



## Water Advisory Commission

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# Water Advisory Commission 2022-2023 Biennial Report

This report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission (Commission) during 2022 and 2023.

## ROLES OF THE WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Commission was established in 1975 to serve as a policy advisory body to the Board of Supervisors (Board) on issues relating to the use and protection of the county's water resources. The roles of the Commission, as outlined in its bylaws, are as follows:

1. Advise the Board on all policy issues impacting water resources in Santa Cruz County, including but not limited to the following categories:

- a. Water quality and conservation.
- b. Water supply development, storage and distribution.
- c. Forestry and watershed management.
- d. Preservation of fish, wildlife, and riparian habitat.
- e. Groundwater extraction.
- f. On-site sewage disposal systems.
- g. Recreation.
- h. Water reclamation.
- i. Public health and safety.
- j. Monterey Bay preservation.
- k. Local agency water management plans.
- l. Water resource development proposals.
- m. Santa Cruz County Water Master Plan/General Plan.
- n. County ordinances, and departmental policies and regulations.

2. Staffing, funding, and other resources available to the Commission necessarily limit the duties and responsibilities outlined above. Therefore, the Commission will utilize discretion in devoting time to those activities that are most important to achieving its overall goal of enhancing and preserving Santa Cruz County water resources. County departments (Planning, HSA-Environmental Health (EH), and Public Works (DPW)) will assist the Commission in its work, by including the Commission in water related correspondence, and by having staff provide timely oral reports on pending issues.

**MEETING DATES, TIME AND LOCATION**

In 2022-23 meetings were generally held from 4-6 pm on the first Wednesday of even numbered months, with meetings cancelled or rescheduled depending on special circumstances. Since the end of COVID remote meeting provisions, all meetings have been held in person. Agendas are posted at least five days in advance of meetings, and are distributed electronically to local water districts and interested persons. Agendas and attachments are posted on the County website: <http://scceh.com/Home/Programs/WaterResources/WaterAdvisoryCommission.aspx>

**COMMISSION STRUCTURE**

The Commission consists of seven members, five of whom are concerned citizens nominated by individual supervisors and two that are appointed at-large. The two at-large positions represent public water purveyors and private or mutual water companies in the county. From the beginning of 2020, Cherie Bobbe served as Chair and Chris Berry served as Vice-Chair. In April 2021, Brian Lockwood was elected to serve as Chair and Chris Berry to continue to serve as Vice-Chair. In April 2022, Brian Lockwood was re-elected to serve as Chair and Paul Lego was elected to serve as Vice-Chair.

Membership during 2022-2023 was as follows:

1st District: Frank Cheap
2nd District: Ray Pereyra
3rd District: Linda Wilson
4th District: Brian Lockwood
5th District: Bryan Largay
Public Water: Chris Berry-City of Santa Cruz Water Dept. until April 1, 2022, Nate Gillespie from Scotts Valley Water District was appointed in June 2022.
Mutual Water: Paul Lego, San Andreas Mutual Water Company

**COMMISSION STAFF**

Sierra Ryan, the Water Resources Program Manager in the EH division of the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, served as administrative secretary to the Commission throughout the reporting period.

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>2022</b>	1ST DISTRICT	2ND DISTRICT	3RD DISTRICT	4TH DISTRICT	5TH DISTRICT	PUBLIC WATER	SMALL SYSTEMS
	CHEAP	PEREYRA	WILSON	LOCKWOOD	LARGAY	BERRY	LEGO
Feb. 2, 2022	E	P	P	P	P	P	P
April 6, 2022	P	P	P	P	E	P	P
June 1, 2022	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Aug. 3, 2022	P	P	P	P	E	E	P
Oct. 5, 2022	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Dec. 7, 2022	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
P	Indicates attendance at that meeting						
E	Excused from meeting						
A	Absent from meeting						
*	Present, but not formally appointed to Commission due to a lapse						

P – Indicates attendance at that meeting, E – Excused from Meeting, A – Absent from meeting

\* - Present but not formally appointed to the Commission yet

<b>2023</b>	1ST DISTRICT	2ND DISTRICT	3RD DISTRICT	4TH DISTRICT	5TH DISTRICT	PUBLIC WATER	PUBLIC WATER	SMALL SYSTEMS
	CHEAP	PEREYRA	WILSON	LOCKWOOD	LARGAY	BERRY	Gillespie	LEGO
Feb.1, 2023	P	P	P	P	P	P	*	P
April 5, 2023	P	P	P	E	P	-	*	P
June 7, 2023	P	P	P	E	P	-	*	P
Aug. 2, 2023	E	E	P	P	E	-	P	P
Oct. 4, 2023	P	P	P	P	P	-	P	P
Dec. 6, 2023	P	P	P	P	P	-	P	P
P	Indicates attendance at that meeting							
E	Excused from meeting							
A	Absent from meeting							
*	Present, but not formally appointed to Commission due to a lapse							

## **GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

All information regarding the Commission activities is available on the internet. The website facilitates data access and makes the Commission's work more available to the public. The Commission website address is:

<http://sceh.com/Home/Programs/WaterResources/WaterAdvisoryCommission.aspx>

In addition to preparing an agenda and minutes from the previous meeting, staff regularly includes pertinent water related articles in the Commission agenda packets to stimulate discussion on related topics.

Listed below are the principal issues and events that were discussed by the Commission during the past two years:

### **1. Update on County Water Resources Management Efforts**

- Annual Water Resources Reports to Board of Supervisors
- Drought Response
- Updates to County Septic System Ordinance and Management Program
- Climate Action and Adaptation Planning

### **2. Pajaro Valley Water Management Issues**

- The Pajaro River flood control project
- Managed Aquifer Recharge
- Basin Management Plan Update and Implementation, including the 5-year update to the alternative Groundwater Sustainability Plan
- Extension of recycled water pipeline along San Andreas Road
- College Lake Project and EIR
- Watsonville Sloughs Project and EIR

### **3. Santa Margarita Groundwater Issues**

- Implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan
- Challenges with the Big Basin Water Company

### **4. Mid-County Water Issues**

- Implementation of Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Sustainability Plan
- Status of water supply projects
- Relationships between groundwater, groundwater dependent ecosystems, streamflow, and fish

### **5. Coordination with Commission on the Environment and Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission**

- Ongoing subcommittee to discuss coordination of effort with COE and Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission

**6. Senate Bill 552 Compliance**

- The WAC has taken responsibility for compliance of SB 552 including drought response activities and related planning.

**7. Water Well Ordinance Update**

- The County is investing in updating section 7.70 of the County Code pertaining to water well constructions. Two Commissioners serve on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Well Ordinance Update process, and the Commission has received regular updates.

**8. Additional Significant Items**

- In addition to the list of principle issues discussed above, the Commission also discussed or followed the progress of the following issues and ongoing projects:
  - Presentations by County Water Resources staff on programs they oversee
  - Commissioners were regularly updated on actions taken by the Board on items that affect water supply, water quality, fisheries and riparian habitat protection, groundwater recharge, flood control, drainage, reclaimed wastewater and other related issues.

**FUTURE GOALS**

In the coming years the Commission will be following-up on current endeavors. These endeavors include oversight of SB 552 implementation, commenting on and providing recommendations to the Board on County Water Resource efforts, and staying abreast of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act implementation and water supply projects. The Commission intends to continue its trend of soliciting information from various individuals and agencies as this information relates to water resources in the county. As always, the Commission will continue to evaluate important issues affecting the County's water resources, respond to requests by the Board and the public, and make timely recommendations on both policy and other appropriate matters.

Prepared by:

Sierra Ryan

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