



County of Santa Cruz
Water Advisory Commission
701 Ocean Street, Room 312 ❖ Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-2022 ❖ Fax (831) 454-3128
<https://www.scceh.org/>

AGENDA
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION
Wednesday February 1, 2023, 4pm

Meeting will be held online via Teams. [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Please see information on meeting access and procedures on the page 4 of the Packet.

- A. OPENING**
1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. AB 361 Compliance, authorizing teleconference meeting
- B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 7, 2022**
- C. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**
Opportunity for the public to comment on items under the purview of the Water Advisory Commission but not on today's agenda.
- D. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**
- E. STAFF REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- F. NEW BUSINESS**
1. Agricultural Water Conservation Panel
See attached staff memo and presentation.
- G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS and UPDATES**
2. Response to survey sent by Rita Sanchez from the County CAO's office on updates to the 2023 Operational Plan and A Santa Cruz County Like Me project.
Discuss response to survey posted here: <https://forms.office.com/g/1hmgPkswxU>
 3. Response to letter from NOAA National Marine Fisheries Services
Informational item
 4. Storm Response
Oral report discussing updates to the County's role in drought response
 5. Groundwater Sustainability Agencies Update
Oral reports outlining updates from the three GSAs in the County.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Email from Becky Steinbruner, Jan 24th, 2023

7. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTION ON ITEMS AFFECTING WATER:

December 13, 2022

[DOC-2022-1074 : Consider the Santa Cruz County 2022 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan \(CAAP\), the greenhouse gas \(GHG\) reduction targets for 2030 and 2045, the use of the 2022 CAAP Equity Guardrails, and the Drought Response Outreach Plan, and direct the Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience to return on April 25, 2023, with an update on plan promotion and implementation, as outlined in the memorandum of the Director of the Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience](#)

[DOC-2022-1042 : Approve multi-year agreement with Bay Area Corporation, Inc. dba: Bay Area Water Trucks, Bay Area Water Transport in the amount not to exceed \\$160,000 for provision of emergency potable water hauling, and take related actions, as recommended by the Director of Health Services](#)

[DOC-2022-1043 : Accept the Shallow Monitoring Wells Mid-County Groundwater Basin, Project No. 22C1-009 as completed; approve final cost of \\$220,960.88; authorize General Services to file the Notice of Completion, and take related actions, as recommended by the Director of Health Services](#)

[DOC-2022-1044 : Adopt resolution supporting Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency's Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge & Recovery Projects, supporting water right application, and request for release from priority of State-Filed Application, as recommended by the Director of the Health Services](#)

January 10, 2023

[DOC-2023-23 : Approve amendment to agreement with Balance Hydrologics, Inc. to increase by \\$52,950 for a new not-to-exceed contract amount of \\$217,925, for the development and installation of Monitoring Network to track success towards groundwater sustainability in the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin; approve Local Project Sponsor Agreement with Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency; adopt resolution authorizing the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency to submit grant application to the California Department of Water Resources for grant funding to support Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan implementation, and take related actions, as recommended by the Director of Health Services](#)

[DOC-2023-24 : Adopt resolution adopting the 2014 Integrated Regional Water Management Plan with 2019 Addendum, as recommended by the Director of Health Services](#)

Jan 31, 2023

8. ITEMS OF INTEREST

1. ABC 7, December 19, 2022. *High-tech Flights Help Fight Threat of Sea Water Intrusion Along Coast.* <https://abc7news.com/sea-water-threat-fight-intrusion-airborne-electromagnetic-survey/12551959/>
2. Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, December 2022. Multiple articles of interest. <http://www.sccfb.com/wp-content/uploads/BTF-December-2022.pdf>
3. Good Times Santa Cruz January 3, 2023. *UC Santa Cruz Students Answer Complex Water Questions*

<https://www.goodtimes.sc/santa-cruz-desalination/>

4. The Atlantic, January 16, 2023. *Dust Lakes Keep Popping Up Across the West*
<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2023/01/climate-change-impacts-saline-salt-lakes/672722/>
5. The Hill, January 17, 2023 *Here's how California is Trying to Hold on to its Rainwater*
<https://thehill.com/changing-america/sustainability/infrastructure/3816724-heres-how-california-is-trying-to-hold-on-to-its-rainwater/>
6. The Wall Street Journal, January 17, 2023. *Water Is a Terrible Thing for California to Waste*
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/water-is-a-terrible-thing-for-california-to-waste-winter-floods-rain-climate-11673984138>
7. Santa Cruz Local, January 20, 2023. *Water Projects Try to Capture More Rain in Santa Cruz County*
https://santacruzlocal.org/2023/01/20/water-projects-try-to-capture-more-rain-in-santa-cruz-county/?utm_source=Santa+Cruz+Local&utm_campaign=0f01f132df-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_01_21_03_42_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f5d347e2d2-c7890409c5-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D
8. KSBW. Updated January 22, 2023. *People in Boulder Creek without water for over two weeks.*
<https://www.ksbw.com/article/people-in-boulder-creek-without-water-for-over-two-weeks/42557676>
9. U.S. Drought Monitor for California
<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CA>

9. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- a. City of Santa Cruz Water Department Sanitary Survey (June 2023)

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner and Public Participation Information and Guidelines

This meeting will be held in hybrid format, you may attend in person or online using the link below. The meeting location is 701 Ocean Street room 510, Santa Cruz. The public may also conference into the meeting by clicking the link below or calling in (audio only) using the Conference ID:

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 266 881 443 066

Passcode: DBPVCY

[+1 831-454-2222,](#)

Phone Conference ID: 827 254 974#

- Once in the meeting, please mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
- If disruptive sound is coming from your device/phone line, the moderator will mute your device and you will have to unmute yourself to participate.
- If you are dialing in by phone, press *9 to raise your hand and *6 to unmute yourself.

Commissioners are expected to join with a video camera. Public attendees may choose to have their cameras on or off.

Please join the meeting a few minutes BEFORE 4:00 pm so that we can start at 4:00 pm. Staff will open the video conference at 3:50 pm. Feel free to chat and say hello before 4:00 pm.

Meeting Roles and Rules:

- All meeting attendees should keep their microphones on mute unless they are speaking.
- Brian Lockwood, Chair, will lead the meeting. Chair Lockwood will announce each agenda item, identify who will be leading an item and introduce discussion and public comment periods.
- Sierra Ryan, staff, will assist with roll call, note taking, and tracking who wants to speak. Please allow time for staff to make notes about any decisions. Sierra will monitor her email during the meeting.
- There will be a public comment period for each item and the Chair will invite the public to participate at the appropriate time.
- During a discussion, if 2 or more people speak at the same time, please defer to the person who speaks first. In any moment where we have some confusion due to multiple people wanting to speak, please pause and let the Chair take the lead. The Chair will call on someone to speak. Also please “raise your hand” to speak by clicking on the hand symbol in the upper right.
- If you are having any trouble joining you can send a message to Sierra (email sierra.ryan@santacruzcounty.us or text 831-345-5202.) There will be a public comment period for each item. You can also contact Sierra on technical issues.



County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency

Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312 ❖ Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 454-3133

<https://www.scceh.org/>

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION'S
FINDINGS PURSUANT TO ASSEMBLY BILL 361 AUTHORIZING TELECONFERENCE
MEETINGS AS A RESULT OF THE CONTINUING COVID-19 PANDEMIC STATE OF
EMERGENCY AND HEALTH OFFICER RECOMMENDATION FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING**

WHEREAS, The Water Advisory Commission is a legislative body under the Brown Act as defined under Cal. Gov. Code section 54952(b) and Santa Cruz County Code Section 2.38.110; and

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2021, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 361 ("AB 361"), urgency legislation effective immediately, that amended Government Code section 54953 to permit legislative bodies subject to the Brown Act to continue to meet under modified teleconferencing rules provided that they comply with specific requirements set forth in the statute; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to AB 361 and Cal. Gov. Code section 54953(e)(1)(A), a legislative body may meet under the modified teleconferencing rules during a proclaimed state of emergency, and where local officials have imposed or recommended measures to promote social distancing; and

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a Proclamation of State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and which remains in effect; and

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2021, Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer Dr. Gail Newel strongly recommended that legislative bodies in Santa Cruz County continue to engage in physical/social distancing by meeting via teleconference as allowed by AB 361 and confirmed that she will regularly review and reconsider this recommendation and notify the public when it is no longer recommended; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to AB 361 and Cal. Gov. Code section 54953(e)(3), within 30 days of the date the legislative body first holding a teleconferenced meeting under the modified rules, and every 30 days thereafter, a legislative body can continue to hold such teleconference meetings provided it has reconsidered the circumstances of the state of emergency and determined either that the state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person or that local officials continue to recommend measures to promote social distancing; and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 2021, the Water Advisory Commission held its initial teleconference meeting under AB 361 and subsequently met on February 2, April 6, June 1, August 3, October 5, and December 7, 2022 via teleconference; and

WHEREAS, this the Water Advisory Commission has reconsidered the circumstances of the current state of emergency and finds that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to directly impact the ability of members of the public to participate safely in person and further finds that the Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer continues to recommend measures to promote social distancing; and

WHEREAS, in the interest of public health and safety, and due to the emergency caused by the spread of COVID-19, the Water Advisory commission deems it necessary to utilize the modified teleconferencing rules set forth in AB 361;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Water Advisory Commission makings the following findings by a majority vote:

Section 1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct, and adopted as findings of the Water Advisory Commission.

Section 2. Effective immediately, and for the next 30 days, the Water Advisory Commission will meet via teleconference as authorized under AB 361 and Government Code section 54953(e)(3).

Section 3. No later than thirty (30) days from making today’s findings, or at the next scheduled meeting, the Commission will reconsider the circumstances of the COVID-19 state of emergency and, if necessary, adopt subsequent findings to continue holding teleconference meetings in accordance with Government Code section 54953(e)(3).

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Water Advisory Commission in Santa Cruz, State of California, this 1 day of February , 2023 , by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Chair, Water Advisory Commission

ATTEST:

Department Staff

Approved as to Form:

Office of the County Counsel



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Minutes
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION
Wednesday December 7, 2022, 4pm

A. OPENING

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
 - Present: Commissioners Cheap, Largay, Lego, Pereyra, Wilson, Vice Chair Berry, Chair Lockwood
 - Staff: Sierra Ryan, Erin McCarthy, Nathan Salazar, Sean Abbey,
 - Guests and members of public: Rita Sanchez, Joe Serrano, Kailey O., Rick Rogers, Edan Cassidy, Becky Steinbruner, John Ricker
3. AB 361 Compliance, authorizing teleconference meeting
 - Motion – Cheap, second – Pereyra, all in favor
 - Sierra to seek input from counsel on Brown Act and returning to in-person meetings

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: **October 5, 2022**

Misspelling and capitalization typos need fixed
Motion by Berry; seconded by Lego, all in favor

C. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Opportunity for the public to comment on items under the purview of the Water Advisory Commission but not on today's agenda.

- Kailey O. – grad student, curious if projects are in motion within the County that utilize recycled water?
- Ryan – Water Status Report, included in meeting packet, summarizes all recycled water projects going on.
- Largay- Scotts Valley Water District has project and recycled water facilities, PV Water and City of Watsonville have facilities, and Soquel Creek WD and Santa Cruz WD are collaborating on a project;
- Lockwood - PV Water will offer a tour of recycling facility in Watsonville, reach out to Lockwood or Mendiola at PV Water
- Steinbruner – Pure Water Soquel Groundwater Replenishment Reuse Project Title 22 Engineering Report open for public comment until tomorrow at 5pm, examines quality of water injected into system and modeling of how it will flow; 1500 page document; concerned that there is no antidegradation component

D. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

- Cheap- sat in on Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission meeting, they have made decisions about funds to distribute to projects, interesting. Was on a Coastal Commission call about the desal plant that was

ultimately passed in Monterey County; could be informative if desal comes up again in this area.

- Berry – weekly water conditions: strange rain event in Sept. and good rainfall last week; Loch Lomond about 76% full; fish are moving and fishermen are catching fish; 2-4” rain received Fri. – Sun for mountain areas, less near coast. Unable to do ASR piloting right now because in exceedance category, that is likely to change soon. Participated in Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting for LAMP, glad to see some things went through but disappointed that some did not (comments from real-estate industry). Currently working on Watershed Sanitary Survey, deadline is Dec. 31, 2022. Received a response from State Board on water right petition; they provided info about what additional info is needed to make a determination in January.
- Lego – continued concern about chromium 6 MCL; not sure if has been determined yet or will be soon; small water systems will need guidance, would like to have that on a future agenda. Status on that?
- Salazar – no update received recently, likely within 1-2 years we will get an update.
- Largay – represent 5th Supervisorial District; SLVWD Directors have expressed that they are grateful for ongoing collaborations (w/ County, City, GSAs) regarding groundwater plan, conjunctive use plans, fisheries work and many programs.
- Lockwood – attended Water Summit and heard presentation about beavers being parachuted into watersheds; popular topic recently; also attended Assn of Calif Water Agencies Summit which was good but some presentations on outlook for water supply were depressing; Colorado River is very low and considering state of emergency, involuntary agreements in Bay-Delta Area, also presentations on solutions. Also was discussion of chromium 6, PFAS, Southern San Joaquin Valley and other basins that are working on solving problems.

E. STAFF REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ryan – we started a process to build a grant proposal to Regional Water Board 319h grant program to do homeless encampment clean-up in San Lorenzo Watershed. We ended up not being able to build our proposal due to inability to identify a lead within the County and identified a need for better coordination among County agencies. A number of good lessons and action items resulted from the process to help County better prepare for these types of opportunities. City of Santa Cruz would have been a partner on that grant. City of Santa Cruz is submitting a proposal to install water treatment devices.

F. NEW BUSINESS

- Presentation by Rita Sanchez from the County CAO’s office on updates to the 2023 Operational Plan and A Santa Cruz County Like Me project. Presentation posted to the [website](#).
- Sanchez: 2023 Operational Plan includes a vision, 2021-2023 operational plan elements, objectives tied to measures and targets. Staff are currently receiving comments and invite Commissioners to submit comments individually and/or as a Commission.
- Berry – these are big questions that may warrant discussion at a future WAC meeting.
- Ryan – we will discuss these questions at February 2022 WAC meeting and provide responses to Ms. Sanchez.
- Sanchez: A Santa Cruz County Like Me project includes a report and survey to gather information about Commissioners’ representation. Findings included underrepresentation from South County, renters, certain ethnic groups and age groups. Overrepresentation of college graduates. Includes recommendations that are being pursued by program staff. Will be sending out another survey for Commissioners.

Ms. Sanchez will provide survey link to Ryan.

- Berry – water industry does tend to be older, college educated, and often Caucasian representation; I'd like to see more diversity.
- Lockwood – You mentioned 50% response rate from Commissioners and showed results compared to County population. How many Commissioners does the 50% correspond to? Would be helpful to know that to make the graphs more meaningful. Also suggest labeling x axis on graphs.
- Largay – You asked how we came to serve. I was asked to apply by the Supervisor for my district. Coordinating with the Supervisors offices could be important to encourage diversity; age diversity could be harder because experience is often required to serve. Virtual meetings may reduce barriers, perhaps having County offices in Watsonville will be helpful; not everyone can afford the time commitment to serve on commission; maybe there could be stipends to offset the costs of serving.
- Lockwood – I also was recruited by the Supervisor for my district.
- Lego – same for me.
- Steinbruner – have heard other Commissioners comment on this. How will findings be used, and what changes might we see for how commissions are run; to be interested in being a Commissioner, people need to know that their time will result in making a difference.
- Serrano – (LAFCO); in 2018 law required commissions to have websites, transparency has improved, but I think there needs to be more effort to let residents know that commissions even exist and that they have opportunities to participate. I've dealt with a number of counties and Santa Cruz County is more proactive about being transparent than some others.
- Review of DRAFT 2022 Santa Cruz County Water Status Report
Provide comments and take action to recommend that staff present the Report to the Board of Supervisors after comments are incorporated. See Attachment
- Ryan – we do these reports every year. Opportunity to recognize work going on. Tried to focus on the large amount of planning going on, often multi-year planning work is not easy to see. In many cases we are working on 50yr planning horizons related to climate change. I'd like to finesse it before it goes to BOS, and would like to hear from Commissioners about how to pull out and highlight key items.
- Cheap – executive summary
- Berry – great effort and interesting and the record is important. Getting people to read it is next challenge.
- Ryan – we are getting two new Supervisors that might benefit from reading it; tables get reused frequently.
- Lockwood – hopefully we can help get those two new Supervisors up to speed
- Lego – great report; During drought response meetings, someone noted that we are doing better than many other parts of the state. Suggest adding something about how we are different from the rest of the state. That might help Supervisors and public understand where we are; otherwise people might think that we are in an even worse crisis situation than we are. Provide context.
- Largay – agree with Paul. Gross misunderstanding of water resources by public. In this County we are almost autonomous and that empowers us to solve our own problems. One way is to consider dropping maps in (supply watersheds, groundwater areas) to help people understand at a glance. Also Environmental Health water quality data – residents are interested in water quality conditions and that might help to build support for related programs.
- Ryan – great idea, intend to add maps and pictures
- Cheap – great report. Is this actionable?
- Ryan – action is usually “accept and file.” We will refer to it as needed to support future actions.
- Pereyra – consider highlights or something more watered down for general population?

- Ryan – that is purpose of key findings and executive summary; I plan to revisit those. We can create a two-pager.
 - Lockwood – thanks to staff for the work; great report; could add a graph or map to executive summary and make a one pager; a useful figure is the cartoon-like figure we did for the County in the past; suggest adding a bullet point about how the large municipalities are doing with water; highlight how much money was raised; clarify \$7.2M to each PV Water and SqCWD (total \$15M). Use uniform formatting for how dollars. Good work from staff of all agencies that contributed.
 - Berry – I have high resolution version of the figure that Lockwood referred to. Will provide it to Sierra.
 - Steinbruner – data on page 17 that I didn't understand how came to be (small water companies).
 - Ryan – small water systems report their data to the County. Will explain that in the report (Sean will add that language). I appreciate the Commissioners have the opportunity to provide feedback before it goes to Board. Suggest adding LAFCO review of water agency service areas. Suggest adding that Davenport recycled water is not being used to the extent that it was intended. Suggest adding an update about chrom 6 – the status of the MCL development. Suggestion for map is the MAR map by Dr. Fisher.
 - Ryan - Deadline for comments from Commissioners is 12/14/22.
 - Ricker – great report, is informative. Previously, reports did have recommendations for BOS and Chair of WAC would sometimes push for those. Hasn't been a big need for that recently. We used to use a one pager for Connect the Drops. Most of the actions are taken by other agencies. Now things are moving and everyone collaborating which is progress compared to the past.
 - Steinbruner – BOS could push for Connect the Drops to happen again.
 - Discussion of language for motion.
- Motion: WAC recommends approval of 2022 Water Status Report in substantially the same form as attached and recommends approval by the BOS.
Motion by Cheap, Second by Lego, all in favor
- Letter from NOAA National Marine Fisheries Services directed to the Board of Supervisors on November 4, 2022 regarding well permitting.
Receive information and provide guidance. See Attachment
 - Ryan – other counties that have documented surface-groundwater connectivity and issue ministerial well permits received a similar letter. If impacting stream flows through well production, that could impact public trust resources. Staff plan to revisit and update well ordinance. NMFS have requested our response. It will to some extent address the level of certainty around connectivity.
 - Rogers – encourage Counties to get out in front of this; Sonoma County has formed technical and policy working groups; hopefully Sonoma County process can be used as a reference moving forward; NMFS willing to participate as stakeholders.
 - Lockwood – Sonoma County or Sonoma County Water Agency ?
 - Rogers - both. Board of Supervisors called for the formation of the committees.
 - Pereyra – timeline? Will it impact any well permits currently in process?
 - Berry – will this impact ASR wells at all?
 - Ryan – we will need to consider process for updating the well ordinance
 - Cheap – Implications for requirement for GSAs to approve wells (Executive Order N-7-22 paragraph 9)?
 - Ryan – we will need to leave space for GSAs to have their process
 - Steinbruner – attended Sonoma County workshop on it and some of the committee meetings are open to public. I hope that public will be allowed to participate in these committee meetings. How does this dovetail with the Executive Order? May be important in Santa Margarita. I hope that this will result in objective criteria for declaring a groundwater emergency.

- Ricker – well permits used to be discretionary. Most applications are for replacement wells and would be exempt from discretionary approval. Could put some language in ordinance that would help to reduce impacts to stream flows.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS and UPDATES

- Drought Response

Oral report discussing updates to the County's role in drought response

- Item going to Board on Dec. 19 as part of Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
- Ryan will circulate meeting packet which will include instructions to remote in to that meeting.

- Groundwater Sustainability Agencies Update

Oral reports outlining updates from the three GSAs in the County.

- Ryan – applying for \$2.3M grant with SMGWA.
- Lockwood – Executive Order; applying for \$20M grant; going out to bid for College Lake project

H. CORRESPONDENCE

Email forwarded by Chris Berry on 12/1/2022

I. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTION ON ITEMS AFFECTING WATER:

No discussion

J. ITEMS OF INTEREST

No discussion

K. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Agricultural Water Conservation
- City of Santa Cruz Water Department Sanitary Survey

L. ADJOURNMENT FOLLOWED BY SOCIAL GATHERING AT THE PARADOX HOTEL RESTAURANT

Motion to adjourn – Berry, second – Cheap, all in favor.



County of Santa Cruz

Water Advisory Commission

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<https://www.scceh.org/>

Subject: February 1, 2023 Water Advisory Commission Agenda Item F1

Title: Agricultural Water Conservation in Santa Cruz County

Recommended Action:

1. Receive presentation and participate in discussion with staff about supporting agricultural water conservation.

Background

At the October 5, 2022 Water Advisory Commission meeting, Commissioners expressed interest in learning more about agricultural water use and how agriculture in Santa Cruz County is contributing to water conservation.

Santa Cruz County irrigated agriculture is predominantly located in the Pajaro Valley, which includes southern Santa Cruz County and parts of northern Monterey and San Benito Counties.

The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water) maintains an Agricultural Water Conservation Program that is implemented by the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCD) along with their partners. In response to interest expressed by the Commissioners, staff coordinated with Commissioner Lockwood, other staff from PV Water, and staff from the RCD to develop this agenda item, which focuses on Agricultural Water Conservation Programs led by PV Water and RCD.

Santa Cruz County Agriculture

Agriculture is a fundamental part of the history, culture and economy of Santa Cruz County. The County's cool coastal climate, long growing season, and rich soils allow for highly productive crops that provide food in local, national and international markets.

In 2021, there were about 17,000 commercially irrigated acres in Santa Cruz County and about 7,100 acres were registered as organic. The total gross production value was about \$642 million (Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner, 2021 Crop Report; not including timber, poultry or livestock). Table 1 shows a summary of crop types by acres in 2021.

Santa Cruz County commercial crop acres, 2021

Crop type	Acres
vegetables	7,882
berries (mainly strawberry, raspberry, blackberry)	5,188
apples, grapes (and other tree and vine fruits)	2,887
flowers, nursery	893
hemp	64
Cannabis*	52
total	16,966

Source: Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner, 2021 Crop Report, and Cannabis Licensing Office

Santa Cruz County agriculture has a history of innovation, exemplified by its diverse crop history, early adoption of new practices by many producers, and by the founding of California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) in Santa Cruz in 1973, which ultimately led to the establishment of organic certification standards at the national level.

Agricultural water use

Agriculture accounts for about 80% of water use in California (Dept of Water Resources 2023). It accounts for about 50% of total water use in Santa Cruz County, or about 27,000 acre-feet per year (Santa Cruz County Environmental Health, Water Status Report 2022).

About 90% of the County's agricultural water use is in the Pajaro Valley, and about 93% of that is sourced from groundwater and about 6% recycled water. About 10% of agricultural water use is in Mid and North Santa Cruz County, and about 90% is from groundwater and 10% from surface waters (Water Status Report 2022).

Santa Cruz County Plans and Policies

Santa Cruz County policies and regulations continue to preserve agricultural land as an essential and irreplaceable resource for future generations. Consistent with Measure J (1978), County land use policies protect open space and natural resources by directing development to urbanized areas and limit land divisions and land uses in other areas. Chapter 5 of the Santa Cruz County Sustainability Update, a comprehensive update to the General Plan/Local Coastal Program adopted in 2022, includes updated policies and implementation strategies aimed to preserve agricultural land uses. It maintains policies limiting land divisions and conversions of agricultural land, requires buffers on land adjacent to commercial agricultural parcels, and provides new guidance for siting development to protect agricultural land and minimize disturbance to agricultural soils. The preservation of agricultural land and support for the local agricultural economy is also addressed comprehensively through the Zoning Ordinance and the Agricultural Land Preservation and Protection Ordinance.

Santa Cruz County Agricultural Water Conservation Programs

The PV Water Agricultural Water Conservation Program was initiated in 2014 and is now included in the Pajaro Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Update 2022 (GSU22). The conservation goal for the program, 5,000 acre-feet per year, makes up over 40% of the solution described in the GSU22. The goal was intended to be accomplished through voluntary action by the agriculture industry to improve irrigation efficiency.

RCD staff lead implementation of the PV Water Agricultural Water Conservation Program. They also leverage grant funding to supplement PV Water funds, and to provide a comprehensive scope of services to agriculture. In addition to assistance with irrigation efficiency, RCD staff provide assistance with groundwater recharge, soil health, climate-smart agriculture, nitrogen management and others – all of which are interconnected with water use.

Panelists

Speakers for this agenda item include:

- Introduction - Erin McCarthy, Water Resources Planner at Santa Cruz County, Environmental Health
- Agricultural Conservation Programs - Dan Hermstad, Program Specialist at Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
- Agricultural Conservation Programs - Sacha Lozano, Program Manager at Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
- Agricultural Conservation Progress - Marcus Mendiola, Water Conservation and Outreach Specialist at Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency

Meeting materials

Meeting materials including the Agenda and presentations can be found at the [Water Advisory Commission Meetings website](#).



By: _____

Erin McCarthy
Water Resources Planner



County of Santa Cruz



Health Services Agency ♦ Environmental Health

Water Advisory Commission

February 1, 2023

Agricultural Water Conservation

Santa Cruz County Agriculture

- Roughly 17,000 irrigated acres; 625 farms; 130 organic
- 80% of farms < 50 acres; median farm size ~10 acres
- \$600+ million gross market value
 - Wide range in income among farms
- Agriculture is major employer
 - South County communities are >70% Latinex
 - 38% are beginning farmers
- Provide produce on local and global scales
- Agricultural uses are ~50% of water use in Santa Cruz County (~27,000 AFY, 2022)

• Sources: USDA NASS 2017, UC Census 2017, SCC Ag Commissioner 2021

County policies protect agricultural land uses, economy and heritage

- [Santa Cruz County Strategic Plan](#): “Protect and restore natural resources, including water, air, forests, coastline and agricultural lands.”
- [Chapter 5](#) of the Santa Cruz County Sustainability Update (2022)
 - Limits conversion and division of ag lands
 - Supports diversification of income strategies for small farms
 - Expands agricultural support uses on ag lands
 - Supports agricultural water conservation programs
 - Calls for ensuring a sustainable supply of water for agricultural use
 - Supports the development/adoption of climate-smart farming
 - Calls for establishing a program coordinated with the Water Board’s Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program



Motivating agricultural conservation

- Carrots and sticks can motivate change
- Regional Water Board's Ag Order (stick)
- SGMA - encourages management at the local level
- Pajaro Valley Agricultural Water Conservation Program
 - Developed as part of Pajaro Valley BMP Update (2012)
 - Included in Groundwater Sustainability Update (2022)
 - Developed in collaboration with agriculture
 - Utilizes carrots





Pajaro Valley Conservation Program



RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

- 40% of overdraft solution
- Consistently funded and led by PV Water since 2014
- Implemented by RCD and partners
- Informed and guided by research and experts
- Voluntary
- Focuses on improving irrigation efficiency
- Supported by recharge projects and other best practices by growers
- Many collaborators & growers have contributed to progress
- Changing agricultural practices is challenging and takes time



RCDSCC Stewardship in Agriculture Water Conservation Program



Pajaro Valley
Water Management Agency

Dan Hermstad and Sacha Lozano
RCD of Santa Cruz County
County Water Advisory Commission briefing
February 1st 2023

Background

- Critically overdrafted aquifer
- Seawater Intrusion
- No State Water or Surface Water
- All pumps are metered
- Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency identifies conservation efforts as primary component of “Basin Management Plan” (now **GSU22**) starting in 2014.

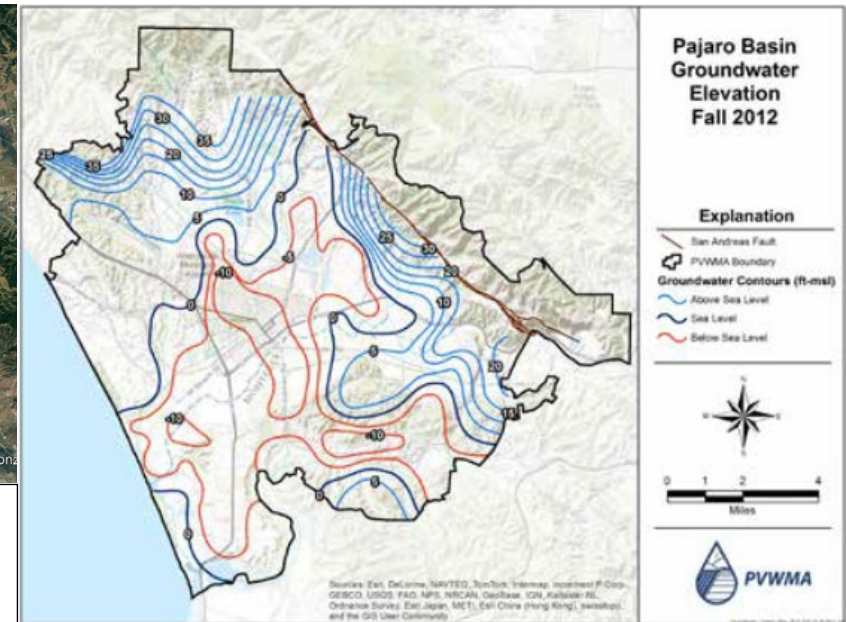
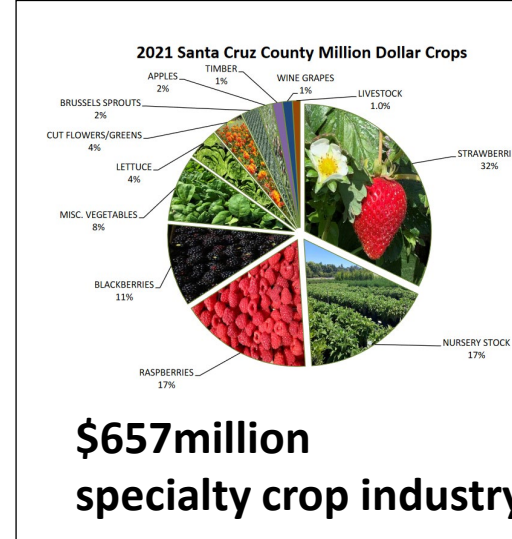


Figure ES-1. Groundwater levels in much of the basin are below sea level.

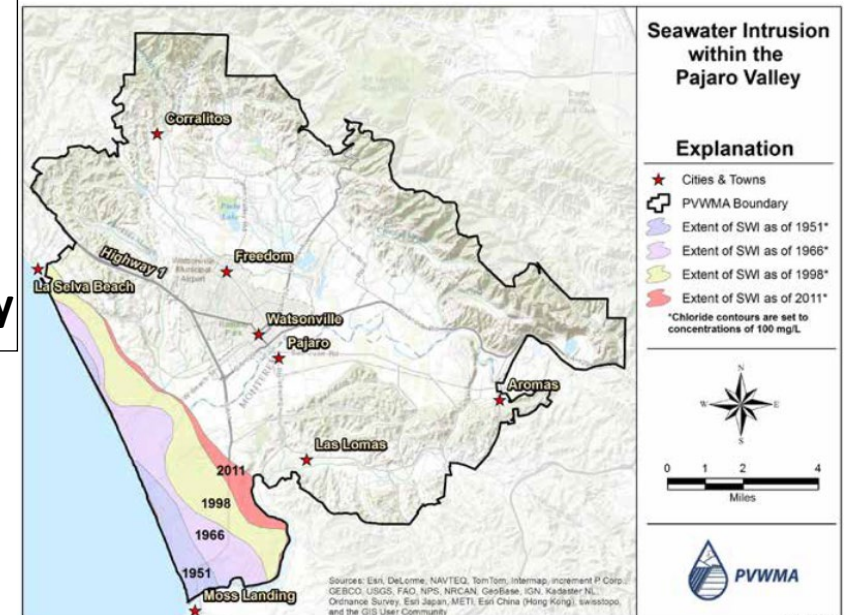


Figure ES-2. Seawater continues to degrade groundwater along the coast.

Program Components

Irrigation Monitoring and Technical Assistance

- Monitor water applied to a block (relative to weather and crop uptake)
- One-on-one consultations and technical assistance
- Discuss irrigation concepts and system operation with growers and farm staff
- Provide timely recommendations and reports.



Weather-based irrigation scheduling (CropManage)

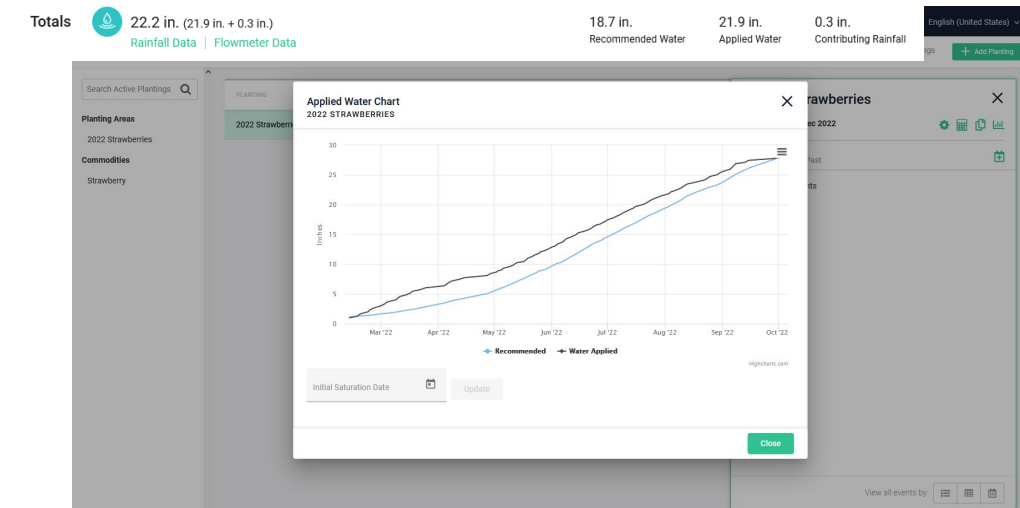


Water Events
2022 green cabbage | West Coast - Block 1

All **Water** Fertilizer Soil Samples Tissue Samples

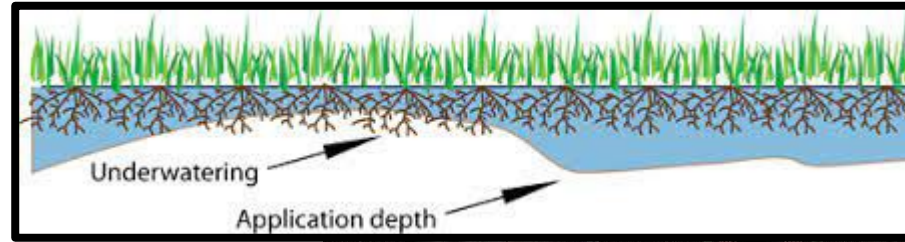
Irrigation Data | Additional Water Data

Date	Irrigation Method	Irrigation Interval	Recommended Max Irrigation Interval	CropManage Recommended Amount	Applied Water	Contributing Rainfall
4/19/2022	Germination Sprinkler	N/A	N/A	N/A	5.2 hr	0 in.
4/23/2022	Sprinkler	4 days	2.1 days	2.2 hr	3.5 hr	0.16 in.
4/25/2022	Sprinkler	2 days	1.2 days	1.9 hr	3.4 hr	0.04 in.
4/27/2022	Sprinkler	2 days	0.9 days	1.8 hr	2.4 hr	0.06 in.
5/4/2022	Sprinkler	7 days	2.6 days	2.8 hr	3.7 hr	0 in.
5/9/2022	Sprinkler	5 days	2.3 days	2.8 hr	4.9 hr	0 in.
5/20/2022	Sprinkler	11 days	3.9 days	5.1 hr	4.9 hr	0 in.



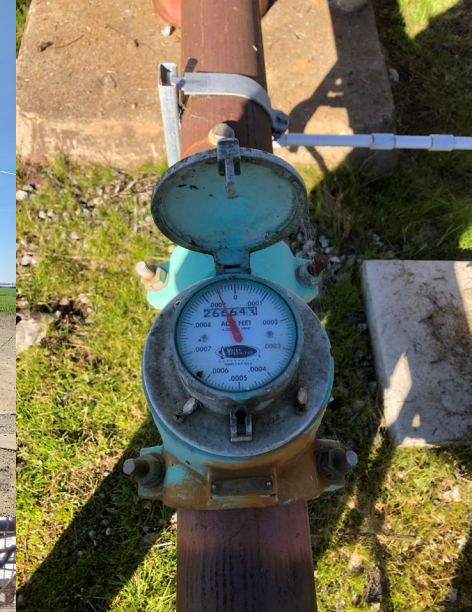
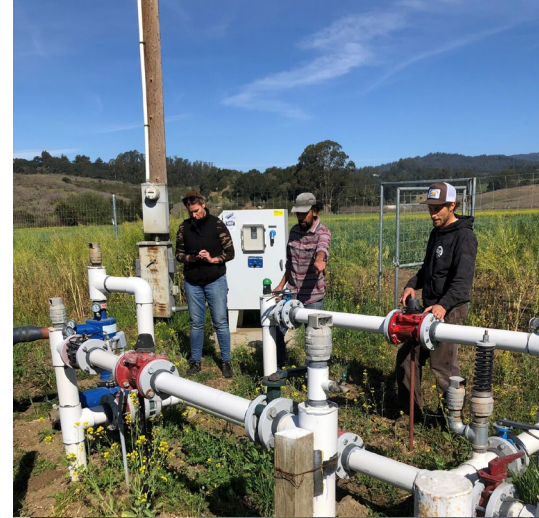
Distribution Uniformity Evaluations

- Measure how evenly water is applied to a crop field
- Identify and address deficiencies in the system
- Discuss irrigation management and opportunities for improvement with growers and irrigators
- Educate and train farm staff as needed



Water System Audits and One-on-one consultations

- Measure pressures throughout field
- Compare meter measurements
- Pump Tests
- Interview with grower about how system is run and used
- Identify “low-hanging fruit” opportunities for improvement

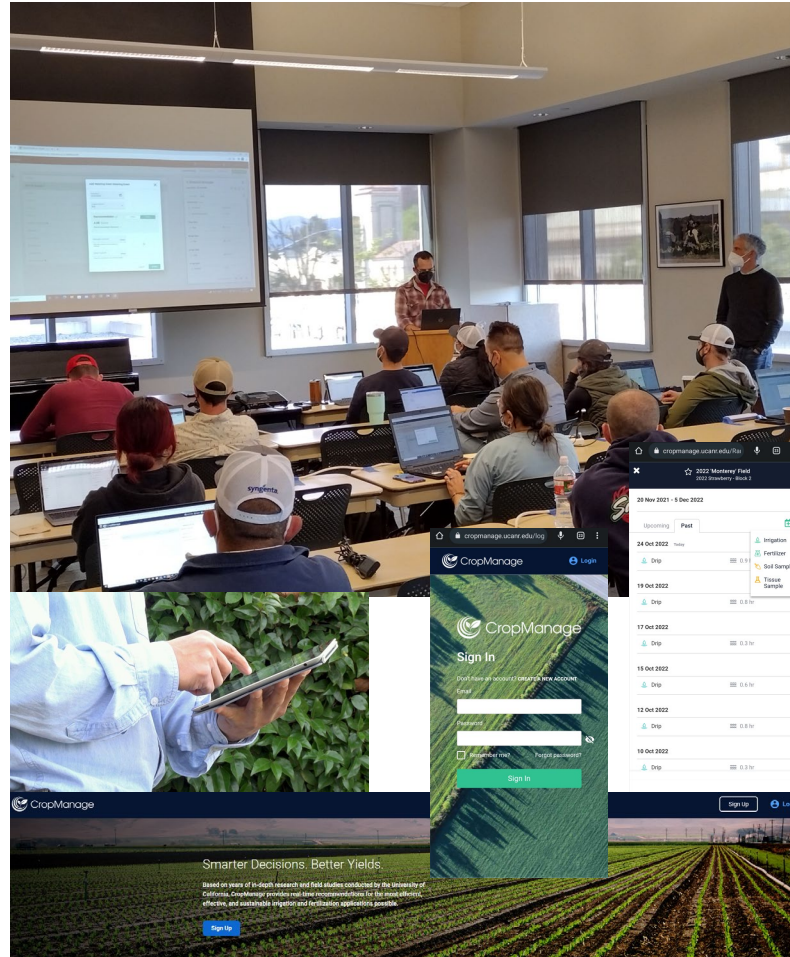


Outreach and Education

Irrigator trainings in Spanish



CropManage workshops



Newsletter articles

News & Information from RCD

Written by Dan Hermstad, Agriculture Program Specialist
Resource Conservation District, Santa Cruz County

Irrigation Efficiency

Optimizing your irrigation efficiency is central to assuring you are making use of every drop of water that is pumped from the ground. But what is meant when people say irrigation efficiency?

Irrigation efficiency can most easily be described as the percentage of water that is pumped from the ground that is applied and used by a crop. If your flowmeter shows that you pumped 20,000 gallons of water at the well and you measured 20,000 gallons of water applied to your crop then you would have an irrigation efficiency of 100%. This never happens of course. There are several ways in which water can be lost. Some examples include leaking pipes, evaporation, water draining below the root zone and open valves to "burn" pressure.

Another measure of your efficiency is the distribution uniformity (DU). This is a measure of how evenly the water is being applied to a field. Even though you may have very high efficiency, it is not desirable to have all the water going to one or two plants and leaving all other plants dry. A high distribution uniformity means that every plant is getting the same amount of water. Drip systems commonly have DUs in the 90% range while sprinkler systems typically have DUs in the 70% range. So drip systems, in addition to saving water, can also create a more even canopy and crop stand.

The RCD performs irrigation system evaluations to determine the efficiency and distribution uniformity of your system. Using a systematic set of measurements we can identify areas where the water you pump from the ground is not reaching your crop and tell you how uniformly it is getting applied to your crop. If you have fields where you are uncertain about the irrigation system in place we can help. You can reach the RCD's Irrigation Specialist at 831-706-8188 or dhermstad@rcdsantacruz.org to schedule an irrigation evaluation.

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Vegetable Land for Lease

**Conlan Ranch
Castroville, CA
100 acres all or part**

**Flexible Terms
(831) 234-8343**

Annual Meeting Continued from Page 1

Officers:

- For President and State Delegate, two-year position:
Dennis Webb - Timber
- For 1st Vice President and State Delegate, two-year position:
Peter Navarro - Berries
- For 2nd Vice President and State Delegate, two-year position:
John Pisturino - Cattle
- For Past-President & Alternate State Delegate, two-year position:
Arnett Young - Vegetables

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BANK

We switched all our banking to Santa Cruz County Bank, which was smooth and easy. They listen and truly understand agriculture and the needs of our business.

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BETWEEN THE FURROWS JULY 2022

2020-2022 Grower Rebate Program

Implementation of new practices

Efficient sprinkler heads



Sprinkler check valves



Pressure regulators



Flowmeters & telemetry



➤ A total **\$92,462** in grower rebate requests processed since 2020

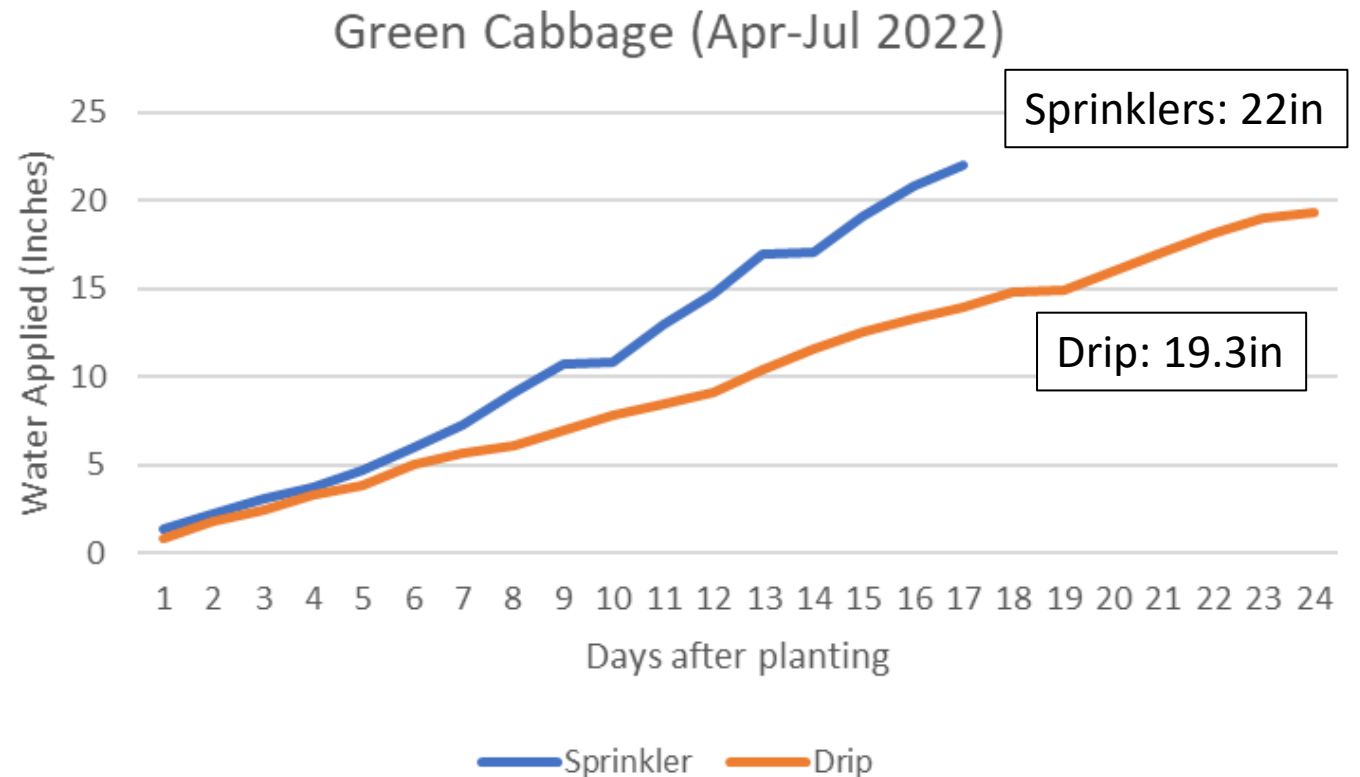
Rebates have been used for: windfighter sprinklers, new sprinkler heads and raisers, aluminum pipe joints and gaskets, pressure regulators, check valves, flush valves, flowmeters and telemetry, drip irrigation trials for vegetables, nurseries and orchard operations, PC drip tape and drip irrigation supplies, VFDs, VFD booster pump for storage tanks, soil tensiometers, and alternative sprinkler system for use under high tunnels

Implementation of new practices (Rebate Program)

Example: Sprinkler to drip conversion

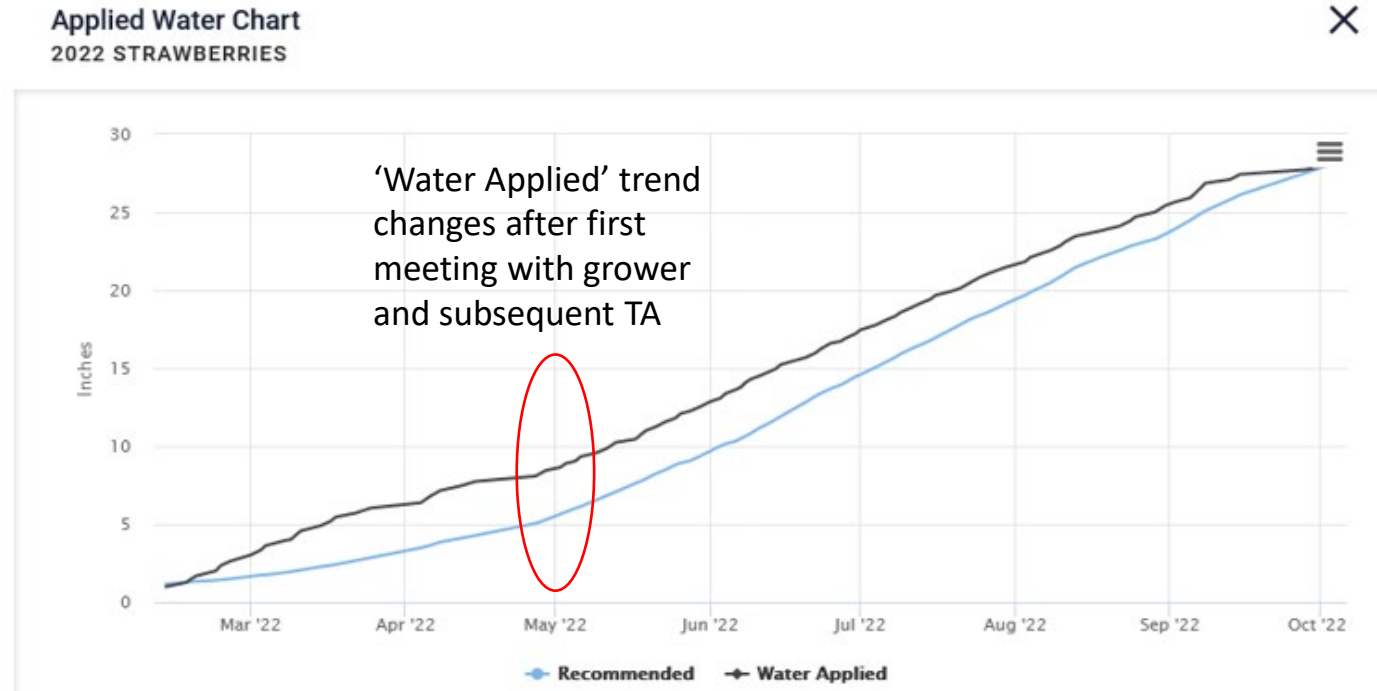


Side-by-side trial



(Drip block had more irrigation events but lower total applied)

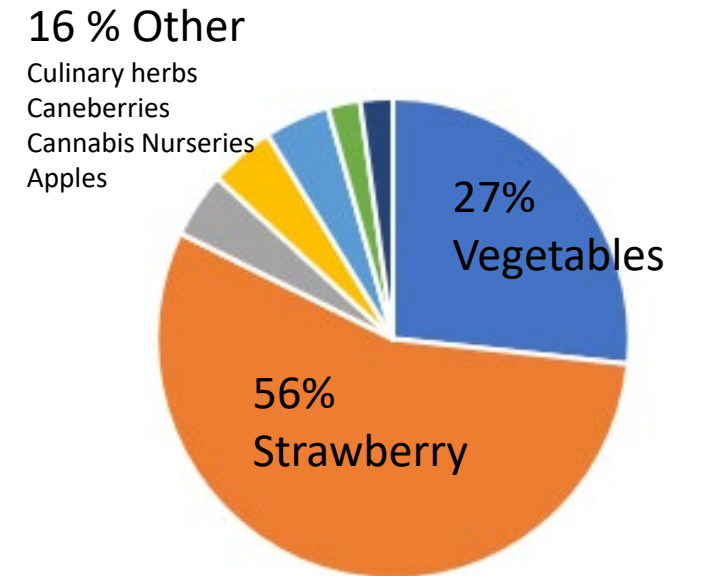
Water Conservation Impact



- Growers receive periodic reports that can guide management adjustments to conserve water
- Growers can also use CropManage independently to generate and follow recommendations for efficient irrigation and nitrogen management

Program Participation

Program participation	2016-2023
No. Farm Operations (growers)	52
No. Ranches (monitoring sites)	84
Total Acres	1,500+
Percentage of ranches <40ac	71%
No. Rebate Requests processed	20
Total \$\$ rebate provided	\$92,462
Drip irrigation participants (%)	67%
Sprinkler irrigation participants (%)	33%



2021-2023 participants by crop

2016-2023 Program Growth

- PV Water funding (approx. \$1.5million since 2016)
- RCDSCC has leveraged this investment with additional grant funding (approx. \$1.6million) from other sources (CDFA, USDA-NRCS, SusCon and CA FarmLink)
- Strong partnership with UCANR for technical expertise and guidance
- Leveraged partnerships and funding have developed a robust water conservation program with high technical and material capacity to serve local growers
- Increased loaner equipment inventory available for program participants
- Augmented RCD staff and overall program capacity to serve a larger annual cohort of growers/ranches (currently at 25-30 participants per year)



Enclosure	Datalogger	Modem	Solar Panel	Battery Date	Solar Panel Hard Current Locator	QR Code	Inv Status
RCDS012	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified

Enclosure	Datalogger	Modem	Solar Panel	Battery Date	Solar Panel Hard Current Locator	QR Code	Inv Status
RCDS012	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified
RCDS013	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified
RCDS014	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified
RCDS015	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified
RCDS016	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified
RCDS017	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified
RCDS018	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified
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RCDS048	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified
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RCDS050	RCDS01-DL10(S	IP: 166.144.206. SP-RC26			none	Freedom	Verified



Other Related Activities

- Climate Smart Ag TA and Funding
- Soil Health
- Carbon Farming



- INM and Water Quality protection (Ag Order)

PRUEBA RAPIDA DE NITRATO EN EL SUELO GUÍA PARA FRESA

GUÍA PARA TOMAR MUESTRAS DE NITRÓGENO DEL SUELO

Esta guía da información práctica para tomar una muestra de suelo y medir el nitrógeno mediante la prueba rápida de nitratos. Se recomienda tomar una muestra a un pie de profundidad, porque las raíces de fresa alcanzan hasta el primer pie de suelo, y la muestra nos dice si hay suficiente nitrógeno para las plantas. También se puede tomar una muestra más profunda a dos pies que nos dice si perdimos nitrógeno por drenaje.

Materiales Requeridos: *materiales en la foto

1. Varilla para muestrear suelo 7/8" x 33" - www.ams-samplers.com/7-8-x-33-est-soil-probe-w-handle.html
2. Un balde (3-5 galones)
3. Seis tubitos de centrifuga de 50 ml con gradilla para los tubitos www.amazon.com/SPL-Conical-Centrifuge-Racks-Sterile/dp/B01MD4HGPJ
4. Botella de chorro - www.amazon.com/Plastic-Squir-Bottle-Lid-16/dp/B004BNC80C
5. Cronómetro o reloj con cronómetro
6. Solución de cloruro de calcio - "gratis con el RCD"
7. Tiras de papel con reactivo ("tiras reactivas") para la prueba rápida de nitratos - "gratis con el RCD"

831-484-2959 or info@rcdcsantacruz.org

- Managed Aquifer Recharge (and Recharge Net Metering)

Recharge Net Metering (ReNeM) in the Pajaro Vallay

ucTV Recharge Net Metering

Water Bill

Recharge Basin

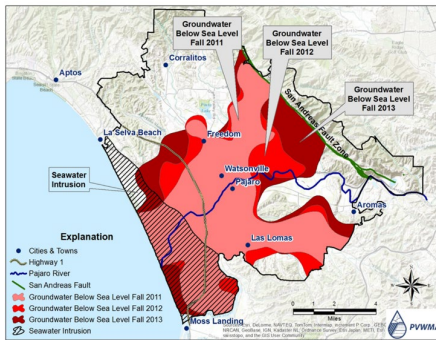
02 22296

Watch on YouTube

Brief history...

PV Water

12,000 AFY aquifer overdraft & seawater intrusion



PV Groundwater Basin Management Plan (BMP) (2010-2014)

“Conservation” a key component and priority of the BMP (5,000 AFY goal) (2014-2019)

Partner with PV Water to achieve BMP conservation goal (2015-2019)

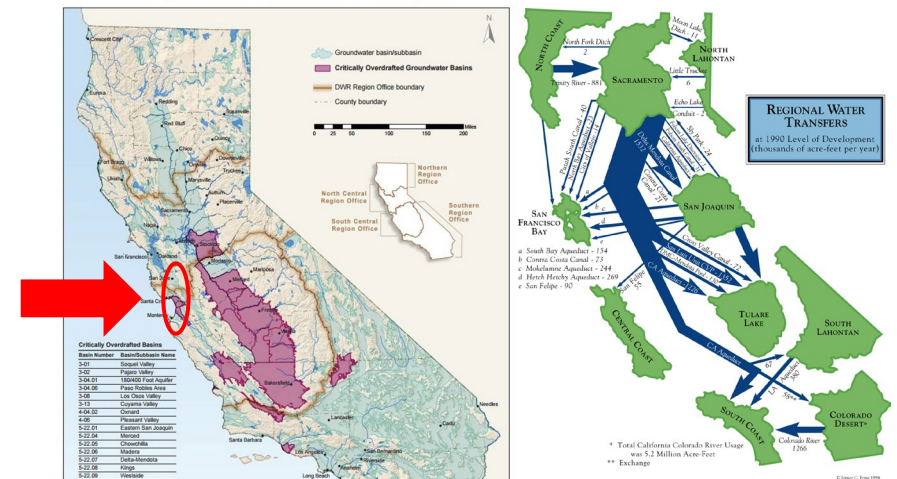
Strategic plan - water conservation goals
Performance-based conservation metrics and incentives (PICA) (2011-2015)

Community Water Dialogue (2010)

Ag Industry Leaders

RCDSCC

Critically Overdrafted Groundwater Basins – January 2016

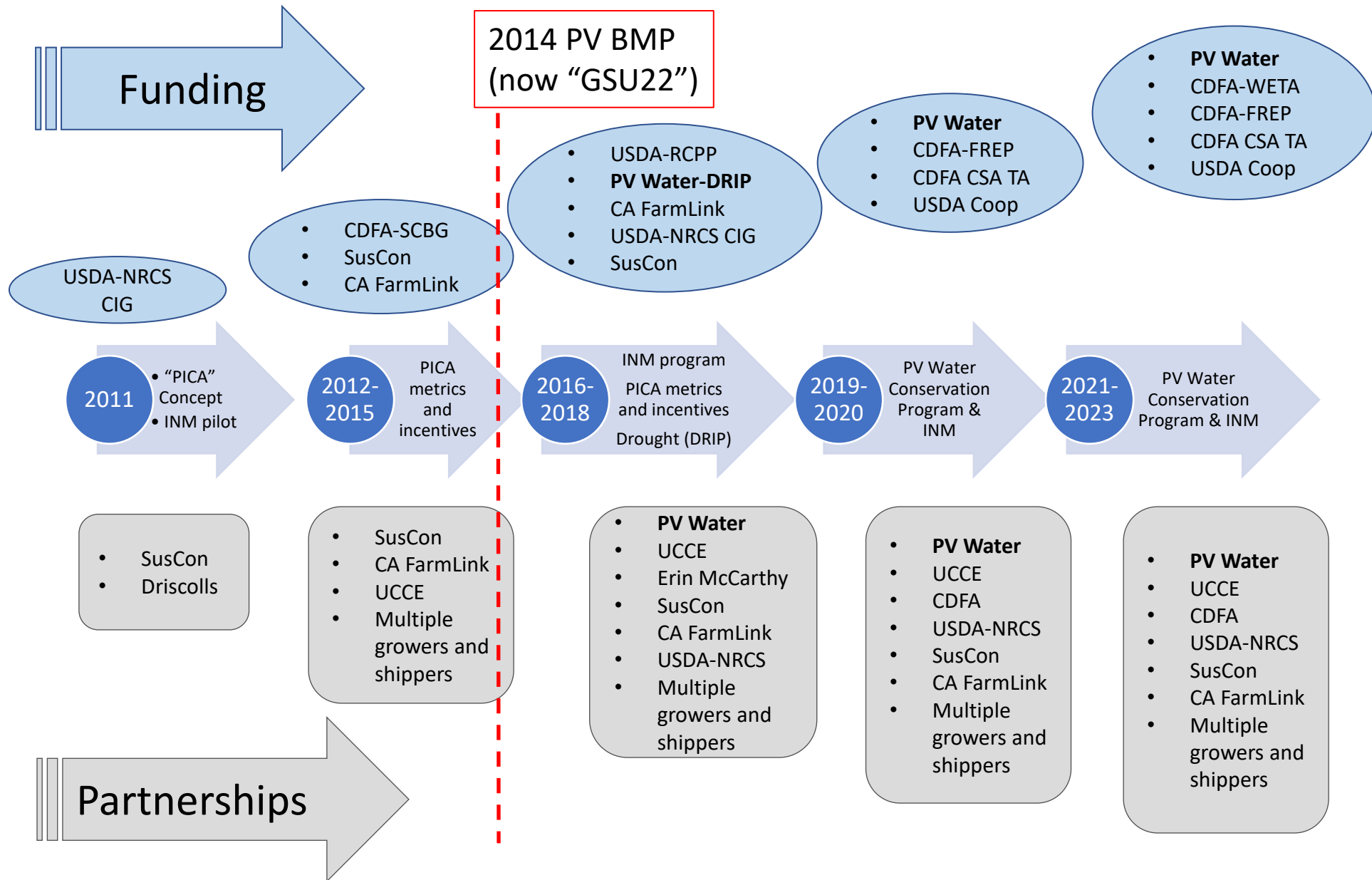


Virtually “off the grid” from large-scale water transfers, and dependent on critically overdrafted groundwater

SGMA – PV “BMP” becomes **GSU22**

2019 – present
PV Water & RCDSCC
Conservation and INM
Program

RCDSCC Program Development, Leveraged Funding and Partnerships



Thank you!



Pajaro Valley
Water Management Agency



RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



PV Water Board of Directors Meeting

BMP Agricultural Conservation Program Update

February 1, 2023

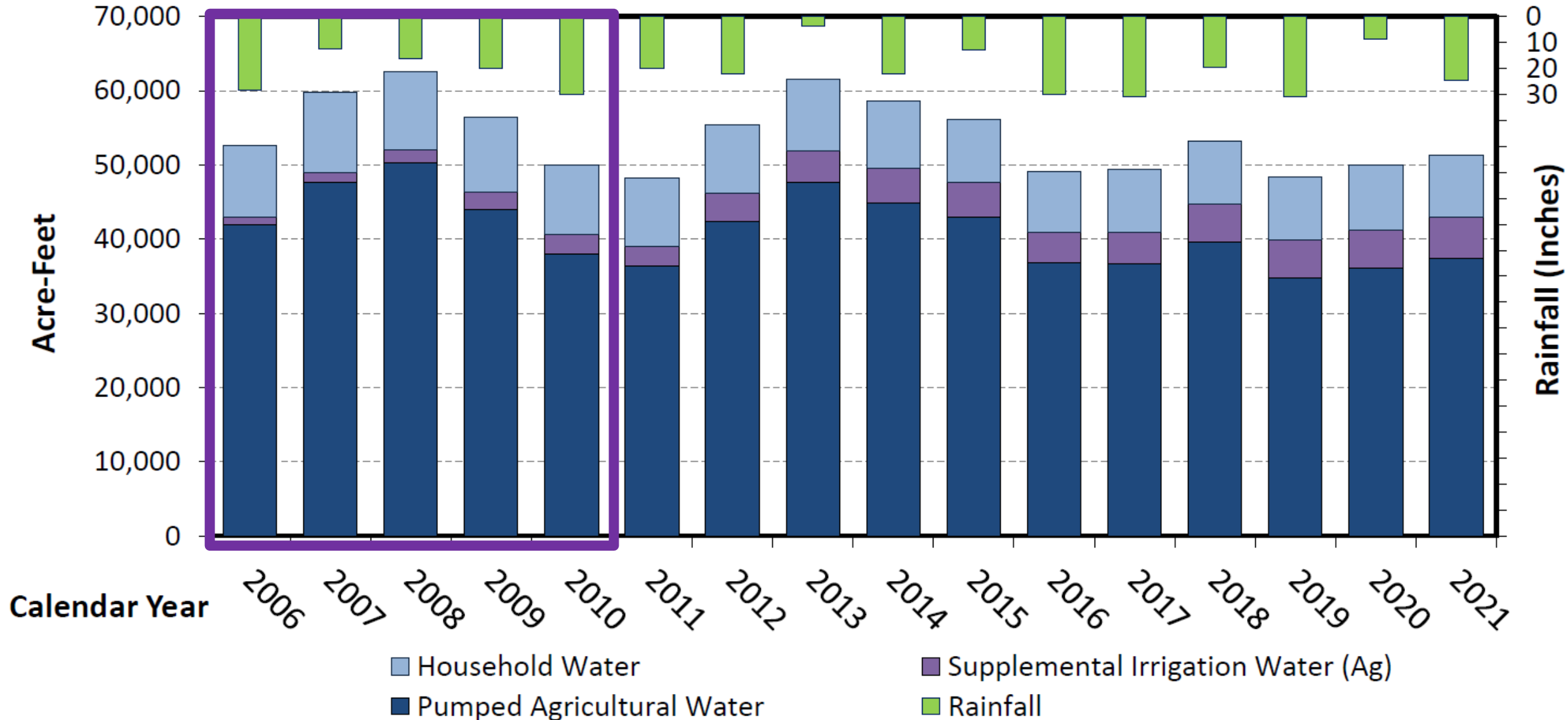




State of Conservation

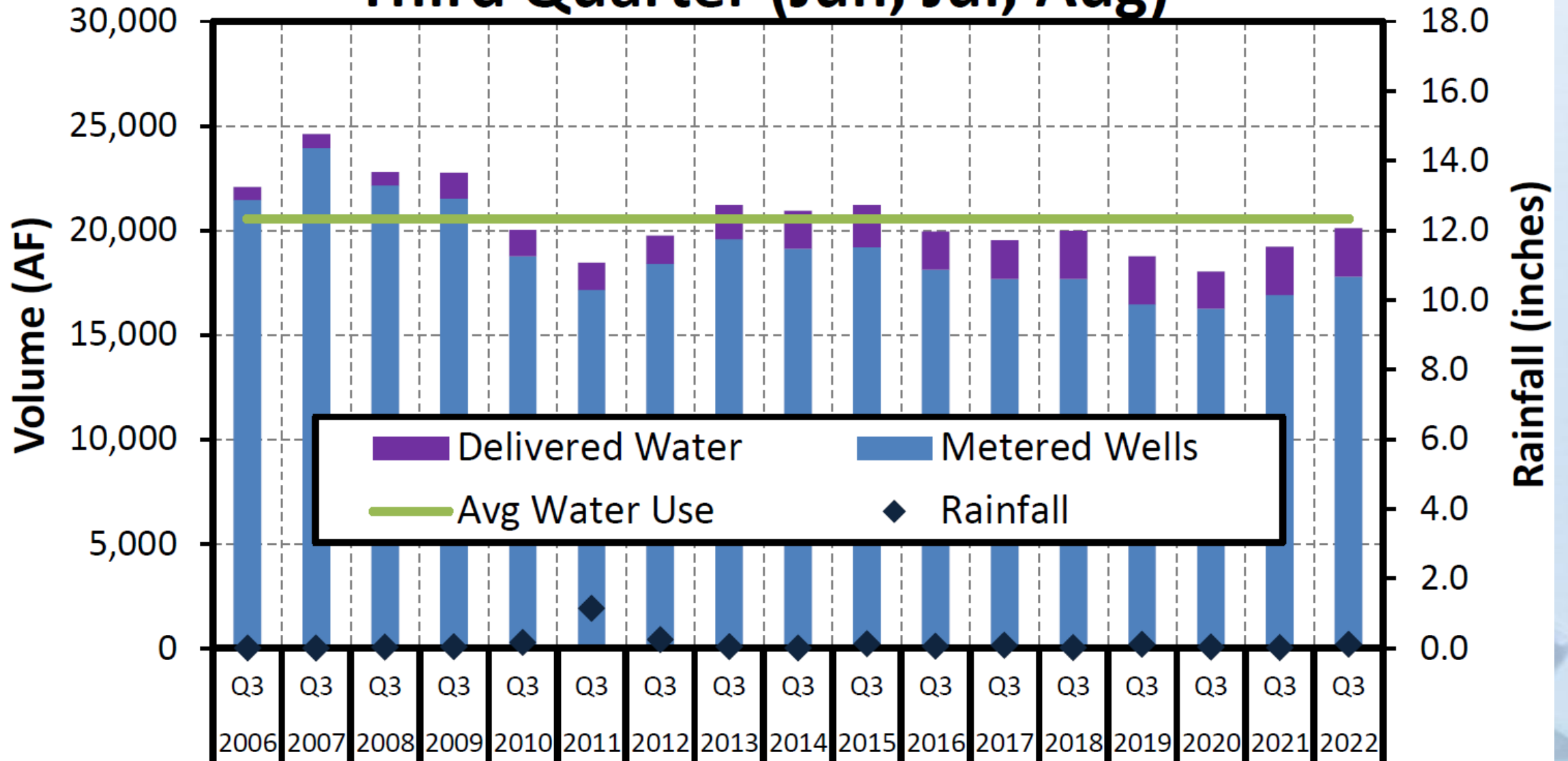
Water Use and Precipitation Trends

Pajaro Valley 2006 - 2021



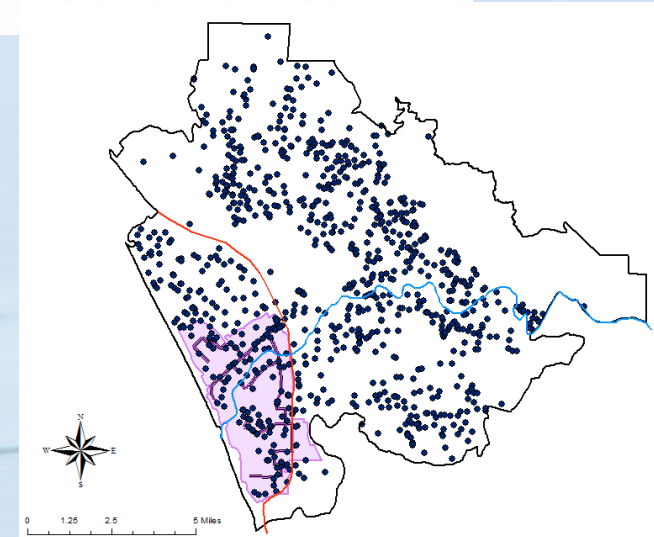
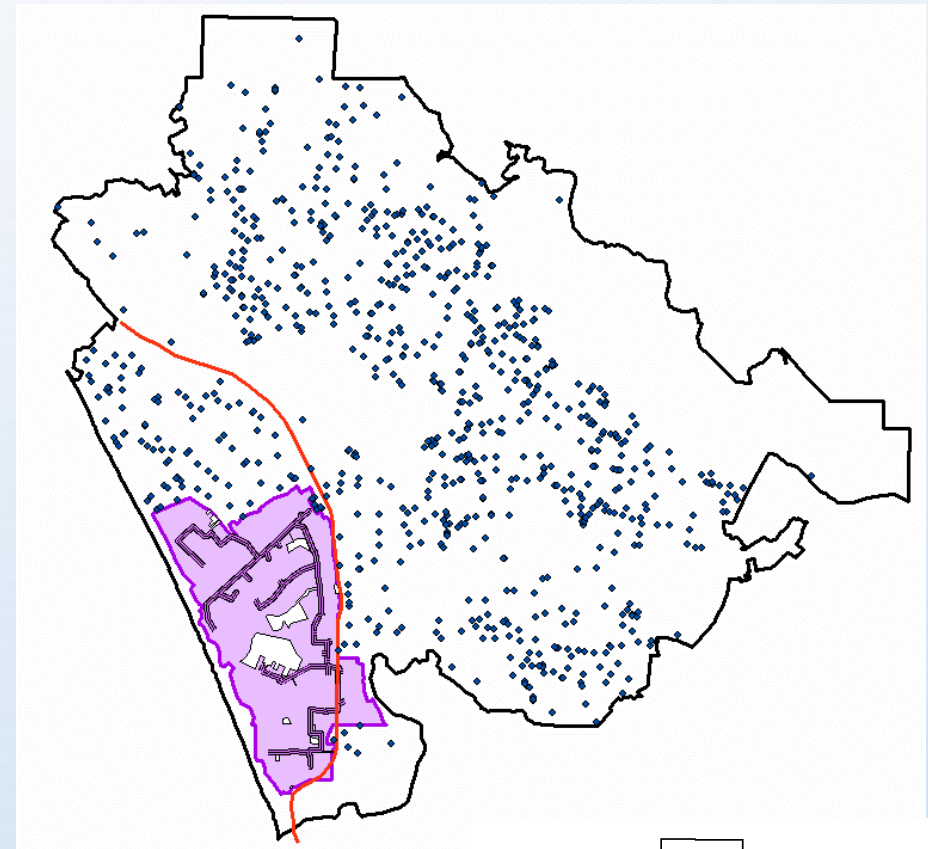
Quarterly Well & Delivered Water Production

Third Quarter (Jun, Jul, Aug)



Progress Toward Conservation Goal

- GSU22 Goal: 5,000 AFY saved by 2023; 75% achieved by 2020 (or start work on Phase II projects)
- To eliminate complexity due to delivered water, look elsewhere
- Wells Outside the DWZ (ODWZ) account for ~80% of agricultural production
 - ODWZ Wells 2006-10 (BMP Baseline Period)
 - Average Annual Production: 35,250 AF
 - Average Rainfall: 21.38 inches
 - ODWZ Wells 2017-21
 - Average Annual Production: 31,610 AF
 - Average Rainfall: 22.81 inches
 - Progress = **91%** toward 4,000 AFY goal (80% of goal for whole basin)



Thank You, for more information...

Visit our website: pvwater.org

Call: 831-722-9292

Email: mendiola@pvwater.org

Pajaro Valley
Water Management Agency

Pay Online | Select language | search... | Watsonville... 45°F 73°F

About | Board | Operations | Hydrology | Conservation | Resources | Contact

Managing Water Resources Of The Pajaro Valley
PV Water works tirelessly toward achieving a sustainable groundwater basin.
[Read more](#)

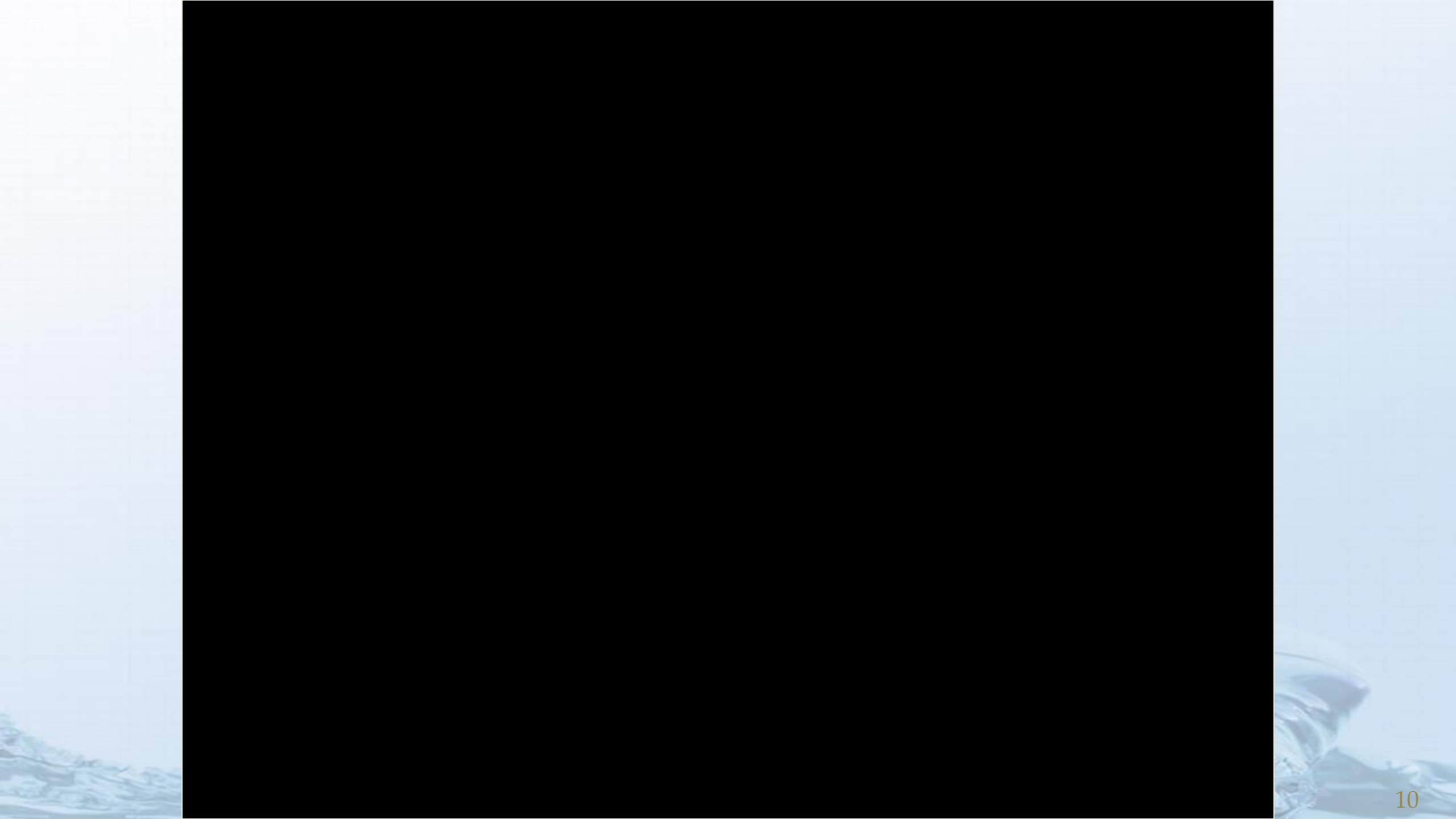
About PV Water
Who we are, What we do & Why we do it
[Learn more](#)

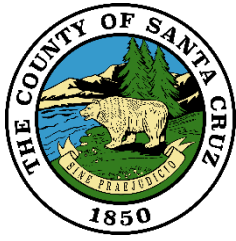
Hydrology
Looking at Water and the Pajaro Valley
[Learn more](#)

Projects
What we're doing, what we've done
[Learn more](#)

Upcoming Meetings & Events

NOV 13	Admin/Finance Committee Meeting
NOV 19	Board of Directors Meeting
NOV 28	Projects & Facility Operations Committee
DEC 11	Admin/Finance Committee Meeting
DEC 19	Board of Directors Meeting





County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency – Environmental Health



701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY - Call 711 <http://www.sceh.org>
EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us

January 3, 2023

Amanda Ingham and Rick Rogers,
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region
777 Sonoma Ave, Room 325
Santa Rosa, CA, 95404

Subject: Response to NMFS Letter to Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors dated November 4, 2022.

Dear Ms. Ingham and Mr. Rogers,

Thank you for communicating with the County of Santa Cruz (“County”) regarding our well permitting process in a letter dated November 4, 2022. The County of Santa Cruz is committed to supporting the conservation of both coho salmon and steelhead and protecting the critical instream flows that support juveniles, especially through the dry summer and fall.

Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Water Resources staff have already identified a revision to our well permitting ordinance, Section 7.70 of the Santa Cruz County Code (“SCCC”), as a priority for 2023. We appreciate that you met with Water Resources staff on November 15 to discuss the letter. At that time, you explained that similar letters were also sent to several other counties, and that it is not a warning or indication of any future enforcement action by NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As discussed during the call, the following is our response to your November 4, 2022 letter.

Background

Santa Cruz County has a very complex geology, born from our location at the transition between the Pacific and North American Plates, including the San Andreas Fault and other axillary faults, and marine processes that contribute to some of our bedrock formations. Over the past 20 years, there has been a substantial amount of work completed to better understand our groundwater aquifers and these studies have contributed in a positive way in developing Sustainable Groundwater Management Plans and projects to improve water resource sustainability.

Well permitting

While our current well permitting process is ministerial, proposed wells are required to meet a set of conditions to protect shallow groundwater and surface water. These requirements include minimum standards for the annular seal depth, review of potential impacts to sensitive habitat by environmental resource planners, and review of water use efficiency.

Our code requires a minimum seal depth of 50 feet below ground, unless the only usable water available is within that range. Even if that is the case, the seal depth may not be less than 20 feet below ground. Based on our experience, such a situation is exceedingly rare.

As part of the review process, County staff refer well applications to environmental resource planners if the proposed well location may potentially impact sensitive habitat. This includes the riparian corridor as well as known or potential habitat for listed species such as coho salmon and steelhead trout, Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander, California Red-Legged Frog, and the Mount Hermon June Beetle, among others.

Wells which will serve more than four residential parcels, or which are expected to use more than two acre-feet of water per year are required to demonstrate efficient use of indoor and outdoor water use. Applicants must report conservation measures that are currently in place or will be implemented once the well is constructed. The County also has the authority to conduct water use efficiency audits and require reasonable conservation measures be implemented. *See* SCCC 7.70.110(D).

The majority of wells permitted by the County are for rural residential properties and are considered de minimis users from the perspective of groundwater management. Your letter did not draw a distinction between de minimis and non-de minimis, or between new and replacement wells.

Sustainable Groundwater

While we appreciate the effort to communicate with us about NMFS's priorities, we respectfully disagree with statements in your letter that imply a proven connection between current groundwater pumping and reduced stream flow based on the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for the Santa Cruz and Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basins.

We are disappointed that your letter included two quotes from the GSPs, without providing the nuance and context that is included within the GSPs. Further, while the letter uses the GSPs to claim that "surface water and groundwater are hydraulically linked throughout much of Santa Cruz County," the total area of the GSPs that are identified as potentially interconnected is less than one-eighth of the total area of the County. Based on this limited area of impact, this raises questions about NMFS basis and justification to request a County-wide well management change.

The Santa Cruz Mid-County GSP, which has been approved by the State of California Department of Water Resources, identifies only small parts of the Basin along Soquel Creek, Branciforte Creek, Arana Gulch, and towards the mouth of Aptos Creek (Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency, GSP p 2-49) to have modeled interconnection between surface water and groundwater. Even at those locations, the link is tenuous, as the model does not take into account the impacts of evapotranspiration from riparian vegetation on streamflow (Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency, GSP p 2-126). Despite extensive monitoring along Soquel Creek, a measurable impact from substantial pumping on streamflow has not been detected even where a thorough monitoring system is in place:

Annual rainfall, flows from the upper Soquel Creek watershed outside of the Basin, temperature and evapotranspiration individually have a much greater measurable influence on streamflow than groundwater pumping. For this reach of Soquel Creek, it has been concluded over several years of monitoring that there is not a direct measurable depletion of surface water flow correlated with municipal pumping. (Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency, GSP p 3-95)

The Santa Margarita GSP takes a conservative approach to interconnection, assuming - for the sake of setting minimum thresholds and sustainability management criteria - that there is interconnection between surface water and groundwater throughout the Basin. However, your letter implies that both an interconnection has been proven and that it is a direct threat to threatened species, both claims are contradicted in the GSP:

The groundwater model shows a Basin-wide reduction in streamflow from pumping, but without GDE monitoring data, a quantifiable correlation has yet to be established. However, given the current condition of waterways that continue to support threatened and endangered species, these impacts are not thought to be significant and unreasonable. On-going programs such as Santa Cruz County's Juvenile Steelhead and Stream Habitat Monitoring Program have monitored steelhead density and stream habitat since 1994. No correlation between the amount of creek baseflow and fish density or habitat availability has been identified, perhaps because other factors, both anthropogenic and naturally occurring, can affect habitat abundance. (Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency, GSP p 2-43).

The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies are in the process of increasing their monitoring networks to refine the data available and improve model calibration. Neither GSP calls for a change in well permitting standards as a requirement to meet sustainability goals.

Water Resources Successes and Next Steps


The Santa Cruz County water resources community has been working very hard over the past 20 years to address water resources sustainability while protecting instream flow. While historic groundwater pumping and altered recharge patterns have all contributed to reduced

groundwater levels over the past century, groundwater elevations in both groundwater basins identified in your letter have seen increases in recent years.

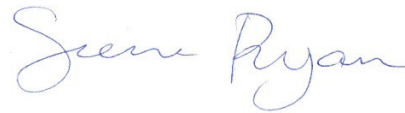
We are proud to have among the lowest per-capita daily water use in California. We are also proud that water districts have added customers while overall water use continues to decline. We are excited that a purified wastewater plant in the Mid-County Basin will begin recharging that basin in 2023. In addition, we have completed two Groundwater Sustainability Plans and one Alternative, and have plans for many more projects to improve water resource sustainability throughout our county.

Finally, while we appreciate hearing from NMFS about your policy positions and perspective, we would have preferred that NMFS took the time to reach out to our Water Resources staff to discuss these concerns first. We consider ourselves a partner with NMFS on the conservation of steelhead and coho salmon and have strong working relationships with both regulatory and research staff. We look forward to working with you as we update our well permitting ordinance over the next year.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

88F018C895E447B...

Andrew Strader
Interim Director of Environmental Health
Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency
701 Ocean St., Room 312
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-2022



Sierra Ryan
Water Resources Program Manager

cc:

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors (BoardOfSupervisors@santacruzcounty.us)
Craig Weightman, CDFW, Region 3 (Craig.Weightman@wildlife.ca.gov)
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James Bishop, Central Coast RWQCB (James.Bishop@waterboards.ca.gov)

From: [Becky Steinbruner](#)
To: [Sierra Ryan](#); [Brian Lockwood](#)
Cc: [Paul Lego](#); [Becky Steinbruner](#)
Subject: Requesting the Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission Agenda Include Public Discussion of SGMA Implementation Grant Components
Date: Monday, January 23, 2023 5:37:30 PM

*****CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.***

Dear Sierra and Brian,

I note today that the January 17, 2023 Soquel Creek Water District Board meeting agenda included a presentation regarding the SGMA Implementation Grant Components. Due to the severe storm damages in my area that caused power and internet failure as well as road closures, I was unable to participate at all in that meeting to hear the presentation.

<https://www.soquelcreekwater.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/439?fileID=1470>

The information provided in the slide presentation available is significant and relevant to the County's water supply planning. Therefore, I feel this information should also be provided to the Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission, and publicly discussed.

Please place this matter on the next County Water Advisory Commission agenda.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Becky Steinbruner