

WHY ARE WE HERE?



Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

California's recent drought has highlighted the over-pumping across the state and prompted immediate action to revitalize groundwater levels. Governor Jerry Brown signed into law the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in September 2014.

SGMA provides local agencies with a framework for managing groundwater basins in a sustainable manner. Local agencies must adopt a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to achieve sustainability within 20 years of adoption.

This brochure highlights the key elements of SGMA compliance and achieving sustainability in the Basin.

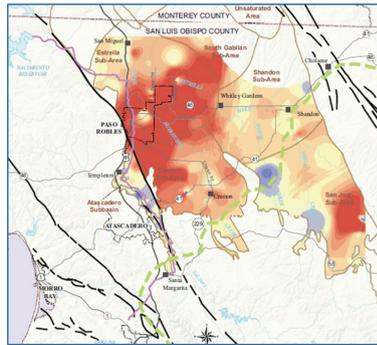
Your Groundwater Basin

The Paso Basin is the primary water supply for residents, landowners, and businesses in a large portion of the North County. The Paso Robles and Atascadero subbasins cover over 900 square miles, with 600,000 acres of residential, agricultural, and commercial land uses.

Over the last several decades, the Basin has been pumped at a higher rate than what nature can restore. The State has designated the Basin to be in a condition of critical overdraft. This over-pumping is widespread across California and aggravated by the recent drought.

This public forum is being held because:

- Groundwater levels are declining in many parts of the Basin
- Basin outflows exceed inflows; this is projected to continue and potentially worsen
- State law requires the Basin be managed to achieve sustainability
- Important public decisions need to be made very soon
- Future opportunities for input and participation need to be identified



Groundwater level change map (1997-2013)



WHAT'S NEXT?

- Formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agency(ies) ("GSAs")
- Development of a basin-wide Groundwater Sustainability Plan ("GSP")
- Implementation of sustainability projects
- Achieve groundwater sustainability!

FOR RESOURCES AND MORE INFO

To stay informed, join our new SGMA email list at: slocountywater.org/sgma

For more information, contact the County of San Luis Obispo via:

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Achieving Sustainability *in the* Paso Groundwater Basin

FEBRUARY 23, 2017

*Paso Basin
Public Forum*



HOW DOES SGMA IMPACT ME?

The State has classified the Basin as a “high priority” basin under the requirements of SGMA. By June 30, 2017, local public agencies must form one or more Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (“GSA”) to manage the Basin and develop the GSP. Basin users and stakeholders will need to join forces to define sustainability goals and a clear path to achieve these goals.

If these deadlines are not met, the State Water Board will step in to protect the Basin. This will involve mandatory extraction reporting for non de minimus users (and accompanying fees) to the Board and interim plan implementation (subject to fees for all users), in addition to the local SGMA efforts and costs to come into compliance with the law.



WHAT'S THE CURRENT CONDITION OF THE PASO BASIN?

Sustainability Goals

Sustainable Groundwater Management = the management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results (SGMA). “Undesirable results” are defined as significant and unreasonable:

- Lowering of groundwater levels indicating a depletion of supply,
- Reduction of groundwater storage,
- Seawater intrusion,
- Degraded water quality,
- Land subsidence, or
- Depletions of surface water resulting in adverse impacts on the water’s beneficial uses.

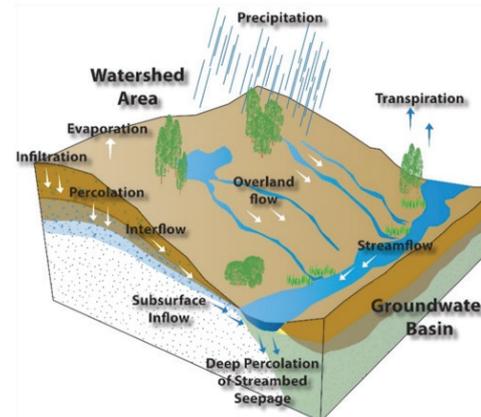
Groundwater sustainability means not exceeding the Basin’s perennial yield, the maximum annual amount that can be safely withdrawn from the Basin.

Groundwater Model

Partners and stakeholders in the Paso Basin have already conducted significant efforts to define basin conditions and create tools to help with future management. Three tools have been developed to assess Basin conditions:

- 1 Groundwater level curves are updated each spring.
- 2 Groundwater level change maps are created periodically to track historical changes.
- 3 Basin Computer Model was updated to simulate Basin response under current and projected future conditions. The Basin Computer Model was last updated to support the Supply Options Study (see next page). The baseline model assumed a 1% percent growth over a 29-year period.

These tools show us that groundwater levels have been declining in many parts of the Basin (outflows have historically exceeded inflows) and that these conditions are projected to continue unless actions are taken.



HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY?

- Local agencies use groundwater tools to define Basin’s current conditions.
- GSAs and basin users define sustainability goals and projects in a new GSP that meets regulatory standards.
- Stakeholders implement actions/projects defined in GSP over 20 years.
- GSAs continually monitor basin and submit reports to State to show progress and Basin recovery.

Partners and stakeholders in the Paso Basin have already conducted significant effort to define potential management actions and projects. Now decisions will need to be made on what combination of conservation and supply enhancement actions to take.

Supply Options Study

The completed Supply Options Study provides information on the quantity, quality, procurement methods, and points of delivery to the Basin for several supply options - Nacimiento Water, State Water, and Recycled Water. Eight delivery alternatives were analyzed in the Basin Computer Model to assess effectiveness.



The Supply Options Study compiled a prioritized list of the most beneficial and viable options for procuring available local and state water resources. This list and other information within the study will help the GSAs to obtain supplemental supplies and create projects which wholly or partially stabilize groundwater levels.

Water Conservation Program

On October 27, 2015, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Countywide Water Conservation Program to address ongoing water scarcity concerns. The amendments were effective on November 26, 2015 and are as follows:

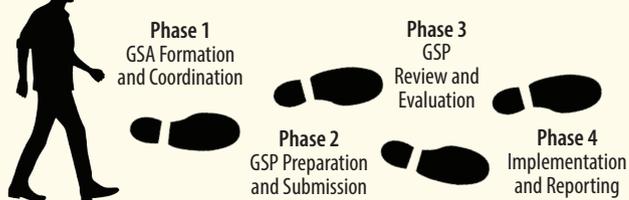
Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (until GSP is adopted)

- New buildings and new irrigated agriculture must offset new water use.
- New construction and new irrigated agriculture in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin must be water neutral.

Ongoing Countywide

- Water waste prevention measures apply to all unincorporated areas where a similar program is not already operated by a water purveyor.
- Agricultural best management practices encouraged in unincorporated areas.

Phases of GSP Development and Implementation



Formation of GSAs

On January 13, 2015, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors adopted a SGMA Strategy aimed at helping local basins move towards SGMA compliance, and directed staff to implement the policy. The overarching strategy seeks to:

Establish community-focused GSAs based on cooperative interagency and stakeholder relationships in order to comply with SGMA requirements.

The county and other local agencies are working together to form multiple GSAs with willing and eligible partners over the Basin.

The Basin is one of nine subbasins in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. GSAs within the Paso Basin, Atascadero Basin, and the greater Salinas Valley, intend to coordinate on GSP development, providing a path towards sustainability.