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## Section 3.0 Current Management & Planning Efforts

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### **3.0 CURRENT MANAGEMENT & PLANNING EFFORTS**

This section summarizes current management and planning efforts related to groundwater resources within the Plan Area that are conducted by a variety of local, state and federal agencies, as well as individual organizations and stakeholder groups. These existing efforts include regulatory and non-regulatory regional planning, management and monitoring efforts, which are grouped into the following general categories:

- Water Resource Planning
- Water Conservation
- Water Reuse
- Stormwater Management
- Water Quality Programs
- Monitoring Programs

The following sections summarize these efforts and programs as they relate to groundwater resources within the Plan Area and demonstrate the interest, support and continuing commitment of the individual agencies, organizations and stakeholders in managing local groundwater resources.

#### **3.1 Water Supply Planning**

##### **3.1.1 North Coast Integrated Water Management Plan**

In November 2002, California voters approved Proposition 50, the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002. The Act encourages regional cooperation in water resources planning by providing grant funding for projects identified in a regional plan, referred to as an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP).

The North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (NCIRWMP) is an innovative, stakeholder-driven collaboration among local government, watershed groups, tribes and interested partners in the North Coast region of California (<http://www.northcoastirwmp.net/>). The North Coast comprises seven counties, multiple major watersheds, and a planning area of 19,390 square miles, representing 12% of California's landscape, including the Plan Area. The NCIRWMP's focus areas include restoring salmonid populations, enhancing the beneficial water uses, promoting energy independence, reducing greenhouse gas

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emissions, addressing climate change, supporting local autonomy and intra-regional cooperation, and enhancing public health and economic vitality in the region's economically disadvantaged communities.

The NCIRWMP serves as a comprehensive planning tool that links other water resources management plans and programs through collaborative processes, coordination and communication. In recognition of the importance of groundwater resources and the need for the North Coast to address groundwater management planning on a regional scale, the development of the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Plan was awarded funding as a pilot-project through a NCIRWMP Planning Grant by DWR.

### **3.1.2 Urban Water Management Planning**

Urban Water Management Plans (UWMP) are prepared every five years by California's urban water suppliers to support long-term resource planning and ensure adequate water supplies are available to meet existing and future water demands. Every urban water supplier that either provides over 3,000 acre-feet of water annually or serves more than 3,000 or more connections is required to assess the reliability of its water sources over a 20-year planning horizon considering normal, dry, and multiple dry years. The plans are submitted to DWR, which then reviews the submitted plans to make sure they have completed the requirements identified in the [Urban Water Management Planning \(UWMP\) Act](#) (Division 6 Part 2.6 of the Water Code §10610 - 10656).

Within the Plan Area, UWMPs are prepared by the Water Agency (as a wholesaler) and the Cities of Cotati, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa and Town of Windsor (as retailers). The Plans discuss and describe:

- Existing water supplies and transmission system;
- Projected water demands over the next 25 years;
- Projected water supplies available over the next 25 years, the reliability of that supply, and general plans for water supply projects;
- Current and planned water conservation activities;
- A water shortage contingency analysis; and
- A comparison of water supply and water demand over the next 25 years under different hydrological assumptions (normal year, single dry year, multiple dry years).

As local groundwater makes up a portion of the urban water supply within the Plan area (as further described in Section 4.3), the UWMPs also discuss and describe groundwater production facilities, historical and projected groundwater use and the conditions of the groundwater basin. Thus, UWMPs serve as a routine mechanism for local urban water providers to coordinate and plan for future urban

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groundwater use. The most recent projections for future urban groundwater use are incorporated into Section 4.8.

In addition to the UWMPs required by the state, local urban water providers perform other water supply planning activities related to groundwater, including development of water master plans, preparation of water-supply assessments for larger proposed developments (as applicable), updates of city and county General Plans, and other activities. Information regarding some of these activities is summarized below:

- Water Master Plans have been developed by many urban water providers in the Plan Area, including the Cities of Cotati, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol and Town of Windsor, which assess water supply needs and describe planned projects. The City of Santa Rosa is also developing a Groundwater Master Plan to provide direction and recommended policies on the City of Santa Rosa's use of current and future groundwater resources for both peaking and emergency supply.
- Beginning with passage of SB 610 in 2002, water supply assessments must be furnished to local governments for inclusion in any environmental documentation for certain projects that are subject to CEQA (as defined in Water Code 10912 [a]). The water supply assessments are required to determine water supply sufficiency for a 20-year projection in addition to the demand of existing and other planned future uses. Since 2002, a number of water supply assessments have been prepared in the Plan Area on behalf of local planning agencies.

### **3.1.3 Water Supply Strategies Action Plan**

The Water Supply Strategies Action Plan was developed by the Water Agency in coordination with its water contractors to increase water supply system reliability, resiliency and efficiency in the face of limited resources, regulatory constraints and climate change uncertainties. Nine Water Supply Strategies were approved by the Water Agency's Board of Directors in September 2010, which include actions to enhance the existing conjunctive use of the region's surface water and groundwater resources, develop groundwater management plans, and comply with recent groundwater monitoring requirements from the state. The Water Supply Strategies Action Plan is updated on a regular basis and the most recent version is available at <http://www.scwa.ca.gov/water-supply-strategy/>.

### **3.1.4 Unincorporated Area Water Supply Planning and Management**

Existing water supply planning and management within the unincorporated portions of the Plan Area are primarily accomplished through activities performed by the County's Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD). Such activities performed by PRMD are mainly associated with administering permits for water wells, reviewing development proposals in unincorporated areas, and implementation of the County's Water Resource Element of the 2020 General Plan.

PRMD is the local agency responsible for administering permits for water wells within the Plan Area and reviews all development proposals within unincorporated areas that will rely on wells for water supply. Regulations and requirements for constructing water-wells are contained in the County's Well Ordinance (Ordinance 25B). In reviewing water well permits and applicable development proposals, PRMD utilizes a four tier classification system based on information on geology and water yields to indicate general areas of groundwater availability. Class 1 areas are Major Groundwater Basins; Class 2 areas are Major Natural Recharge Areas; Class 3 areas are Marginal Groundwater Availability Areas; and Class 4 areas are Areas with Low or Highly Variable Water Yield.

County maps of these areas are utilized in the development review and well permitting process and the requirements for proving adequate groundwater vary by these classes. Discretionary applications in Class 3 and 4 are required to include hydrogeologic reports establishing that groundwater quality and quantity are adequate and will not be adversely impacted by the cumulative amount of development and uses allowed in the area, so that the proposed use will not cause or exacerbate an overdraft condition in a groundwater basin or subbasin.

Additionally, the County commissioned a pilot study of areas it has determined to be water scarce, including portions of the Plan Area (Bennett Valley and Mark West Study Areas). The study examined climate, land use and the depths of wells drilled over time (Kleinfelder, 2003). PRMD subsequently established requirements and guidelines for performing pump tests on new water-wells for complying with permit requirements in water scarce areas.

PRMD requires the measurement and reporting of groundwater-level measurements on a quarterly or monthly basis for commercial and industrial projects requiring a use permit after 2004 and using over 0.5 afy of water.

In recognition of the importance of water resource within unincorporated areas of the county, an optional Water Resource Element was developed and included in the County of Sonoma General Plan 2020. Many of the objectives and policies identified within the Water Resources Element support one of its key goals, which is to

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manage groundwater as a valuable and limited shared resource and many of the objectives and policies. These objectives and policies include supporting local groundwater studies and management programs, encouraging activities which protect natural groundwater recharge areas. The Water Resources Element for the 2020 General Plan can be reviewed at <http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/gp2020/wre.pdf>.

### **3.1.5 Climate Change Studies and Planning**

Projected changes in climate include increased variability in precipitation and rises in air temperature, resulting in shorter wet season, longer dry season, more droughts and more extreme high flows. A regional study of how climate change affects water resources and habitats in the San Francisco Bay area conducted by the US Geological Survey (Flint and Flint, 2012). Results indicated large spatial variability in climate change and the hydrologic response across the region; although there is warming under all projections, potential change in precipitation by the end of the 21st century differed according to model. Hydrologic models predicted water supply could be subject to increased variability (that is, reduced reliability) due to greater variability in precipitation and water demand is likely to steadily increase because of increased evapotranspiration rates and climatic water deficit during the extended summers.

Increases in climatic water deficit (integrating climate, energy and soil moisture), will impose demands on irrigation, vegetation and other organisms, and necessitating an watershed-wide, ecosystem approach to adaptation. To face these potential changes in climate the Water Agency is working with federal and local partners, including the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to advance the science in our region in an effort to plan for and adapt to predicted changes.

### **3.1.6 Groundwater Banking Feasibility Study**

In an effort to improve the region's water supply reliability, the Water Agency and its partners (Cities of Cotati, Rohnert Park and Sonoma, Valley of the Moon Water District, and the Town of Windsor) are conducting a feasibility study for a regional groundwater banking program. Conceptually, the groundwater banking program would involve the diversion and transmission of surplus Russian River water produced at existing drinking water production facilities during wet weather conditions (i.e., the winter and spring seasons) for storage in aquifers beneath the Santa Rosa Plain and/or Sonoma Valley. The stored water would then be available for subsequent recovery and use during dry weather conditions (i.e., the summer and fall seasons) or emergency situations. The Water Agency and the study participants are exploring groundwater banking in a systematic and phased

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approach utilizing information obtained from completed and ongoing scientific studies and groundwater management activities sponsored by the Water Agency and its partners.

### **3.2 Water Conservation**

A number of regional and local water conservation programs have been established in the Plan Area. The Sonoma-Marín Saving Water Partnership represents 10 water utilities in Sonoma and Marin counties that have joined to create a regional approach to water use efficiency. Within the Plan Area, these utilities include the Cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati; Town of Windsor and Sonoma County Water Agency. Each of these utilities have water conservation programs to assist the communities reduce water use.

Water conservation and use efficiency program elements include:

- Rebate program to replace top loading clothes washer with high efficiency front-loading clothes washer and replace old toilets with high efficiency toilets.
- Qualified water efficient landscaper training that provides education on proper plant selection for local climates, irrigation system design and maintenance, and irrigation system programming and operation.
- Online water wise gardening website which offers a Mediterranean and native plant list, design and garden installation tips, and irrigation system design and maintenance information.
- Green business program that provides businesses with water and energy conservation information and incentives, to reduce waste and prevent pollution.
- Annual eco-friendly garden tour, providing information on graywater irrigation systems, rainwater catchment systems, permeable surfaces, living walls, native and drought tolerant plants, edibles, swales, chicken coops and lizard habitat, and cob furniture.

More information is available on the Sonoma County Water Agency website at <http://www.scwa.ca.gov/sonoma-marin-saving-water-partnership/> and at other local utilities.

Members of Wine Institute and the California Association of Winegrape Growers introduced the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices self Assessment Workbook in 2002 to promote environmental stewardship and social responsibility in the California wine industry. More than 50 members of Wine Institute and CAWG developed the Sustainable Winegrowing Program and workbook over a two-year period with input from environmental groups, regulators, university educators and social equity groups. Since the workbook and program were initiated, nearly 70 percent of the winegrowers and producers in California have joined, and nearly half of the vineyards and production facilities in the state have completed self-assessments.

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The workbook is a self-assessment tool for California's vintners and growers and provides practical information on how to conserve natural resources, protect the environment and enhance relationships with employees, neighbors and local communities. The workbook addresses a number of criteria for measuring performance, including Vineyard Water Management and Winery Water Conservation and Quality.

Winegrowers and producers conduct a self-assessment using the workbook and online tools. The Chapters on viticulture, soil management, vineyard water management, and winery water conservation include guidance and options for optimal vines selection, vineyard design, soil type and water demand management to improve measurement, management, water conservation and water use efficiency. The workbook provides guidance and options on how they can improve winegrowing management and wine production. Participants develop a work plan to make improvements and then evaluate progress over time. Another aspect is the certification program: winegrowers and producers can be third-party certified as a sustainable winegrowing facility.

More information on sustainable winegrowing practices is available at <http://www.sustainablewinegrowing.org/>.

### **3.3 Water Reuse**

Water reuse is recognized as an important tool in reducing the demand for potable water and groundwater used for irrigation. Water reuse currently occurs across multiple scales throughout the Plan Area, ranging from large-scale municipal recycled water programs to graywater systems developed by individual property owners.

The Santa Rosa Subregional Water Reuse System is the largest water reuse system in the Plan Area and reclaims water receives from. The water is treated to a tertiary level with activated carbon filtration and UV disinfection. The recycled water is distributed to the Geysers Steamfield, agricultural users, golf courses, and public and private landscaping. The Subregional System delivers approximately 13 mgd (14,500 afy) of the recycled water to the Geysers Steamfield via a 42-mile pipeline, where the water is injected into underground wells in the Geysers area. Geothermal activity gradually heats the injected water to produce steam, which is extracted to drive turbines at the Geysers power plants, producing electricity. Delivery of recycled water to the Geysers is an ongoing obligation, taking first priority in the allocation of recycled water from the Subregional System plant. Surplus recycled water is then diverted into the recycled irrigation system and distributed to the agricultural and municipal users. More information is available at <http://ci.santa->

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[rosa.ca.us/departments/utilities/recycle/pages/default.aspx](http://rosa.ca.us/departments/utilities/recycle/pages/default.aspx)

Other significant water reuse systems within the region include the Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup Sanitation Zone and the Town of Windsor, where recycled water generated from these systems is used for agricultural and landscape irrigation. Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup Sanitation Zone and the Town of Windsor

Smaller-scale water reuse systems within the Plan Area include:

- Winery wastewater reuse systems, which typically reuse treated water generated during winery operations for irrigation. Such systems are regulated by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- Small-scale graywater systems reuse wastewater collected from showers, bathtubs, bathroom sinks, and clothes washing machines from individual homes. Such graywater is then utilized for landscape irrigation. Permitting of graywater systems in Sonoma County is conducted by PRMD.

### **3.4 Stormwater Management**

The integration of appropriate stormwater management practices with the protection and preservation of groundwater resources has been increasingly recognized. Several initiatives within the Plan Area highlight efforts to reduce potential water quality impacts to local waterways, while also enhancing or preserving groundwater recharge.

#### **3.4.1 Municipal Stormwater Permit Program**

U.S. EPA intended that storm water discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) be primarily addressed through the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on an iterative approach because of the intermittent and variable nature of storm flows and pollutant concentrations as well as insufficient available effluent and receiving water data rather than numerical effluent limitations (61 FR 43761).

California's Municipal Storm Water Permitting Program regulates storm water discharges from MS4s through a permitting program. MS4s consist of drains, pipes, and ditches, and conveyed to nearby streams, rivers, lakes, estuaries, basins, wetlands, and oceans. Storm water permits require permittees to develop and implement a storm water management plan with the goal of reducing the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable through the use of best management practices. The program areas include public education and outreach; illicit discharge detection and elimination; construction and post-construction; and

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good housekeeping for municipal operations.

The Sonoma County Water Agency is a co-permittee with the City of Santa Rosa and the County of Sonoma for the MS4 permit boundary, which incorporates most of the Plan Area and includes the City of Santa Rosa and unincorporated areas near the cities of Healdsburg, Windsor, Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati, and Sebastopol. To comply with the MS4 permit, the City of Santa Rosa and County of Sonoma developed a Low Impact Development Technical Design Manual, which provides technical guidance for project designs that require the implementation of permanent stormwater BMPs. Low Impact Development (LID), as it relates to storm water, aims to mimic the hydraulic function of the undeveloped site by capturing, treating, and infiltrating storm water as close to the source as possible and using small scale landscape-based features located throughout the project site.

### **3.4.2 Water Smart Development Guidebook**

The Water Agency developed the [Water Smart Development Guidebook](#) to provide Sonoma County land developers, city and county planning officials, and environmental regulatory agencies with a reference guide to avoid and minimize potential adverse impacts to water resources that can result from development projects. The guidebook provides guidance for the planning and design of residential and commercial developments for water resource related project elements. The three core subjects of the guidebook focus on ways to increase water conservation, increase water reuse, and reduce stormwater impacts.

### **3.4.3 Stormwater Management/Groundwater Recharge Scoping Study**

In Fall 2010, the Water Agency initiated watershed scoping studies for flood-control/groundwater recharge projects in the Laguna de Santa Rosa, Petaluma, and Sonoma Valley Watersheds. The goal of the initial scoping studies (one in each watershed) is to establish the project objectives, identify potential project concepts, and determine, at a preliminary level, the technical and practical feasibility of projects that would reduce flooding while providing additional community benefits. These benefits could include groundwater recharge, water quality improvements, water supply improvements, improved ecosystem functions, preservation of agricultural land use, preservation or enhancement of open spaces, system sustainability or benefits like recreation, public access or education.

The initial phase of the studies were completed in late summer 2012. These studies are consistent with one of the strategies of the Water Agency's Water Supply

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Strategies Action Plan. More information is available at <http://www.scwa.ca.gov/stormwater-groundwater/>.

### **3.5 Water Quality Programs**

#### **3.5.1 North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan**

The California legislature assigned primary responsibility for the protection and enhancement of water quality in California to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and the nine regional water quality control boards (Regional Water Boards). The State Water Board provides state-level coordination for the water quality control program by establishing statewide policies and plans for the implementation of state and federal laws and regulations. The regional water boards adopt and implement water quality control plans (basin plans) which recognize the unique characteristics of each region with regard to natural water quality, actual and potential beneficial uses, and water quality problems. Article 3 of Chapter 4 of Porter-Cologne directs regional water boards to adopt, review, and revise basin plans, and provides specific guidance on factors which must be considered in adoption of water quality objectives and implementation measures. The format for basin plans is described in Sections 13241-13247 of Porter-Cologne.

The Plan Area is located within the North Coast Region, which encompasses a total area of approximately 19,390 square miles. The North Coast RWQCB Basin Plan contains a brief description of the North Coast Region, and describes its water quality and quantity problems and the present and potential beneficial uses of the surface and ground waters within the Region. The Implementation Plans section describes measures, including specific prohibitions, action plans, and policies that form the basis for controlling water quality. Statewide plans and policies are included with a description of Regional Water Board surveillance and monitoring activities. The plan contains provisions for public participation, complies with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, and establishes a setting and the framework for the development of discharger regulation.

The water quality objectives contained in the NCRWQCB Basin Plan are prescribed for the purposes of protecting the beneficial uses, and consists of general and specific objectives. Whenever the existing quality of water is better than the water quality objectives established in the plan, such existing quality shall be maintained unless otherwise provided by the provisions of the State Water Resources Control Board Resolution No. 68-16, Statement of Policy with Respect to Maintaining High

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Quality of Waters in California. The state policy establishes two conditions that must be met before the quality of high quality waters may be lowered by waste discharges.

First, the state must determine that lowering the quality of high quality waters:

- 1) Will be consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the state,
- 2) Will not unreasonably affect present and anticipated beneficial uses of such water,
- 3) Will not result in water quality less than that prescribed in state policies (e.g., water quality objectives in Water Quality Control Plans).

Second, any activities that result in discharges to high quality waters are required to

- a) Meet waste discharge requirements that will result in the best practicable treatment or control of the discharge necessary to avoid pollution or nuisance, and
- b) Maintain the highest water quality consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the state

Objectives for surface waters and groundwaters are generally set to prevent adverse affect on designated beneficial uses.

The US EPA approved a TMDL for high ammonia levels and low dissolved oxygen concentrations in 1995, as the Waste Reduction Strategy for the Laguna de Santa Rosa. The Waste Reduction Strategy focused on reducing nitrogen loading from point and non-point sources. Regional Water Board staff currently are developing additional TMDLs for nitrogen, phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and sediment in the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed, to address continuing water quality impairments. These TMDLs will apply to the entire Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed, including Mark West Creek, Santa Rosa Creek, and all the tributaries.

Designated beneficial uses for the Santa Rosa Plain are provided in Table 2-7. The Basin Plan includes groundwater recharge as a designated beneficial use of water for natural or artificial recharge of groundwater for purposes of future extraction, maintenance of water quality, or for halting saltwater intrusion into freshwater aquifers.

**Table 3- 1 Beneficial Uses – North Coast Region**

The NCRWQCB Basin Plan is available online at [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water\\_issues/programs/basin\\_plan/basin\\_plan.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/basin_plan.shtml)

### **3.5.2 Salt & Nutrient Management Plan**

The State Water Resources Control Board adopted a Recycled Water Policy in February 2009. The purpose of the Policy is to increase the use of recycled water in a manner that implements state and federal water quality laws. The Recycled Water Policy requires that Salt and Nutrient Management Plans be completed by 2014 to facilitate basin-wide management of salts and nutrients from all sources in a manner that optimizes recycled water use while ensuring protection of groundwater supply and beneficial uses, agricultural beneficial uses, and human health.

A salt and nutrient management plan is being prepared for the Plan Area by the City of Santa Rosa. Plan components typically include:

- Basin-wide water quality monitoring
- Water recycling goals and objectives
- Salt and nutrient source identification
- Basin loading - assimilative capacity estimates
- Salt mitigation strategies
- Anti-degradation analysis
- Consideration of emerging constituents of concern

A draft salt and nutrient management plan for SRP has been developed and has included several public workshops with local stakeholders.

### **3.6 Groundwater-Level Monitoring**

Groundwater-level measurements are collected numerous organizations within the Plan Area, including DWR, the Water Agency, Cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati, Town of Windsor, California American Water Company, Sonoma State University and many operators of small mutual water systems. Groundwater-levels are measured from a combination of private wells, dedicated monitoring wells and inactive and active public water supply wells. Details of the groundwater-level monitoring efforts and plans for coordinating and expanding the monitoring are provided in Section 5.2.

The Water Agency is working on behalf of the County of Sonoma to comply with the recent California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) Program (<http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/>). In the Santa Rosa Plain, a preliminary groundwater monitoring network has been established and data are being submitted to the CASGEM program online.