistent, shows seawater in aquifers is just offshore
 - Flightlines are not exactly the same, which can complicate direct comparison
- Increasing chloride onshore is currently a localized issue to the Seascape area that is better characterized with sTEM
 - sTEM is more repeatable



Discussion



March 21, 2024

MEMO TO THE MGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subject: Agenda Item 5.3

Title: Receive Update and Provide Direction on a Groundwater Well

Registration and Metering Policy for Non-De Minimis Users

Attachment(s):

1. Template of Letter and Survey Sent to Potential Non-De Minimis Users

Recommended Board Action: Receive Update and Provide Direction on a Groundwater Well Registration and Metering Policy for Non-De Minimis Users

Background

The Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) calls for a groundwater extraction metering program for non-de minimis users, defined as those expected to extract more than 5 acre-feet per year, or more than 2 acre-feet per year from wells located in priority areas. Per the GSP, how the metering is to be deployed and monitored is to be defined through the development of a Metering Program.

The Metering Program is expected to consist of four components: 1) a Metering Plan; 2) a Metering Policy; 3) a Meter Installation Project; and 4) ongoing reporting by the applicable non-de minimis groundwater users. The first Metering Program component, the Metering Plan, was received by the MGA Board on December 15, 2022, with the Board providing direction to staff to begin development of a Metering Policy to provide a framework for program implementation.

Staff provided updates to the Board on September 21, 2023 and December 14, 2023 on the proposed Metering Program components and characteristics of the estimated 39 parcels with 33 distinct owners that could be subject to the Metering Program requirements. At the December 14 meeting, the Board ratified the selection of legal counsel with Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) experience to advise MGA on SGMA authorities before further developing the Metering Program.

Discussion

Staff has continued to research the potentially applicable non-de minimis parcels and determined that eight of the parcels did not have groundwater extraction that would require compliance with the Metering Program. Staff reached out directly to the

Board of Directors March 21, 2024 Page 2 of 2

remaining 25 parcel owners (22 letters and 3 phone calls). Each letter was customized to include information known about the property (e.g., a well completion report was found) and included an optional survey (see attached letter template and survey). To date, five survey responses have been received in addition to the 3 phone call communications, leaving information on 17 owners unconfirmed. Of the eight successful communications, two owners confirmed their wells are metered, one owner confirmed there is not a well on the property and is served by Soquel Creek Water District, one owner is interested in receiving financial assistance to install a well, and four owners responded that their groundwater extraction is not above the threshold required to comply with the metering requirement.

Staff has also continued development of a Groundwater Well Registration and Metering Policy for Non-De Minimis Users in consultation with both MGA general counsel and MGA's SGMA legal counsel. The components of the policy include: 1) well registration; 2) metering; 3) reporting; and 4) enforcement and appeal. Staff will provide an overview of these components and seek Board direction on preparing a final Policy for future Board consideration.

Recommended Board Action:

1. Receive update and provide direction on a Groundwater Well Registration and Metering Policy for Non-De Minimis Users

Submitted by:

Rob Swartz

Senior Planner Regional Water Management Foundation On behalf of the MGA Executive Staff

> Ron Duncan, General Manager, Soquel Creek Water District Ralph Bracamonte, District Manager, Central Water District Heidi Luckenbach, Water Director, City of Santa Cruz Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Manager, County of Santa Cruz



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[Outreach Template Letter]

[Date]

Subject: Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin Well Registration and Extraction Metering

Dear:

In 2014, the State of California passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (Act), which requires that local agencies manage their groundwater resources for all groundwater users and allows for state intervention in cases where local agencies do not demonstrate sustainable groundwater management. In 2016, the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) formed to ensure local control of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin (Basin).

MGA submitted its Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)¹ to the State in January 2020, and the State approved the GSP in June 2021. The GSP identifies existing and proposed projects and management actions that will help the Basin achieve sustainability by 2040. The GSP also identifies where important information is unknown that can help improve continued management of the Basin.

As part of filling critical information gaps on groundwater usage, the MGA is requiring the registration of wells and the installation of meters along with annual reporting of groundwater usage² by users that pump more than 2 acre-feet per year (about 650,000 gallons) in priority management zones or pump more than 5 acre-feet per year (about 1.6 million gallons) elsewhere in the Basin. The priority management zones include along the coastline where the Basin is experiencing seawater intrusion and within 1,000 feet of streams that are in direct connection with groundwater (see enclosed figure). You are being contacted as a property owner or tenant that may fall under these criteria in the Basin.

At its March 21, 2024 meeting, the MGA Board of Directors is expected to consider adopting a policy to officially begin the metering program. The tentative proposed date for registering wells is by September 30, 2024, and the proposed date for installing meters is by March 31, 2025.

¹ The GSP is available on-line at <u>www.midcountygroundwater.org</u>

² This is authorized by California Water Code Sections 10725.6 and 10725.8



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MGA is developing a financial assistance program to help offset some of the expense of installing a meter. Your response to the enclosed questionnaire will help us determine if your well falls under the registration and metering requirements and will help us design a program that covers as much assistance as possible for those being required to install a meter. The questionnaire is also available on our website at https://www.midcountygroundwater.org or it can be accessed by scanning this code:



MGA's analysis of County records indicates that your parcel [insert APN(s)] is within the [Coastal/Streams] priority management zone [or uses more than 5 acre-feet per year based on parcel size and land use]. Land use information indicates that [fill in what we know about parcel]. As an important first step in determining whether the well registration, metering, and groundwater use reporting are applicable to you, we are seeking your help in confirming if our information about this [these] parcel[s] is correct by completing the survey.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this important effort. If you have any questions, please contact Rob Swartz at 831-662-2051 or at rswartz@cfscc.org. Please forward this information to any land managers or operators associated with the property that may be affected.

Sincerely,

Rob Swartz

Senior Planner

Regional Water Management Foundation

On Behalf of MGA

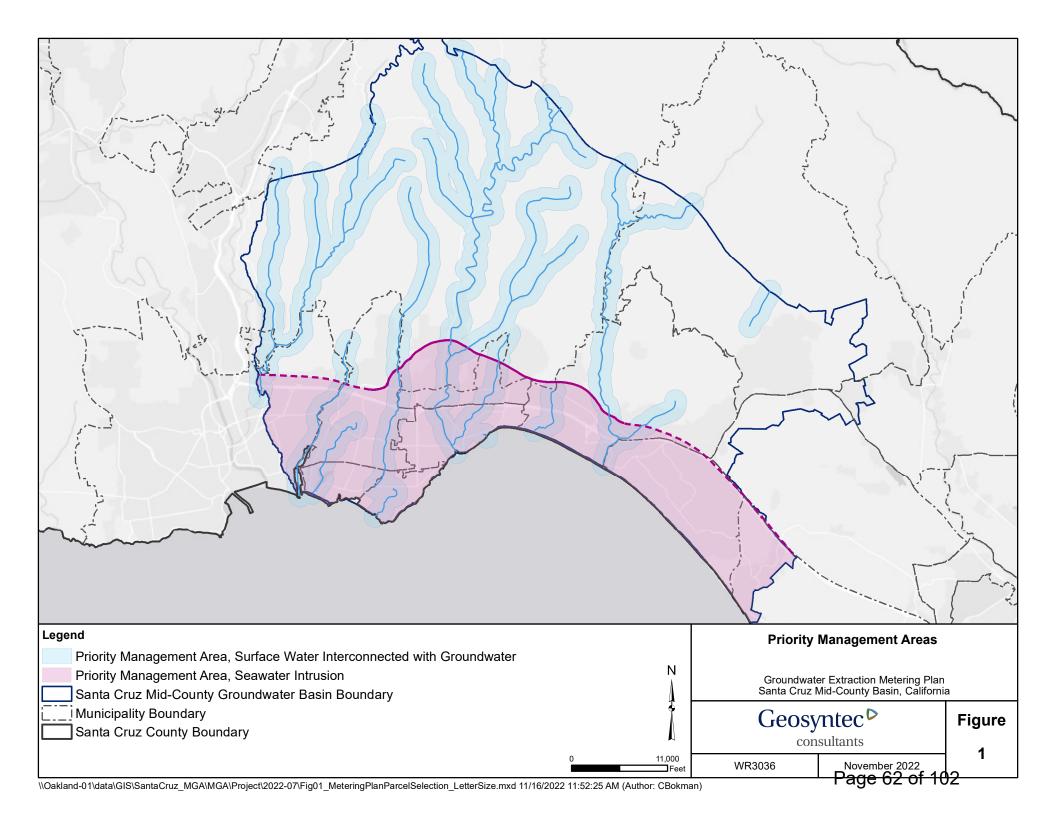
Sierra Ryan

Jeen Ryan

Water Resources Manager

County of Santa Cruz Environmental Health

Health Services Agency





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Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) Private Groundwater Well Survey

Thank you for participating in our survey! The information you provide will greatly enhance our ability to manage our precious groundwater for today and for future generations.

1.	Name of person completing form			
2.	Person completing form is (check one):Property Owner,Property Tenant,Other*			
	*please indicate relationship to property (e.g., Property Manager, Maintenance Supervisor, etc.) in the comments section below			
3.	Mailing address for future correspondence			
4.	Assessor Parcel Number or address where well is located			
	Contact phone number Contact email			
	My property is (check one):			
	Served by a well on the property			
	Served by more than one well			
	Served by a well from a neighboring property*			
	Not served by a well			
	*if served from another property, please provide an address or parcel number in the comments section below			
8.	I do not believe that the registration and metering requirement applies to me because (check at that apply):			
	The property is not served by a well			
	The well is <u>not</u> located within 1,000 feet of a stream or within the seawater intrusion area and uses less than 5 acre-feet of water per year			
	The well is for domestic purposes only and uses less than 2 acre-feet of water (about 650,000 gallons) per year			



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9. If known, please provide the following information about your well:	
Depth of the well	
Approximate diameter of the well casing	
Year of construction	
Approximate flow rate of the well when pumping	
Approximate annual volume of groundwater pumped	
10. Does the well already have a flow meter installed?	
Yes	
No	
11. Are you interested in receiving financial assistance to install a flowmeter on the well?	
Yes	
No	
12. Comments	

March 21, 2024

MEMO TO THE MGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subject: Agenda Item 5.4

Title: Review Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and Provide Direction on

Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25

Attachment(s):

1. Table 1. Budget Summary

2. Table 2. Operating Expenses

Recommended Board Action: Provide direction to guide the completion of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget.

The attached Tables 1 and 2 present the projected totals for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY 23/24) and the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (FY 24/25). The FY 23/24 projected operating expenses are based upon the actual expenses incurred July 1 – January 31 and the projected expenses to June 30.

The following narrative summarizes the MGA's beginning cash reserves, operating revenue, operating expenses, and ending reserves.

BEGINNING RESERVES

The projected beginning cash reserves for the MGA for FY 24/25 totals \$1,870,131. The beginning reserves amount is the ending reserves amount from the prior year plus any surplus of revenue collected from the prior year over the actual expenses incurred.

OPERATING REVENUE

Operating revenue consists of grant awards and Member Agency contributions. Operating revenue for FY 24/25 is projected to be \$442,000.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Implementation Grant (SGMI Grant) Total: \$7,600,000; Years: 2022 – 2025

Awarded in 2022, this Department of Water Resources (DWR) grant partially funds planning activities and the implementation of selected projects and management actions identified in the GSP. The grant includes five (5) separate component projects (described further below in this memo). Components 1-4 are led by the Member Agencies; eligible project costs will be reimbursed by the grant. The lead Member

Board of Directors March 21, 2024 Page 2 of 9

Agencies are funding their respective Component(s) as work proceeds (e.g., consultant contracts) and will be reimbursed in arrears as the MGA is reimbursed by DWR via quarterly grant submittals.

Member Agency Contributions — Revenue collected from Member Agencies funds operating expenses. The annual contributions amount is based upon projected operating expenses for the fiscal year, anticipated revenue from grants, and the amount in reserves. In FY 24/25, there is no proposed contribution from Member Agencies because the amount of anticipated revenue from the grant reimbursements and the amount in reserves do not necessitate a contribution this year.

Member Agency Contributions - SGMI Grant Administration

Revenue for SGMI Grant administration (which is not reimbursed by the grant) will be contributed via annual invoices to Soquel Creek Water District and the City of Santa Cruz for the grant administration costs related to their respective SGMI Grant Components.

OPERATING EXPENSES

The operating expenses are presented in the following budget categories:

- Administration
- Legal Support
- Management and Coordination
- Monitoring: Network Expansion, Data Collection, Analysis and Management
- Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Reporting
- Outreach and Education

Total operating expenses are projected to be \$949,000 in FY 24/25.

Budget Category: Administration

This budget category includes costs related to the administration of the MGA, including administrative staff support, contracts management, finance staff support and related expenses, insurance, organizational memberships and conferences, as well as miscellaneous supplies and materials.

FY 23/24: The approved budget is \$140,000.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget is \$146,500.

Budget Category: Legal Support

As in prior years, the County of Santa Cruz will provide general legal counsel. In 2023, the MGA selected the firm Best Best & Krieger, LLP (BBK) to provide legal counsel, as needed, on matters pertaining to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

FY 23/24: The approved budget is \$50,000. At the December 2023 meeting the Board approved an increase of \$30,000 to the initial budget amount of \$20,000.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget is \$40,000.

Budget Category: Management and Coordination

This category includes three categories:

- Technical work in support of SGMA implementation
- Planning Activities and Implementation Coordination
- SGMI Grant Administration

FY 23/24: The approved budget for this category is \$267,000,

FY 24/25: The proposed budget is \$260,000.

Technical Work: SGMA Support

FY 23/24: Montgomery & Associates (M&A) will conduct various tasks to support and inform SGMA implementation and agency planning, including tracking SGMA Program Developments, consultation and coordination with DWR.

FY 23/24: The approved budget is \$30,000.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget is \$16,400. The amount for this task is reduced from prior years because several tasks more directly related to Basin monitoring were shifted to the Monitoring Budget Category; the budget for those specific tasks is increased in FY 24/25.

Planning Activities & Implementation Coordination

RWMF is supporting GSP Implementation Coordination and Planning Activities. Tasks in this category include: tracking the progress of the Project and Management Actions (PMAs) identified in the GSP; meeting coordination and facilitation; assisting with the coordination of GSP implementation activities outlined in Chapter 5 of the GSP; assisting in identifying grant opportunities; and considering long-term funding

Board of Directors March 21, 2024 Page 4 of 9

approaches. Consultant support will include assessing authorities and funding approaches for long-term operation of the MGA.

FY 23/24: The approved budget is \$157,000.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget is \$163,000.

SGMI Grant Administration

RWMF is supporting the SGMI Grant administration.

FY 23/24: The approved budget for this work is \$80,000.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget for this work is \$80,000.

<u>Budget Category: Monitoring Network, Data Collection, Analysis & Management</u>

FY 23/24: The approved budget for this work is \$363,240.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget for this work is \$331,000.

This category is broken down into the following tasks:

Monitoring Network

FY 23/24: Approximately \$93,000 is budgeted for the monitoring network principally to fund pre-construction and construction activities to add one shallow groundwater monitoring well (the "Olive Springs") to fill a data gap identified in the GSP. This work is completed.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget is \$29,000 to support ongoing monitoring activities such as consultant technical support and monitoring equipment (as needed).

Monitoring: Streamflow

The GSP's Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) for the depletion of interconnected surface water is based on the shallow well and associated streamflow data available in the Basin. Monitoring is needed to evaluate the associated SMC over time.

FY 23/24: \$32,500 is budgeted for Trout Unlimited to conduct Basin streamflow monitoring. Funding for Basin monitoring activities is included in the SGMI Grant.

FY 24/25: \$34,00 is proposed for Trout Unlimited to continue this work.

Monitoring: Seawater Intrusion

In 2017, the MGA commissioned offshore airborne electromagnetic (AEM) surveys to inform an assessment of the status of seawater intrusion in the upper aquifers just offshore the coast of the Basin. In 2022, DWR conducted AEM surveys of near-shore and inland portions of Santa Cruz County. The MGA, with support from M&A, is assessing the need to replicate the AEM surveys or alternatively conduct geophysical surveys and/or inland electromagnetic surveys to assess seawater intrusion.

FY 23/24: \$150,000 is budgeted to conduct an offshore AEM survey and the postsurvey analyses. AEM surveys will not be conducted this year as the electromagnetic and other approaches to assess seawater intrusion are further assessed.

FY 24/25: \$183,000 is proposed to conduct local scale geophysical surveys to evaluate seawater intrusion. Funding for the electromagnetic surveys is included in the SGMI Grant.

Data Coordination & Data Management System (DMS)

The MGA collaborated with the neighboring Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency and the member agencies of both GSAs (Partner Agencies) to develop a DMS. The MGA entered into a funding agreement with the County of Santa Cruz for its proportional share of the consultant (KISTERS) costs to develop and maintain the DMS.

FY 23/24: The approved budget is \$22,868 for KISTER'S annual DMS hosting fee, user licenses, and software as well as DMS-support from M&A.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget is \$30,000.

Groundwater Extraction Metering Program

The MGA is developing a groundwater metering program that applies to two categories of users: (1) all non-de minimis pumping operations expected to extract more than 5 acre-feet per year, and (2) all non-de minimis pumping operations expected to extract more than 2 acre-feet per year that may impact seawater intrusion or an interconnected stream where groundwater dependent ecosystems are identified in the GSP.

FY 23/24: The approved budget is \$65,000. The program has taken longer to develop than anticipated to implement and only \$10,000 is projected to be expended this year.

FY 24/25: \$55,000 is proposed to continue this work. Funding for this work was included in the SGMI Grant.

Budget Category: GSP Reporting

Groundwater Sustainability Plan Annual Report and Data Reporting

Annual reporting to DWR by April 1st on the GSP implementation is a requirement under SGMA. M&A will prepare the Annual Report and will compile, format and submit the monitoring data to the SMGA portal.

FY 23/24: The budget to develop the GSP Annual Report Water Year 2023 is estimated at \$70,816. The projected expenses are \$75,000.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget to develop the GSP Annual Report Water Year 2024 is \$81,024. The budget to upload groundwater level data to SGMA portal semi-annual is \$8,544. The combined proposed budget is \$89,500.

GSP Periodic Evaluation (5-Year): The GSP Periodic Evaluation is due to DWR before January 30, 2025.

FY 23/24: The approved budget for FY 23/24 is \$200,000. Work is underway, led by M&A. The projected expenditure this year is \$127,000. Funding for this work was included in the SGMI Grant.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget to complete the GSP Periodic Evaluation is estimated at \$52,000.

Budget Category: Outreach & Education

FY 23/24: The approved budget for outreach is \$20,000.

FY 24/25: The proposed budget of \$30,000 supports ongoing community outreach and engagement on GSP implementation efforts, including the non-de minimis groundwater metering program and the GSP Periodic Evaluation.

MEMBER AGENCY LEAD PROJECT & MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

SGMI Grant Components

As noted above, the MGA's grant award of \$7.6 million from DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Management Implementation (SGMI) Round 1 will fund implementation activities through June 2025. The SGMI Grant includes funding the GSP annual report and 5-Year update. Component 5 (SGM Evaluation and Planning) includes activities led by the MGA and the County. The MGA and County will contract directly with consultants/contractors on the respective tasks and fund the

work as it proceeds. The County will invoice the MGA quarterly as work proceeds. The MGA will request reimbursement, in arrears, from DWR as part of the quarterly grant reporting process. Due to the time-lag (6 to 12-months) between work occurring and DWR reimbursement, the MGA needs sufficient funds to pay for Component 5 services as they are incurred. On this grant, DWR will withhold 10% retention (\$760,000), once the total grant expenditures reach 90% of the award. Based upon activity projections, that will not occur in FY 23/24 but will require adequate MGA reserves into FY 25/26.

Four of the Components will be led by Member Agencies (Soquel Creek Water District, City of Santa Cruz, County of Santa Cruz); they will lead the contracting and management of their respective components. The MGA has entered into subgrantee agreements with the respective Member Agencies. The Member Agencies will be reimbursed in arrears via the MGA for eligible expenses submitted to and approved by DWR as part of the quarterly grant reporting process. The MGA will reimburse the Member Agencies as soon as the grant funds from DWR are received.

	Lead	Grant
Component Title	Agency	Amount
Cunnison Lane Groundwater Well	SqCWD	\$1,675,000
	City of Santa	
Aquifer Storage and Recovery, Beltz Well 10	Cruz	\$1,650,000
Park Avenue Transmission Main/Bottleneck Improvements	SqCWD	\$800,000
	SqCWD & City of	
Technical Development of Group 1 and 2 Projects	Santa Cruz	\$1,900,000
Sustainable Groundwater Management Evaluation and		
Planning	MGA & County	\$1,575,000
Total	\$7,600,000	

ENDING RESERVES

General Reserves

Prudent financial management requires that the agency carry a general reserve in order to manage cash flow and mitigate the risk of expense overruns in case actual expenses are greater than anticipated in the budget. The MGA is currently maintaining higher general reserves due to the potential for delays in grant reimbursements related to factors (e.g., state budget process) beyond the control of the MGA.

The estimated projected ending general reserves for FY 23/24 are \$1,795,131 and, as proposed, the ending general reserves for FY 24/25 are \$1,363,131.

Contingency Fund

Board of Directors March 21, 2024 Page 8 of 9

The contingency fund is set aside to cover unexpected costs. As proposed for FY 24/25, the contingency is \$94,900. This is 10% of total operating expenses.

5-Year GSP Evaluation (2025) Reserve

This reserve, initiated in FY 21/22 prior to the award of the SGMI Grant, was intended to spread out the financial contributions of the Member Agencies to be used to fund the initial Periodic (5-Year) Evaluation (also referred to as the 5-Year Update) over four years from FY 21/22 through FY 24/25. The FY 21/22 contribution to this reserve was \$75,000. The approach was intended to reduce periodic spikes in Member Agencies' contributions as activity and expenses increase during the 5-Year Update. With work on the GSP Periodic Evaluation now underway, staff recommends the FY 21/22 contribution of \$75,000 be incorporated in Beginning Reserves and drawn down in FY 24/25.

Member Agency Contribution

In prior years, the proposed budget has included member agency contributions as a component of operating revenue. Prior years' member agency contributions and grant funding has built up sufficient cash reserves such that there is no proposed contribution from the Member Agencies for FY 24/25. The General Reserve is sufficient to cover the proposed Operating Expenses, potential delays (3 – 6 months) in grant reimbursement and the grant retention withhold. At the Board meeting on March 21, 2024, the Board will also separately consider establishment of a reserve policy to provide future guidance on the acceptable threshold and use of reserves.

Recommended Board Action:

1. Provide direction to guide the preparation of the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

Submitted by:

Tim Carson

Program Director Regional Water Management Foundation

Leslie Strohm

Treasurer Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency

On behalf of the MGA Executive Staff

Ron Duncan, General Manager, Soquel Creek Water District Ralph Bracamonte, District Manager, Central Water District Board of Directors March 21, 2024 Page 9 of 9

> Heidi Luckenbach, Water Director, City of Santa Cruz Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Manager, County of Santa Cruz

SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY BUDGET SUMMARY

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN RESERVES FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 AND FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 BUDGET

	2022/23 ACTUALS	2023/24 BUDGET	2023/24 PROJECTED TOTALS	2024/25 PROPOSED BUDGET	INCREASE DECREASE) OVER IOR YEAR BUDGET	% CHANGE OVER PRIOR YEAR BUDGET
Beginning Reserves						
Beginning Cash Reserves	\$ 1,814,953	\$ 1,585,720	\$ 1,935,630	\$ 1,795,131	\$ 209,411	13%
Drawdown of 5-Year GSP Evaluation (2025) Reserve				\$ 75,000		
Total Beginning Reserves	\$ 1,814,953	\$ 1,585,720	\$ 1,935,630	\$ 1,870,131	\$ 209,411	13%
Operating Revenue						
Agency Contributions	\$ 300,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ (100,000)	-100%
Agency Contributions - SGMI Grant Administration	\$ -	\$ 59,250	\$ 60,000	\$ 42,000	\$ (17,250)	-29%
Grant Funds (Received)						
DWR Planning (SGWP) (2018 - 2023)	\$ 466,190	\$ 263,806	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (263,806)	-100%
DWR Planning (SGWP) (2018 - 2023) Retention Release		\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000	\$ -	\$ (200,000)	-100%
DWR SGM Implementation (SGMI) (2022 - 2025) ¹	\$ 42,767	\$ 238,684	\$250,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 161,316	-
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 808,956	\$ 861,740	\$ 610,001	\$ 442,000	\$ (419,740)	-49%
Operating Expense						
Administration	\$ 128,917	\$ 140,000	\$ 140,000	\$ 146,500	\$ 6,500	5%
Legal	\$ 4,063	\$ 50,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 40,000	\$ (10,000)	-20%
Management & Coordination	\$ 115,609	\$ 267,000	\$ 242,000	\$ 260,000	\$ (7,000)	-3%
Monitoring	\$ 435,383	\$ 363,240	\$ 131,500	\$ 331,000	\$ (32,240)	-9%
GSP Reporting						
GSP Annual Report & Related Data Reporting	\$ 71,236	\$ 70,816	\$ 75,000	\$ 89,500	\$ 18,684	26%
GSP 5-Year Update	\$ 3,045	\$ 200,000	\$ 127,000	\$ 52,000	\$ (148,000)	100%
Outreach & Education	\$ 5,027	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 10,000	50%
Total Operating Expense	\$ 763,279	\$ 1,111,056	\$ 750,500	\$ 949,000	\$ 314,745	28%
Ending Reserves						
Contingency	81,098	112,572	112,572	94,900	\$ (17,672)	-16%
5-Year GSP Evaluation (2025) Reserve	75,000	75,000	75,000	-	\$ (75,000)	-100%
General Reserve	 1,779,533	1,148,832	1,607,559	1,268,231	119,399	10%
Total Ending Reserves	\$ 1,935,630	\$ 1,336,404	\$ 1,795,131	\$ 1,363,131	\$ 26,727	2%
Member Agency Lead Project & Management Activities						
SGM Implementation (SGMI) Grant Components	\$ 329,000	\$ -	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 3,000,000		

Notes:

^{1.} Operating Revenue on Grant Funds for the DWR Implementation (Anticipated 2022 - 2025) only includes MGA led activities, not Member Agency led activities

Table 2. OPERATING EXPENSES

SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY OPERATING EXPENSES FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 AND FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 BUDGET

		2022/23 ACTUALS	2023/24 BUDGET	PI	2023/24 ROJECTED TOTALS		2024/25 ROPOSED BUDGET	(C O	NCREASE DECREASE) VER PRIOR AR BUDGET	% CHANGE OVER PRIOR YEAR BUDGET	Comments
Operating Expense											
Administration	\$	128,917	\$ 140,000	\$	140,000	\$	146,500	\$	6,500	5%	
Legal	\$	4,063	\$ 50,000	\$	15,000	\$	40,000	\$	(10,000)	-20%	•
Management & Coordination											•
Technical Work: SGMA Support	\$	21,530	\$ 30,000	\$	40,000	\$	16,400	\$	(13,600)		
Planning Activities & Implementation Coordination	\$	63,066	\$ 157,000	\$	142,000	\$	163,600	\$	6,600		FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant
SGMI Grant Administration	<u>\$</u>	31,012	\$ 80,000	\$	60,000	\$	80,000	\$	-		FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant (~20%)
	subtotal \$	115,609	\$ 267,000	\$	242,000	\$	260,000	\$	(7,000)	-3%	
Monitoring: Basin Network, Data Collection, Analysis & Manag	ement										
Monitoring Network	\$	380,334	\$ 92,872	\$	73,500	\$	29,000	\$	(63,872)		FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant
Monitoring: Streamflow	\$	9,082	32,500		24,000		34,000		1,500		FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant
Monitoring:-Seawater Intrusion	\$	-	\$ 150,000		6,000		183,000		33,000		FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant
Data Coordination & Data Management System	\$	11,645	\$ 22,868	\$	18,000	\$	30,000	\$	7,132		FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant
Groundwater Extraction Metering Program	_\$	34,321	 65,000		10,000	_	55,000		(10,000)		FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant
	subtotal \$	435,383	\$ 363,240	\$	131,500	\$	331,000	\$	(32,240)	-9%	
GSP Reporting											
GSP Annual Report & Related Data Reporting	\$	71,236	\$ 70,816	\$	75,000	\$	89,500	\$	18,684		FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant
GSP Periodic Evaluation (5-Year) Groundwater Modeling	\$	3,045	\$ -	\$	-	\$	-		-		
GSP Periodic Evaluation (5-Year)	\$	-	\$ 200,000	\$	127,000	\$	52,000	\$	(148,000)		FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant
	subtotal \$	74,281	\$ 270,816	\$	202,000	\$	141,500	\$	(129,316)	-48%	
Outreach & Education	\$	5,027	\$ 20,000	\$	20,000	\$	30,000	\$	10,000	50%	FY 23/24 & 24/25 Partial funding SGMI Grant
Total Operating Expense	\$	763,279	\$ 1,111,056	\$	750,500	\$	949,000	\$	(162,056)	-15%	•
Member Agency Lead Project & Management Activities											
SGM Implementation (SGMI) Grant Components		329,000			3,500,000		3,000,000				Estimated amounts

March 21, 2024

MEMO TO THE MGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subject: Agenda Item 5.5

Title: Consider Establishing a Reserve Policy

Attachment(s):

1. Proposed Reserve Policy

Recommended Board Action: Approve the proposed Reserve Policy or provide direction to staff.

Member agency contributions have built up sufficient cash reserves over the last few years and it is recommended that a Reserve Policy be established to provide guidance on the acceptable threshold and use of reserves. Once guidance on the use of reserves is confirmed, investment instruments whose maturities align with reserve objectives can be considered under a Board-adopted Investment Policy, which will be brought to the Board for consideration in June.

Recommended Board Action:

1. By MOTION, approve the proposed Reserve Policy or provide direction to staff.

Submitted by:

Leslie Strohm

Treasurer

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency

On behalf of the MGA Executive Staff

Ron Duncan, General Manager, Soquel Creek Water District Ralph Bracamonte, District Manager, Central Water District Heidi Luckenbach, Water Director, City of Santa Cruz Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Manager, County of Santa Cruz



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SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY RESERVE POLICY

Reserves are essential to ensuring fiscal responsibility and emergency preparedness in the event unidentified risks result in revenue shortfalls or unanticipated expenditures. The Government Finance Officers Association recommends adopting a policy governing the amount of resources to be held in reserve and conditions under which those reserves can be used. This reserve policy is established to provide general guidelines for fiscally responsible cash management. The policy is not intended to set strict limits that must be adhered to without consideration of other factors. Instead, these guidelines are intended to serve as a decision-making tool in planning for and evaluating activities or transactions that could have a significant impact on the level of cash reserves.

General Reserve

Purpose: To ensure sufficient funding is available to meet annual operating costs. General Reserves will be managed to allow the Agency to fund costs consistent with both the annual budget and long-term financial planning for periodic expenditures such as updates to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan. Adequate reserves along with sound financial policies provide financial flexibility in the event of unanticipated expenditures or revenue fluctuations.

Funding Sources and Levels: General Reserves will be funded through surplus unrestricted gains in net position. The Board of Directors have the authority to direct that a specific source of revenue be set aside to fund General Reserves, as appropriate. Target reserve levels will be calculated and reaffirmed annually during the budget process to maintain General Reserves at a minimum of 50% of annual expenditures, excluding capital investment, grant or debt funded activities.

Reserve Accounting: General Reserves will be recorded in the financial records as a Board designated operating reserve. The Reserve Fund will be funded in cash or cash equivalent funds which will be commingled with the general cash and investment accounts of the Agency. All investment accounts will be in accordance with the Agency's Investment Policy which is reviewed annually.

Use of Funds: The use of General Reserve funds will be for unanticipated operating costs, revenue shortfalls, and to cover cash flow in the event of delays in the timing of revenue



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collection from grants receivable or other accounts receivable. Staff will identify the need to access the reserves and will submit written requests to the Board at a public meeting. Reserve Fund requests will include the amount of funds needed, confirmation that the use is consistent with the purpose of the reserve funds as described in this Policy, and the reason. The funds can only be used with specific Board approval. Funds in excess of the target reserve level may be used to lessen year-to-year fluctuations in Member Agency revenue contributions and/or offset future Member Agency contributions as determined by the Board.

March 21, 2024

MEMO TO THE MGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subject: Agenda Item 5.6

Title: Conduct Annual Election of Officers

Recommended Board Action: Nominate and, if necessary, call for a vote for the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency.

The elected officers of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency Board of Directors are the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary, and are elected annually at the first meeting of the calendar year. Directors may make nominations for each of the elected offices. If more than two Directors are nominated for any office, voting occurs until a nominee receives a majority of the votes. No other Board action is required. Board Officers may succeed themselves and serve any number of consecutive or nonconsecutive terms.

Any change in officers will become effective at the conclusion of the March 21, 2024 Board meeting.

Recommended Board Action:

1. Nominate and, if necessary, call for a vote for the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency.

Submitted by:

Tim Carson

Program Director Regional Water Management Foundation March 21, 2024

MEMO TO THE MGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subject: Agenda Item 6.1

Title: Treasurer's Report

Attachments:

1. Treasurer's Report for the Period Ending February 29, 2024

Attached is the Treasurer's Report for December 2023 through February 2024. These reports contain three sections:

- Statement of Changes in Revenues, Expenses and Net Position
 - o This interim financial statement provides information on the revenue that has been invoiced to the member agencies and the expenses that have been recorded as of the period ending date.
- Statement of Net Position
 - O This interim financial statement details the cash balance at Wells Fargo Bank, the membership revenue still owed through accounts receivable, if any, prepaid expenses such as insurance, and the resulting net income as reported on the Statement of Changes in Revenues, Expenses and Net Position.
- Warrants
 - The list of warrants reflects all payments made by the MGA, either by check or electronic means, for the period covered by the Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer's Report will be provided at each board meeting according to statutory requirement and to promote transparency of the agency's financial transactions.

Recommended Board Action:

1. Informational, no action necessary.

Submitted by: Leslie Strohm

Treasurer

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency

Treasurer's Report

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency For the period ended February 29, 2024



Prepared by Leslie Strohm, Treasurer

Prepared on

March 6, 2024

Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position

December 2023 - February 2024

	Total
INCOME	
Total Income	
GROSS PROFIT	0.00
EXPENSES	
5100 Groundwater Management Services	59,233.22
5110 Grndwtr Mgmt - Groundwater Monitoring	11,782.91
5300 Administrative Personnel Services	19,802.89
5315 Office Services	144.00
5340 Computer Services	259.00
5345 Professional Organizations	1,613.06
5415 Outreach Services	4,996.92
5510 GSP Consulting Services	19,471.50
5515 Audit & Accounting Services	6,180.00
5520 Legal Services	2,471.50
5600 Pass-through Grant Expenses	584,307.76
Total Expenses	710,262.76
NET OPERATING INCOME	-710,262.76
OTHER INCOME	
4401 Grant Revenue - DWR SGMI Grant	753,813.08
Total Other Income	753,813.08
NET OTHER INCOME	753,813.08
NET INCOME	\$43,550.32

Statement of Net Position

As of February 29, 2024

	Total
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1100 Wells Fargo Business Checking	1,836,925.52
Total Bank Accounts	1,836,925.52
Accounts Receivable	
1220 Accounts Receivable - Grants	514,926.04
Total Accounts Receivable	514,926.04
Other Current Assets	
1400 Prepaid Expenses	1,894.32
Total Other Current Assets	1,894.32
Total Current Assets	2,353,745.88
TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,353,745.88
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2100 Accounts Payable	684.00
2110 Accounts Payable - Grants	408,359.26
Total Accounts Payable	409,043.26
Total Current Liabilities	409,043.26
Total Liabilities	409,043.26
Equity	
3100 Retained Earnings	1,952,182.19
Net Income	-7,479.57
Total Equity	1,944,702.62
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$2,353,745.88

Warrants

December 2023 - February 2024

Date	Transaction Type	Num	Name	Memo/Description	Clr	Amount
Bill Payment (Cl	neck)					
			Errol L Montgomery &	2023 GSP annual report; SMGA technical support, GSP 5-year evaluation, Olive		
02/21/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10361	Associates Inc	Springs shallow well		-32,135.00
						-32,135.00
			County of Conto Cruz (County			
02/21/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10362	County of Santa Cruz (County Counsel)			-1,787.50
						-1,787.50
02/21/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10363	Trout Unlimited Inc	Stream and groundwater monitoring		-6,122.91
	,			, and the second		-6,122.91
			Soquel Creek Water District	Quickbooks, Mailchimp, 2022-		
02/21/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10364	(2)	23 audit		-1,296.50
						-1,296.50
			Regional Water Management			
02/21/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10365	Foundation	SGMI Grant administration		-13,902.47
						-13,902.47

Date	Transaction Type	Num	Name	Memo/Description	Clr	Amount
02/21/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10366	County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency	Agency administration, GSP implementation coordination, RWMF planning activities & implementation, data coordination		-63,074.06 -63,074.06
01/23/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10359	City of Santa Cruz Water Dept	DWR SGMI Grant invoice #5		-111,102.75 -111,102.75
01/23/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10360	Soquel Creek Water District (2)	DWR SGMI grant invoice #5	R	-64,845.75 -64,845.75
01/12/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10356	Errol L Montgomery & Associates Inc	2023 GSP annual report, SGMA technical support, data upload to SGMA, GSP 5-year evaluation, Olive Springs shallow well	R	-37,719.00 -37,719.00
01/12/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10357	ACWA	2024 membership dues	R	-3,226.13 -3,226.13

Date	Transaction Type	Num	Name	Memo/Description	Clr	Amount
01/12/2024	Bill Payment (Check)	10358	Soquel Creek Water District (2)	Quickbooks, Mailchimp, Zoom, 2022-23 audit	R	-5,195.50 -5,195.50
12/13/2023	Bill Payment (Check)	10351	County of Santa Cruz (County Counsel)		R	-2,193.75 -2,193.75
12/13/2023	Bill Payment (Check)	10352	County of Santa Cruz Dept of Community Development and Infrastructure	Olive Springs encroachment permit	R	-1,435.00 -1,435.00
12/13/2023	Bill Payment (Check)	10353	County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency	Agency administration, GSP implementation coordination, RWMF planning activities and implementation	R	-56,213.85 -56,213.85
12/13/2023	Bill Payment (Check)	10354	Soquel Creek Water District (2)	Quickbooks, Mailchimp, web hosting	R	-616.50 -616.50

Date	Transaction Type	Num	Name	Memo/Description	Clr	Amount
12/13/2023	Bill Payment (Check)	10355	County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency	Monitoring well construction permit	R	-454.00
						-454.00
Expense						
01/05/2024	Expense	US003Yej3l	Google - Online Payments	G Suite Subscription	R	-72.00
				Google Payment - G Suit		72.00
12/05/2023	Expense	US003Xtrdi	Google - Online Payments	G Suite Subscription	R	-72.00
				Google Payment - G Suit		72.00

Agenda Item 6.2.1

Soquel Creek and Aptos Creek Streamflow Monitoring Report WY2023



FEBRUARY 9, 2024

Prepared By: Trout Unlimited

Mia van Docto, Krysia Skorko, Troy Cameron and Anthony Modena



1. Introduction

In 2022, Trout Unlimited (TU) was awarded a 3-year contract from the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) to perform dry season (May through October) streamflow and year-round groundwater monitoring in the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin (Basin). The monitoring will inform evaluations of sustainable groundwater management as part of the MGA's 2019 Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The MGA GSP seeks to avoid undesirable results for five sustainability indicators: groundwater level declines, groundwater storage reductions, interconnected surface water depletion, seawater intrusion, and water quality degradation. The TU monitoring effort will primarily help assess interconnected surface water depletion while contributing to a larger data collection effort by MGA in assessing long-term groundwater levels. In WY2023, TU monitored stream conditions at 6 priority locations in the Basin. This report provides the results of the first year of streamflow monitoring. Funding for this project has been provided in part from the Budget Act of 2021 and through an agreement with the State Department of Water Resources.



2. Study Area

Watershed Characteristics

The Soquel Creek and Aptos Creek watersheds are coastal drainages dominated by mixed conifer forests, comprised mainly of coastal redwood, tan oak, madrone and Douglas fir (RCDSCC 2019). Most of the study area is within unincorporated Santa Cruz County. Soquel Creek drains approximately 42 sq. miles, and Aptos Creek drains approximately 25 sq miles. Land use in Soquel Creek includes rural residential development, parks and recreation, mining, and timber harvesting. Roughly 25% of the headwaters of the Soquel Creek Watershed are State-protected lands (RCDSCC 2019). Logging has been conducted in the middle and upper watershed since the mid-nineteenth century (RCDSCC 2003). Land use in the Aptos Creek Watershed includes more than 50% forested and state park lands; other land uses include urban and rural residential. There is both historical and modern-day logging on these lands (SCC Environmental Health Dept). Both creeks provide important coho salmon and steelhead trout habitat (RCDSCC 2019).

Rainfall

The Soquel Creek and Aptos Creek watersheds have a Mediterranean climate like most of coastal California, with warm dry summers and cool wet winters. The Parameter-elevation Regression on Independent Slopes Model (PRISM), a precipitation model developed at Oregon State University, indicates that average precipitation throughout the watershed is extremely variable, with the lower portion receiving an average

30 to 40 inches of rainfall annually, and rainfall averages of up to 60 inches in the higher elevation portions of the watersheds. Figure 1 shows rainfall data collected beginning in 1951 from National Climate Data Center (NCDC) station in nearby Santa Cruz, CA (NCDC USC00047916, hereafter, Santa Cruz station). The Santa Cruz station is located in the eastern portion of the city of Santa Cruz near the border with the town of Soquel, at an approximate elevation of 100 feet. The data show that the long-term annual average rainfall here is 29.8 inches. Rainfall in WY2023 was 46.1 inches, well above the long-term average.

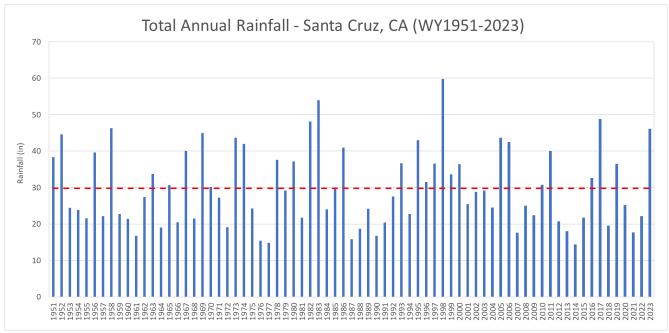


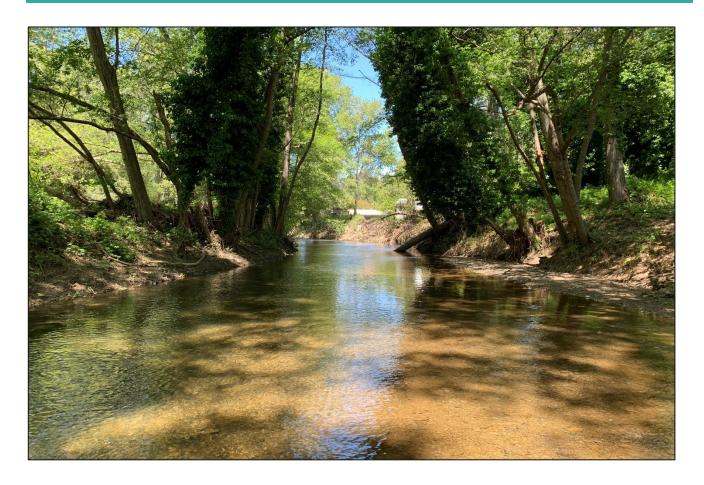
Figure 1. Annual precipitation (inches) during the period of record, WY1951-2023, collected at the NCDC Santa Cruz Station (USC00047916). The red dashed line represents the average annual rainfall (29.8 in) collected at the station.

Monitoring Sites

Figure 2 shows the locations of the gages on Soquel Creek and Aptos Creek. Soquel Creek has four gages in both the upper and lower reaches of the watershed. Soquel Creek at the Quarry (Sq04) is the uppermost gage, just downstream of the confluence with Hinckley Creek. Next downstream is East Branch Soquel above West Branch (Sq01). Next downstream is the Soquel at Mountain Elementary gage (Sq06). Furthest downstream is the Soquel at Cherryvale gage (Sq05), which is upstream of the confluence with Bates Creek. The two gages on Aptos Creek are in the lower portion of the watershed; Aptos at County Park (Ap01) is upstream of Highway 1 and Aptos below Highway 1 (Ap02) is downstream.



Figure 2. Location of Soquel Creek and Aptos Creek streamflow gages.



3. Streamflow and Conductivity Conditions

Streamflow

TU began monitoring at the gage network in May of 2023. Each streamflow gage was operated following United States Geological Survey (USGS) standard procedures, as described in Rantz (1982). Streamflow measurements were collected approximately monthly using a Flow Tracker 2, following USGS protocols for measuring streamflow velocity (Turnipseed and Sauer, 2010). Staff plate readings were used to detect pressure transducer drift and other factors that may cause phase shifts (i.e., changes in the relationship between stage and streamflow) over the course of the project and to tie data in to surveyed benchmarked. Using measured streamflow values, rating curves were developed to correlate streamflow with stage at each site. Manual measurements of temperature and conductivity were collected using a handheld YSI probe.

Figure 3 shows 15-minute streamflow at the four Soquel Creek gages from May through October 2023. In early May, streamflow was highest at site Sq05 (Soquel at Cherryvale), the lowest gage in the watershed, at around 35 ft³/sec. Flows at the next gage downstream (Sq06, Soquel at Mountain Elementary) were nearly as high, with flows approximately 31 ft³/sec. Flows in the upper portions of the watershed were lower; flows at Sq01 (East Branch Soquel above West Branch) were approximately 22 ft³/sec, and the highest gage in the watershed (Sq04, Soquel Creek at the Quarry), had the lowest flows of approximately 17 ft³/sec. Flows receded quickly through May and early June, rising slightly in late June due to early summer rain events, and receded to baseflow in late August, September and October. The lower portion of the watershed consistently gained flow

from the upper portion, and baseflows remain higher at the lower gage (Sq05, Sq06) than at the upper watershed gages. The lower watershed gages show a higher level of variability and daily fluctuations.

Figure 4 shows 15-minute streamflow at the two Aptos Creek gages from May through October 2023. Because of its smaller watershed size, flows are lower than in Soquel Creek. Flow at the upstream site (Ap01) starts out slightly higher than at the downstream site (Ap02) in May, at approximately 9 and 7 ft³/sec, respectively. This relationship reverses briefly in late June and early July, but by the time the sites recede to baseflow in early September, flows are still slightly higher at the upstream site. These gages are low in the watershed, and similar to the gages in lower Soquel Creek, show high variability and daily fluctuations.

Analysis of data from Sq05, Sq06, Ap01 and Ap02 at a daily time step show that the sensors picked up fluctuations in stage that do not match typical diurnal patterns. This variability could be caused by sensor sensitivity limitations and the locations of the gages. Due to nature of the reach conditions TU had to work with, these gages are in pools with higher near-bed velocity gradients than the upper watershed gage pools (Sq01 and Sq04). The reaches' more turbulent nature causes water levels to vary more frequently, resulting in slightly noisier data.

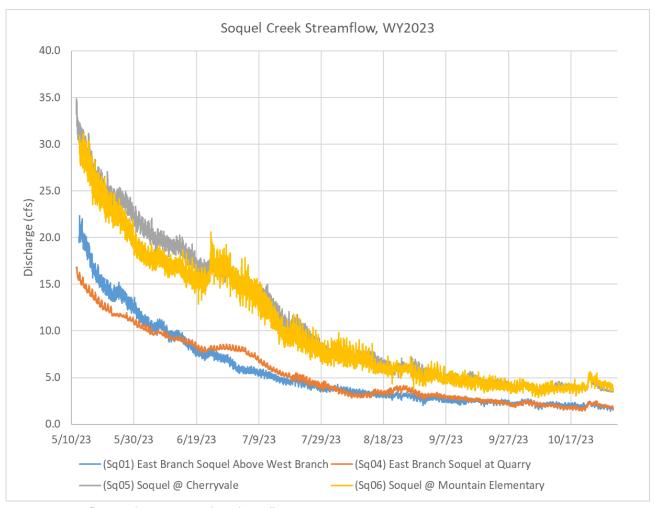


Figure 3. Streamflow conditions in Soquel Creek, at all gage sites in WY2023.

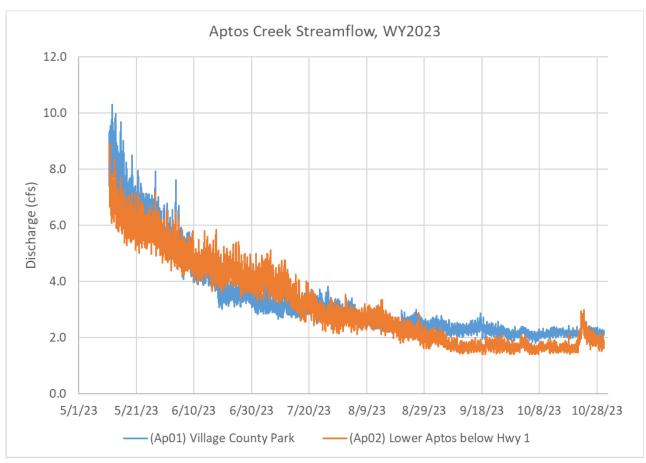


Figure 4. Streamflow conditions at Aptos Creek, WY2023.

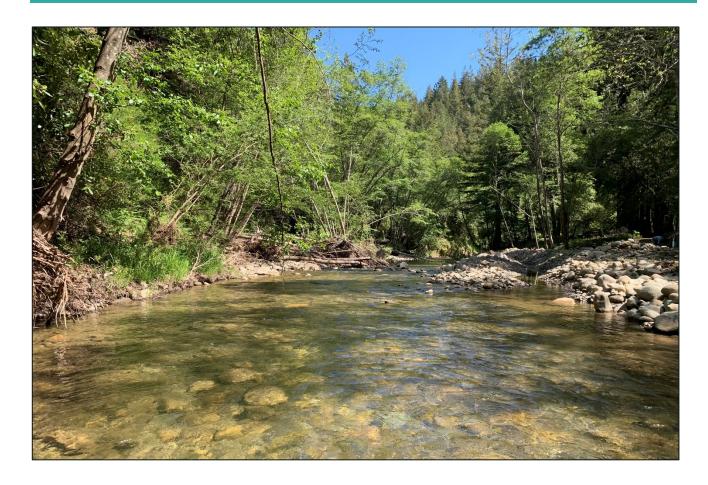
Conductivity

Manual field measurements of temperature, actual conductivity and specific conductivity at 25 degrees C were made in August and September of 2023, the results are shown in Table 1. Conductivity is a measure of the ability of water to pass an electrical current. Each body of water has a baseline conductivity that is considered to be its normal range, often dictated by local geology. It can be affected by rain, spring water inputs, minerals, tides and mixing zones and evaporation. The normal range for freshwater streams is between 100 and 2,000 μ s/cm (SWRCB 2002). According to the EPA, because dissolved salts and other inorganic chemicals conduct electrical current, conductivity increases as salinity increases.

Comparison of the specific conductivity measurements in Table 1 shows that at each site, conductivity increased between August and September as streamflow decreased, but all measurements remained within the normal range for freshwater streams. Specific conductivity at the Aptos sites were similar to each other between sites. The highest conductivities in the Soquel watershed were observed in the upper reaches of the watershed, at the Soquel at the Quarry and EB Soquel above West Branch sites, with lower conductivities observed at the further downstream sites.

Site	Date/Time	Water	Actual Conductivity at	Specific
		Temperature	Field Temp (µs/cm)	Conductivity at
		(deg C)		25 deg C (μs/cm)
(Ap01) Village County Park	8/14/2023 10:52	16.8	706	837
(Ap01) Village County Park	9/13/2023 10:03	15.3	735	902
(Ap02) Lower Aptos below Hwy 1	8/14/2023 16:52	19.1	706	796
(Ap02) Lower Aptos below Hwy 1	9/13/2023 10:51	15.4	737	902
(Sq01) EB Soquel Above West Branch	8/14/2023 12:01	18.4	862	986
(Sq01) EB Soquel Above West Branch	9/13/2023 14:02	16.9	916	1084
(Sq04) East Branch Soquel at Quarry	8/14/2023 13:20	18.6	892	1016
(Sq04) East Branch Soquel at Quarry	9/13/2023 12:59	16.1	961	1158
(Sq05) Soquel @ Cherryvale	8/14/2023 16:00	26.4	761	741
(Sq05) Soquel @ Cherryvale	9/13/2023 11:59	16.6	783	933
(Sq06) Soquel @ Mountain Elementary	8/14/2023 14:34	21.1	757	818
(Sq06) Soquel @ Mountain Elementary	9/13/2023 14:56	18.5	790	902

 $Table\ 1.\ Temperature,\ actual\ conductivity\ and\ specific\ conductivity\ measurements,\ Soquel\ and\ Aptos\ Creeks,\ WY2023.$



4. Conclusions

The gage data presented in this report represent a wetter than average year. Rainfall in WY2023 was 46.1 inches, more than 50% higher than average of 29.8 inches. All of the gage sites monitored remained flowing throughout the dry season, and specific conductivity remained relatively low. Out of the four gages on Soquel Creek, summer baseflows were highest in the lower portions of the watershed and lowest in the upper portions of the watershed. In Aptos Creek, the downstream gage generally had lower flows than the upstream gage. Flow in the lower portion of both watersheds show higher than expected daily fluctuation in streamflow that could not be explained by diurnal variability. Potential causes of the variability include sensor sensitivity limitations and the gages being in higher near-bed velocity gradient pools. If the MGA would like to try to reduce this variability, TU could try using a higher quality sensor at these sites in the future. This report represents the first full year of data collection at these gages. Streamflow will continue to be monitored and comparison of multiple years of gaging will provide further insights into streamflow dynamics.

References

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United States Environmental Protection Agency Website. https://www.epa.gov/national-aquatic-resource-surveys/indicators-conductivity

March 21, 2024

MEMO TO THE MGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subject: Agenda Item 6.3.1

Title: GSP Implementation Status Update

The intent of this memorandum is to provide status updates on Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) implementation activities not covered elsewhere on the Board agenda.

<u>Data Gaps</u> – The Olive Springs monitoring well was constructed between January 8 and January 12. This was the last data gap for the MGA GSP shallow monitoring network and is located near an MGA Soquel Creek stream gage to better understand the relationship between groundwater and interconnected surface water. The well will be equipped with a recording data logger to collect groundwater elevation and temperature data on an hourly basis.

<u>Groundwater Elevations</u> – all fall 2023 groundwater elevations were collected and submitted to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) data portal by December 31st. Of note, a full year of data has now been collected for the 6 monitoring wells constructed in 2022. Those wells and associated data are being added to the DWR data portal in March 2024.

<u>Streamflow Measurements</u> – 2024 dry season streamflow monitoring will commence in May. Staff is coordinating with Trout Unlimited on reinitiating data collection on the West Branch of Soquel Creek, which had historically been monitored.

Submitted by:

Rob Swartz

Senior Planner Regional Water Management Foundation On behalf of the MGA Executive Staff

> Ron Duncan, General Manager, Soquel Creek Water District Ralph Bracamonte, District Manager, Central Water District Heidi Luckenbach, Water Director, City of Santa Cruz Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Manager, County of Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Implementation Grant (Agreement #4600014636)

Project: Cunnison Lane Groundwater Well

Lead: Soquel Creek Water District

Grant Award: \$1,675,000

Status: Underway

Target Completion Date: 12/31/24

Activities to Date: Completed Request for Qualifications for Engineering Design and Survey Services. Completed Cunnison Lane Well Project plans and specifications. Initiated bid for the drilling, construction, and development of a potable drinking water well and related performance and water quality testing of new well. Bid award to occur in March 2023.

2. Aquifer Storage & Recovery, Beltz Wellfield

Lead: City of Santa Cruz Grant Award: \$1,650,000

Status: Underway

Target Completion Date: 3/31/25

Activities to Date: Draft 30% Design Submittal and Basis of Design Report in November 2023, Submittal of the 30% Opinion of Probable Construction Cost in December 2023.

3. Park Avenue Transmission Main Improvements

Lead Agency: Soquel Creek Water District

Grant Award: \$800,000

Status: Underway

Target Completion Date: 6/30/2024

Activities to Date: Construction of the 12" diameter PVC transmission pipeline was completed. Pipeline was flushed, chlorinated, and put into service in December 2023. Grant invoicing and final reporting to be completed in spring 2024.

4. Technical Development of GSP Group 1 & 2 Projects

Leads: Soquel Creek WD & City of Santa Cruz

Grant Award: \$1,900,000

Status: Underway

Target Completion Date: 3/31/2025

Activities to Date: 5 of 7 tasks are underway.

Task 1: Develop Objectives and Project Components to Analyze (Led by District) Consultant Brown and Caldwell is leading this task working with District, City, other consultants. Completion of Technical Memo 1.

Task 2: Groundwater Modeling (Led by City) Montgomery and Associates (M&A) is lead consultant supporting this task

Task 3: Hydraulic Modeling (Led by District)
Akel Engineering is lead consultant supporting this task. Work initiated on TM4 (Hydraulic Modeling) and design scenarios in the hydraulic model.

Task 4: Water Quality and Regional Compatibility/Optimization (Led by District) Brown and Caldwell (BC) initiated work as the lead on the water quality component of the study. Continued:

4. Technical Development of GSP Group 1 & 2 Projects

Leads: Soquel Creek WD & City of Santa Cruz

Grant Award: \$1,900,000

Status: Underway

Target Completion Date: 3/31/2025

Continued:

Task 5: Economic and Financial Analysis/Modeling (Led by District) - Consultants will support an evaluation of funding and financing alternatives to be developed in the Regional Water Optimization Study.

Task 6: Needs Assessment (Led by District) - not yet initiated.

Task 7: Develop Final Report with Recommendations and Implementation Workplan (Led by District) - not yet initiated.

5. Sustainable Groundwater Management Evaluation & Planning

Leads: MGA & County of Santa Cruz

Grant Award: \$1,575,000

Status: Underway

Target Completion Date: 3/31/2025

Activities to Date: Multiple GSP Implementation activities underway: GSP Annual Report WY 23; GSP Periodic (5-Yr) Evaluation; Expansion of monitoring network; Streamflow and groundwater monitoring; development of non-de minimis groundwater usage metering program.

M&A led the preparation of the GSP Water Year (WY) 2023 Annual Report. M&A conducted a variety of activities to complete the GSP Periodic (5-Year) Evaluation. Including an initial reevaluation of the Sustainable Management Criteria; evaluation of Seawater Intrusion in Seascape Area; reevaluation of the Monitoring Network; assessing GSP corrective actions; and support related to completion of the Olive Spring Monitoring well.

Trout Unlimited activities include: streamflow monitoring; data collection and reporting; and associated shallow groundwater monitoring, data collection and reporting.

RWMF staff supported various GSP
Implementation activities including coordination with MGA member agency staff on GSP Projects and Management Actions, coordination with member agencies and consultants to support GSP implementation efforts, coordination of Basin monitoring network evaluation, monitoring networks improvements/ Olive Springs monitoring well, groundwater metering program and well registration planning, meeting coordination and facilitation with member agency staff, support for monitoring data and Data Management System (WISKI) and online portal; participation in County well ordinance technical advisory committee,

Continued:

5. Sustainable Groundwater Management Evaluation & Planning

Leads: MGA & County of Santa Cruz

Grant Award: \$1,575,000

Status: Underway

Target Completion Date: 3/31/2025

Continued:

reviewing/prepare content for GSP Annual Report. Staff also supported planning activities on agency authorities. Supported outreach activities including website content updates, eblast newsletters; participation in Water Harvest festival community outreach event on October 14, 2023.