# MEETING NOTES | May 9, 2013
## Santa Rosa Plain Basin Advisory Panel

## MEETING IN BRIEF

**City of Santa Rosa Groundwater Planning Meeting June 6 at 1:30**
The City of Santa Rosa has been developing its own policies on groundwater planning and will hold a public workshop on June 6 at 1:30 in the City Council Chambers at the meeting of the Board of Public Utilities.

**Regional Water Quality Control Board Provides Overview at May Meeting**
Staff from the Regional Board provided an in-depth overview regarding its responsibilities and activities in surface and ground water resources and quality.

**USGS Report Presentation July 11 at BAP**
USGS plans to release the characterization report in late May 2013 and surface/groundwater flow model later in 2013. USGS is scheduled to present on the characterization report at the July 11th Panel meeting; this meeting will be open to the public. USGS will also present the report at an evening public workshop on July 11.

**http://www.scwa.gov/srgroundwater/**

## Next Panel Meeting: June 13, 9:00-12:00, at 35 Stony Point Rd.
Topics: Land Use and Groundwater Planning and Management Components

## MEETING SUMMARY

### Regional Water Quality Control Board

**Presenters**
Alydda Mangelsdorf, Senior Environmental Scientist
Holly Lundborg, Engineering Geologist
Craig Hunt, Water Resources Control Engineer
Jeremiah Puget, Environmental Scientist

**Presentation Overview**
The purpose of the presentation was to describe the role and activities of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board). The North Coast Region includes all water draining from the Canadian border down to Marin County.

Under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne), the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) has the ultimate authority over state water rights and water quality policy. Nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Boards) oversee water quality on a day-to-day basis at the local and regional level. Porter Cologne also declares that water of the state means any surface water or groundwater within the state, that waters of the state shall be regulated to attain the highest water quality

reasonable considering all current and future demands, and requires all regions develop a water quality control plan (Basin Plan). The Basin Plan includes beneficial uses of water; water quality objectives to protect beneficial uses; an implementation program to meet objectives; and a monitoring program. The Basin Plan is updated every 3 years.

The Regional Board is in the process of identifying a strategic framework for protecting groundwater quality. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) is working on a statewide groundwater strategic plan that will focus on water quality and quantity. The State Board expects to release its plan in fall 2013. The Regional Board is trying to take a broad view of groundwater quality, developing amendments to its own basin plan. The Regional Board's strategy recognizes surface water and groundwater as interconnected resources and the necessity of an ecosystem approach to water quality assessment and protection, regional groundwater assessment, and interagency and stakeholder cooperation.

The Regional Board is very interested in the Santa Rosa Plain groundwater planning efforts and would like to stay abreast of the effort. The Regional Board thinks that collaborative groundwater planning is more effective then the Board issuing edicts. The Regional Board is trying to encourage people to come together to plan proactively.

The Regional Board is in the process of amending the Basin Plan in two phases:

- Phase I - to update water quality objectives and to clarify the process for application of narrative objectives
- Phase II – to add groundwater and surface water protection action plans and policies
  - Control discharge of waste from land disposal and land use activities
  - Recycled water policy narrative, roles, salt and nutrient management plans and requirements, requirements for recycled water irrigation
  - Onsite waste treatment system (OWTS) policy: amend Basin Plan to incorporate State Board policy, regulate non-compliant septic systems and adopt OWTS TMDLs

The Regional Board has primary responsibility for water quality in the North Coast Region. The Regional Board issues and administers permits, provides technical assistance, issues grants, performs surface water monitoring (Regional SWAMP), participates in statewide groundwater monitoring (GAMA), and participates in other statewide efforts. The Regional Board monitors and tracks quality and makes information available on the web through a program called Geotracker.

The North Coast is a predominantly rural region with significant use of shallow groundwater for domestic and agricultural supply. Perennial stream systems in the North Coast often rely on groundwater as their predominant source of base flow during the dry season. Most of the North Coast Region has usable groundwater. Individual groundwater contamination sites are associated with leaking underground storage tanks, wood treatment facilities, dry cleaning operations, unlined landfills, and other causes. The Regional Board does not have a comprehensive understanding of shallow groundwater quality in the region.

The Regional Board also provides oversight on groundwater cleanup; its authority is through the water code and health and safety code. Unauthorized discharge to groundwater and to land threatens groundwater quality. "Point discharge" typically involves leaks, spills

or dumping. The Site Cleanup Program and the Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Program are two programs. The Department of Toxic Substance Control engages on cleanup as well. The goals are to clean up to restore quality within a designated, reasonable timeframe.

The Regional Board is also involved in wastewater treatment permitting. The Regional Board regulates municipal and industrial wastewater through waste discharge requirements (WDRs) and national pollution discharge elimination system (NPDES) permits. Its recycled water policy concentrates on protecting human health and Title 22 drinking water standards. Current water recycling projects are permitted under WDRs/NPDES (wastewater) or State General Permits. Existing permits are for the Santa Rosa Sub-Regional Facility (Geysers, Rohnert Park), agricultural and urban landscape irrigation, and the Graton Facility and irrigation.

The Regional Board manages storm water permits with the goal of preventing pollution associated with municipal, construction, and industrial discharge. Low Impact Development (LID) standards are evolving to protect natural hydrologic systems and water quality. The State Board has issued an LID resolution.

Confusion exists around the definitions of non-point and point sources. The Regional Board thinks of a "point" source as one that requires an Environmental Protection Agency permit.

The Regional Board has worked with dairy owners to develop regulatory policies that are creative and realistic. The Regional Board cited this as an example of how the agency is committed to protecting water quality in partnership with stakeholders.

## Water Quality Insights for the Groundwater Management Plan

Project manager Marcus Trotta presented an outline on sections of the groundwater plan that will incorporate water quality. (See attachment.) Almost every section of the plan has something on groundwater quality. In addition, members discussed other issues around water quality for consideration in the plan.

Conservation plays a role in water quality since the less water used, the less that needs to be treated.

When the groundwater management plan talks about reuse, the plan should also talk about feasibility of reuse, specifically in terms of the ability of soils to absorb constituents found in water that might affect quality.

When the Laguna de Santa Rosa total maximum daily load plan comes online, the groundwater management plan will integrate that into the program. The monitoring data is one element that the groundwater management plan can incorporate.

The Basin Advisory Panel and Tim Parker should examine how management plan components affect water quality, and then revisit the Basin Management Objectives tied to water quality to make sure that the components are contributing to achieving those objectives.

One member expressed concern about the effect of septic discharge on water quality, noting that cities are under very strict guidelines for discharge while individual systems do not meet the same stringent requirements. The Regional Board clarified that it does have a septic policy that is comprehensive. The Regional Board is also undergoing a review that might change the policy in the near future.

**PARTICIPANTS**

**Panel Members**

Keith Abeles
Michael Burns
Elizabeth Cargay
Rue Furch
Dawna Gallagher
Maureen Geary
Darren Jenkins
Bill Keene
Sue Kelly
Gary Mickelson
Curt Nichols
Jane Nielson
Damien O'Bid
Pete Parkinson
Rocky Vogler
Glen Wright
Valerie Minton (Alternate for Kara Heckert)

Other Participants

Bob Anderson
Jeremiah Puget, RWQCB
Craig Hunt, RWQCB
Holly Lundborg, RWQCB
Alydda Mangelsdorf, RWQCB
Jo Bentz, RWQCB
Beth Lamb, RWQCB
Brenda Adelman

Staff

Tim Parker, Technical
Marcus Trotta, Project Manager
Jennifer Laroque, SCWA Public Affairs
Gina Bartlett, Facilitator