



SANTA ROSA PLAIN WATERSHED GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PUBLIC OUTREACH PLAN 2015/2016

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Santa Rosa Plain Watershed, home to approximately half the residents of Sonoma County, faces population growth and increasing demand for water in a changing climate, which necessitates thoughtful management of the region's important groundwater resources.

To address the need for effective groundwater management, a balanced group of stakeholders -- the Santa Rosa Plain Watershed Groundwater Management Program Basin Advisory Panel (Panel) -- collaborated for more than two years to develop and recommend a Groundwater Management Plan (Plan) for the region. Following the Panel's recommendation, the Water Agency Board of Directors formally adopted the Plan in fall 2014.

At about the same time as Plan adoption Governor Brown signed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which became effective January 1, 2015. SGMA requires that eligible local agencies in all high and medium priority groundwater basins form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) by June 2017 and prepare Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) by January 2022. Only local agencies with water planning, management or land use planning authority can form GSAs. If GSAs do not form and develop GSPs by these dates the state has the authority to step in and assume groundwater management responsibilities in high and medium priority basins.

The Santa Rosa Plain is considered a medium priority basin. Eligible local agencies have initiated a facilitated process to assess options on GSA formation in the Santa Rosa Plain groundwater basin and other medium priority basins in Sonoma County. Information and updates on this process are available on the Water Agency's SGMA webpage (<http://www.scwa.ca.gov/sgma/>) and will be shared with the Panel and the general public. SGMA also recognizes that existing groundwater management plans adopted before January 1, 2015 will remain in effect until new GSPs are developed. Implementing the existing Plan and continuing the collaborative stakeholder process, which form a strong foundation for the future GSP, enhances the likelihood of successfully meeting SGMA requirements and deadlines.

The Panel recognizes the importance of achieving broad public understanding of the Plan and support for its implementation. This *Public Outreach Plan* will guide outreach and public education on groundwater management, monitoring and modeling activities conducted during the first two years of Plan implementation. Outreach efforts will foster opportunities for interested parties to stay informed of and provide input on Plan implementation, get involved in voluntary monitoring, and promote sustainable use of groundwater resources in the Santa Rosa Plain. This *Public Outreach Plan* recognizes SGMA implementation is moving forward and the current Plan, Program and collaborative process will be modified in the future. It identifies activities that will inform and educate the Panel and interested parties, and coordinate with SGMA activities led by eligible local agencies in the coming two years.

Panel members, with support from project staff, will continually share information and solicit input from their respective constituent groups on groundwater management issues and activities. Interested parties are welcome to attend Panel meetings. Panel members and others requiring outreach assistance or additional information related to the project should contact Program Manager Marcus Trotta (mtrotta@scwa.ca.gov).

OUTREACH AND BRIEFINGS

Basin Advisory Panel Meetings: The Panel will meet four times each year in 2015 and 2016. The purpose of these meetings is for the Panel to provide guidance on program implementation. The meetings also provide an important forum that enable interested parties to stay informed of groundwater management program activities in the Santa Rosa Plain Watershed. All meetings are open to the public and interested parties are encouraged to attend.

Technical Advisory Committee Meetings: The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will meet approximately six times each year in 2015 and 2016. The purpose of the TAC meetings is to conduct the technical work of the Panel, and to provide regular input to staff about ongoing groundwater management program technical issues. All meetings are open to the public and interested parties are encouraged to attend.

Targeted Constituent Briefings: Panel members, and as needed, program staff, will provide updates for, or solicit feedback from, constituent groups as required or recommended by the Panel. These briefings should inform the public and increase awareness about groundwater management program implementation, major milestones and achievements, groundwater monitoring program development, and SGMA updates. Panel members report back public input received at briefings to the full Panel for discussion and consideration. (See Appendix: Constituent Groups and Interested Parties).

Local Elected Official Briefings: Program staff will brief the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, and other elected officials in the region, on a continuing basis. Briefings may also occur at Water Advisory Committee meetings, which commonly include elected officials from most areas represented in the Plan area.

Interested Parties Briefings: Program staff and Panel members will continue briefing interested parties, many of whom are represented by the diverse Panel membership. One large yet specific target group is rural private well owners throughout the region. Any interested party may request a briefing, or the Panel may recommend conducting outreach to interested parties at key program milestones. (See Appendix: Constituent Groups and Interested Parties).

Public Meetings and Workshops: Public meetings and workshops may be held as needed at key program milestones or as required by the legal framework that currently guides groundwater management planning in California.

COMMUNICATION/TOOLS

Basin Advisory Panel Meeting Announcements: Panel meeting agendas and handouts will be distributed one week prior to each Panel meeting.

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Announcements: TAC meeting agendas and handouts will be distributed one week prior to each TAC meeting.

Interested Parties Email List: Program staff will maintain an interested parties email list that includes anyone interested in receiving information about the Santa Rosa Plain Watershed Groundwater Management Program.

Social Media

Facebook, Twitter and other emerging social media technologies may be utilized to provide program updates to interested parties.

Informational Materials

Program staff and Panel members will jointly develop and utilize informational materials to educate the public. These materials may include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- **Groundwater Management Plan Brochure:** Description of the Plan and its major components.
- **Frequently Asked Questions on the Groundwater Management Plan:** Answers to common questions about the Plan.
- **Existing and New Educational Materials:** Previously utilized and new educational materials including but not limited to the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Primer, *Wellness Guide* for well owners, or *Slow It, Spread It Sink It* publication.
- **Volunteer Groundwater Level Monitoring Materials:** Staff will develop informational materials on the volunteer groundwater level monitoring program that can be used to educate and inform interested parties and well owners.
- **Newsletter Articles:** Brief text (50-100 words) providing occasional program updates that Panel members can insert into organizational newsletters and the Water Agency can publish in its e-newsletter.
- **Newspaper Editorials:** Informational pieces that, pending Panel approval of written content, individual Panel members and/or program staff can submit to local news sources.

Website

The Water Agency will continue to regularly post and archive program meeting and communication materials on the established program website. The website also serves as a repository for groundwater related reports, studies and other topical information discussed by the Panel or its committees.

Media Plan

Program staff will distribute press releases as needed at key implementation milestones to local and regional media and the offices of local elected officials.

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN ACTIVITIES

The Santa Rosa Plain Watershed Groundwater Management Plan includes recommended actions to guide outreach efforts. These include but are not necessarily limited to the following actions:

- Publish the adopted Plan, circulate copies and update constituent groups.
- Develop and implement a Public Outreach Plan to support effective groundwater use and management.
- Maintain an interested parties email and postal mail list to announce meetings and share information.
- Maintain and regularly update the program website as a central information source.
- Develop and distribute educational materials to the public.

- Conduct briefings periodically with interested parties and organizations to share information and receive input.
- Invite and encourage interested parties to attend Panel meetings.
- Maintain and further develop relationships with local, state and federal agencies and local organizations.
- Coordinate with and inform land use decisions of water resources planning.
- Conduct briefings with elected officials who have adopted the Plan.
- Conduct public forums at key Plan implementation milestones.
- Promote partnerships that help advance Plan goals and objectives.

Timeline

2015

Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Panel Meetings		2/17			5/14			8/13			11/12	
TAC Meetings		2/25		4/22		6/24			9/23	10/28		
Meeting Notices		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
GMP Implementation						Volunteer GW Level Program						
Constituent Briefings			----	----			----	----				
Other Briefings			----	----			----	----				
Website Updates		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	

2016

Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Panel Meetings		2/11			5/12			8/11			11/10	
TAC Meetings		2/24		4/27		6/22			9/28	10/26		
Meeting Notices		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Annual Program Update						Management Scenario Modeling						
Constituent Briefings			----	----			----	----				
Other Briefings			----	----			----	----				
Website Updates		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	

APPENDIX – CONSTITUENT GROUPS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

CONSTITUENT GROUPS

The Panel includes stakeholders representing broad interests from throughout the Santa Rosa Plain Watershed.

Agriculture

- Community Alliance of Family Farmers
- EJ Gallo, Representing the Sonoma County Winegrape Commission
- Sonoma County Farm Bureau

Business / Developers

- Building Industry Association of the Bay Area
- Construction Coalition
- North Bay Association of Realtors
- Sonoma County Alliance

Environmental

- O.W.L. Foundation (OWL)
- Sebastopol Water Information Group (SWIG)
- Sierra Club
- Sonoma County Water Coalition (representing OWL, SWIG, and 28 other organizations concerned about water supply and quality)

General Public

- Local Well Owner
- Resident Rohnert Park
- Resident Santa Rosa
- Well Owner and Rancher

Governmental

- City of Cotati
- City of Rohnert Park
- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Sebastopol
- Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District
- Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department
- Town of Windsor

Groundwater Users, including Rural Residential Well Owners

- Foothills of Windsor Homeowners Association
- Sweet Lane Wholesale Nursery

Natural Resource Management

- Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation
- Sonoma Resource Conservation District

Tribal

- Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria

Water Supply & Groundwater Technical Issues

- California Groundwater Association
- Cal American Water Company
- Fircrest Mutual Water Company
- Sonoma County Water Agency

INTERESTED PARTIES

Interested parties, groups or organizations that have expressed interest in groundwater management in the past include the following:

Business

- American Society of Heating and Air Conditioning
- Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce
- Sonoma County Economic Development Board
- Developers (Sonoma Mountain Village or Coddling)
- North Bay Leadership Council
- Manufactures Association
- Chambers of Commerce

Community Organizations

- Rotary Clubs
- League of Woman Voters
- Democratic Club
- Kiwanis Clubs
- Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts

Environmental

- Russian River Watershed Association

Watershed

- Russian River Watershed Council
- Blucher Creek Watershed Council
- North Bay Watershed Association
- Occidental Arts & Ecology Center
- Gold Ridge RCD
- Private Water Agencies
- Wine County Waterworks Association

Well Owners

- Local Schools
- Churches
- Sonoma County Fair

Agriculture

- Western United Dairyman's Association

- Sonoma County Women's Cattleman
- North Bay Dairy Women
- United Winegrowers
- Dairyman's Association
- Horseman's Association
- 4-H

Local Government

- Sonoma County Planning Commission
- Santa Rosa Board of Public Utilities

Other

- Sonoma State University

Draft