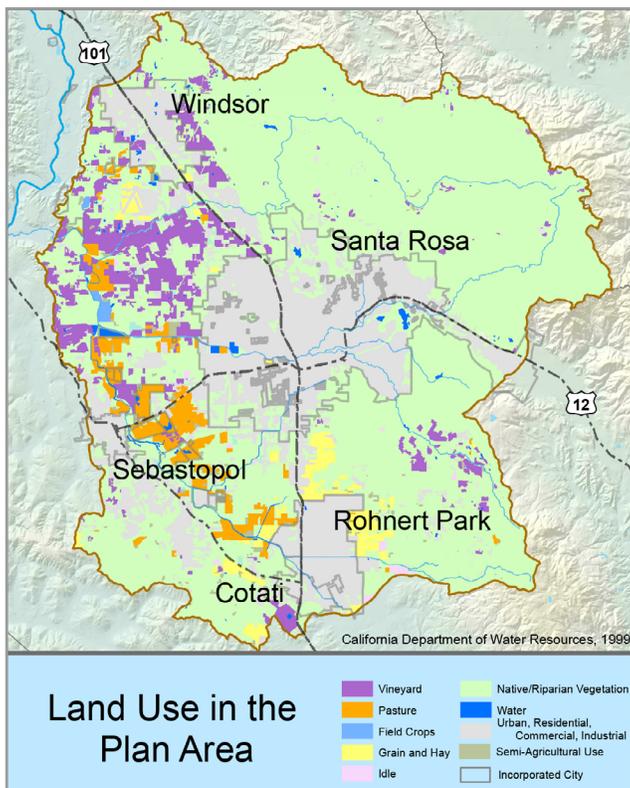


SANTA ROSA PLAIN GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

Goals, Objectives and Management Components

Fall 2014



Recent studies and computer modeling indicate groundwater pumping in the Santa Rosa Plain watershed has caused an average annual imbalance between the total amount of water flowing into and out of the basin of approximately minus 4% (-3,300 acre feet) per year between 1976 and 2010. This imbalance can lead to declines in groundwater levels and reduce the water flowing in creeks and streams. Without management, droughts and climate change may worsen this imbalance. Careful monitoring and management of groundwater and surface water is therefore needed to ensure a sustainable, reliable supply of water in our wells, creeks and streams.

To be proactive, a balanced group of stakeholders called the Basin Advisory Panel (Panel) has been developing a Groundwater Management Plan (Plan) in accordance with state water code to locally and voluntarily manage our groundwater resources. The Panel is comprised of almost 30 technical experts, residential well users, businesses, agricultural groups, environmental organizations, governmental agencies, tribal groups, and natural resource managers. After nearly two years in development, the Panel has recommended that the Sonoma County Water Agency Board of Directors adopt the Plan for implementation.

Four main elements guide the plan:

1. **Water Resources:** to describe water demands and available supplies
2. **Goals & Objectives:** to manage the groundwater basin
3. **Management Components:** to realize progress on the goals and objectives
4. **Implementation:** to prioritize recommended actions and identify a schedule and funding

Water Resources

The Santa Rosa Plain Watershed is recognized as an ecologically and economically important and distinguished area of Northern California. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) completed a study of the Santa Rosa Plain which includes an innovative computer model that fully integrates surface-water and groundwater to better understand and manage the area's water resources. Study results suggest that groundwater pumping slightly exceeds the amount being replenished; this may affect creeks and streams in addition to wells.

Goals & Objectives

The goal of the Plan is to locally manage and protect groundwater resources through non-regulatory measures to support all beneficial uses, including human, agriculture, and ecosystems in an environmentally sound, economical, and equitable manner for present and future generations.



Management Components

The Panel has developed management components to ensure implementation achieves the goal and objectives.

Component 1: Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement is the foundation of an ongoing collaborative process of decision-making and action during Plan implementation. The Plan continually cultivates and informs stakeholders through participation in meetings, relationship building, and broad educational outreach.

Component 2: Monitoring Program & Modeling

An important component of the Plan is to establish a comprehensive, long-term monitoring program including surface water flows, land subsidence and groundwater levels. Monitoring data will be used periodically to evaluate groundwater resources, improve the monitoring program, and help make decisions on water management strategies.

Component 3: Groundwater Protection

Groundwater protection takes many forms: acting to maintain quantity and quality, improving well management, protecting recharge areas, and providing educational tools and information.

Component 4: Increase Conservation & Efficiency

Water conservation reduces the demand for potable water resources for both surface and groundwater supplies. By lessening groundwater withdrawals, water conservation approaches protect groundwater levels, water quality conditions, and ecosystems.

Component 5: Increase Groundwater Recharge

To ensure a long-term, viable, sustainable groundwater supply, the Plan seeks to increase groundwater recharge in the Plan area over the long term.

Component 6: Increase Water Reuse

Appropriate water reuse within the Plan area could provide additional water supply for users that can offset demands on groundwater supplies. This could include using highly treated municipal wastewater (recycled water) and untreated household gray water beneficially for a variety of non-potable (i.e. not for drinking) applications.

Component 7: Integrated Groundwater Management

Integrated groundwater management includes identifying and implementing activities, developing strategies, and adopting policies that recognize the links between groundwater and the broader hydrologic system, comprising climate, rivers, wetlands, and ecosystems.

Next Steps and Implementation

The Panel selected the Sonoma County Water Agency as the lead agency for the Plan. The next step in the two-year Plan development will be for the Water Agency's Board of Directors to consider adoption of the Plan at a publicized Board Hearing in Fall 2014. After adoption, the Plan will continue to be a living document that can adapt to changing conditions. Plan Implementation is structured to encourage an open, collaborative and cooperative process for groundwater management activities, and to maximize coordination of the many future actions envisioned by the Panel, Technical Advisory Committee, and the public.

Funding has been provided by the Sonoma County Water Agency, cities of Cotati, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Town of Windsor, California American Water, and the County of Sonoma. Moving forward, funding for implementation of the Plan would likely come from those same entities, in addition to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, United Winegrowers, and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

Learn More and Contribute

Stakeholder involvement is critical to the success of the Plan implementation. The success of this Plan for the long term will depend on continued participation and involvement of the Plan Area community, as represented by Panel members and the interested public.

Stay Informed: Visit www.sonomacountywater.org/srgroundwater for information and upcoming meeting dates
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