



# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY -Call 711 [www.scceh.com](http://www.scceh.com)  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



### AGENDA

#### SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION

**Wednesday October 4, 2023, 4pm**

This meeting will be held in hybrid format. Commissioners are expected to attend in person.  
In-Person: 701 Ocean Street; Third Floor Training Room (directly above the stairs)  
Remote via Teams: [Click here to join the meeting](#) Meeting ID: 239 082 751 837 Passcode: 2iJwBW

**A. OPENING**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call

**B. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Opportunity for the public to comment on items under the purview of the Water Advisory Commission but not on today's agenda.

**C. CONSENT AGENDA**

Items on the consent agenda are considered to be routine in nature and will be acted upon in one motion. Specific items may be removed by members of the advisory body or public for separate consideration and discussion. Routine items that will be found on the consent agenda are meeting minutes, drought response updates, and Groundwater Sustainability Agency updates.

1. [Approval of Meeting Minutes for August 2, 2023](#)
2. [Update on County Drought Response](#)
3. [Update from Groundwater Sustainability Agencies](#)

**D. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Opportunity for Commissioners to provide brief updates

**E. STAFF REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Opportunity for staff to provide brief updates

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

1. [LAMP Implementation Status](#)

Oral report from Heather Reynolds.

2. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

Presentation on the CAAP, and opportunity for the WAC to provide feedback into their interest in participating.

**G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS and UPDATES**

1. Well Ordinance Update Status

See attached materials.

**H. CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**I. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTION ON ITEMS AFFECTING WATER:**

September 19, 2023: [Adopt a resolution authorizing the submittal of a grant application for the County Drought Resilience Planning Grant to the California Department of Water Resources, as recommended by the Director of Health Services](#)

August 8, 2023: [Approve the terms of the groundwater monitoring well easement agreement granting an easement over APN 070-261-56 and APN 070-261-58, and take related actions, as recommended by the Deputy CAO/Director of Community Development and Infrastructure](#)

**J. ITEMS OF INTEREST**

1. <https://lookout.co/santacruz/environment/story/2023-09-22/el-nino-getting-stronger-odds-are-tilting-toward-another-wet-winter-for-california>
2. <https://slvpost.com/big-basin-water-crisis-receivership-hearing-scheduled/>
3. <https://slvpost.com/slv-water-district-manager-rick-rogers-to-retire/>
4. <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2023/08/25/santa-cruz-water-department-director-announces-retirement/>
5. <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2023/08/25/slv-water-invests-13-million-for-new-pipelines-improved-fire-response/>
6. <https://slvpost.com/a-primer-on-our-local-water-system/>
7. <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2023/08/17/state-authorities-big-basin-co-wastewater-plant-close-but-not-fully-operable/>

**K. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

**L. ADJOURNMENT**



# County of Santa Cruz

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### **SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION** **Wednesday August 2, 2023, 4pm** **Meeting Minutes**

This meeting was held in hybrid format. Commissioners attended in person.  
Location: 701 Ocean Street; Third Floor Training Room (directly above the stairs)

#### **A. OPENING**

1. Call to Order at 4:01pm
2. Roll Call

Commissioners present:

- Wilson
- Gillespie
- Lego
- Lockwood

Absent with notification:

- Largay
- Pereyra
- Cheap

Staff: Sierra Ryan, Erin McCarthy, Nathan Salazar

Public: Rob Swartz, Becky Steinbruner, John Ricker, Rachel Fatoohi

#### **B. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Opportunity for the public to comment on items under the purview of the Water Advisory Commission but not on today's agenda.

Rachel Fatoohi (Santa Cruz County CDI) – working on Zone 5 (flood district) Master Plan; studying larger conveyances throughout zone; looking at needs related to maintenance and to avoid future issues; hopefully complete master plan this coming year; may need support from WAC to help foster broader support from public representatives and funders.

Wilson: are there documents we should get familiar with?

Ryan: if agenda'd, info would be provided

Lockwood: will there be a summary of the master plan available to public?

Fatoohi: yes, we have a consultant helping with

Steinbruner: State Water Board moving ahead with potable water reuse, was in a meeting today, public hearing on Sept. 7.

### **C. CONSENT AGENDA**

Items on the consent agenda are considered to be routine in nature and will be acted upon in one motion. Specific items may be removed by members of the advisory body or public for separate consideration and discussion. Routine items that will be found on the consent agenda are meeting minutes, drought response updates, and Groundwater Sustainability Agency updates.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes for April 5, 2023 and June 7, 2023

Lego: submitted one edit to April meeting minutes via email and staff has made that edit.

2. Update on County Drought Response

No discussion

Motion to approve by Lego, second by Wilson

All in favor

### **D. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Opportunity for Commissioners to provide brief updates.

- Gillespie: large water systems (serving 3,300 or more people), along with some small systems, will be conducting sampling required by the US EPA under the fifth iteration of the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule; (UCMR #5), including 29 perfluorinated compounds (PFAS) and lithium  
Scotts Valley Water District (SVWD) Intertie #1 is completed (bi-directional connection with City of Santa Cruz, extends up to Boulder Creek); SVWD – constructing a replacement well, replacing a well that had declining production
- Wilson: attended Intercommission Working Group meeting; discussed Significant Tree Ordinance, Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), also discussed decade of environment, riparian issues related unhoused communities.
- Lockwood: also attended above meeting; decade on the environment was interesting; Chris Berry helped to lead; included Water Advisory Commission, Commission on Environment, and Fish and Wildlife Commission; will report after next meeting.

**E. STAFF REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Opportunity for staff to provide brief updates

Ryan: in process of hiring to fill Water Resource Planner position (Kristen Kittleson retired); also ready to fill position in lab (Water Quality Specialist); also got 2 vehicles to replace two old vehicles for the program.

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Sustainable Groundwater Management Background and Status

Presentation by Rob Swartz, Regional Water Management Foundation, and Brian Lockwood, PV Water.

Presentation slides are posted on WAC website.

Swartz: background on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA); 100 years after state passed surface water rights system; the law applies to high and medium priority basins; Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) include timeline to work toward and achieve sustainability; avoid significant and unreasonable undesirable results for six indicators; demonstrate progress to state; sustainable management criteria; 3 basins that law applies to in County; RWMF assisting 2 of these basins (Mid-County and Santa Margarita); Joint Powers of Agreement to form the groundwater agencies; groundwater sustainability plans have been approved by Dept of Water Resources; plans look ahead 50 years; seawater intrusion issue in Mid-County basin; summary of management actions.

Steinbruner: Do you have figures for conjunctive use pilot project in Soquel Creek Water District?

Swartz: no, will look for info

Steinbruner: models related to water exchanges?

Swartz: they will use existing models and refine them

Ryan: County role and interests; SGMA and Groundwater Sustainability Plans are integrated to General Plan, CAAP, Drought Response and Outreach Plan; involvement of staff and Supervisors; contribute funds to Groundwater Agencies; well permitting includes groundwater agency involvement.

Steinbruner: when will Bulletin 118 be updated?

Lockwood: roughly updated every 5 years.

Swartz: not certain will happen on 5 year interval

Lockwood: Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin and SGMA (presentation slides posted on web); acknowledge stakeholders, partners, staff; history of PV Water groundwater management; Alternative GSP approved (Basin Management Plan, 2014); summary of water use; water use declining; seawater intrusion; water supply and treatment facilities; groundwater levels increased since 2022 (median 4.2 ft); College Lake Water Supply Project in construction; Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery Project; looking at new diversion on Struve Slough; successful Conservation Program mostly focused on agriculture.

Steinbruner: Managed Aquifer Recharge Project on Highway 129?

Lockwood: we also participate in that program (Recharge Net Metering Program); 3 basins constructed so far; grant just awarded to numerous partners to support this work.

Lego: San Andreas Mutual is at north end of PV Water delivery pipe. Plan to extend?

Lockwood: not right now. Currently supply limited, College Lake project will supplement that supply as will sloughs projects; then may be able to meet demand.

## 2. Chromium VI MCL update

Presentation by Paul Lego

Presentation slides posted on WAC website

Lego: focusing on impacts to small water companies; background on Chromium 6; naturally occurring and from manufacturing waste; much in Santa Cruz County is naturally occurring; EPA MCL = 100ppb, California MCL = 50ppb, proposed California MCL = 10ppb (open for public comment); if implemented ~4 years to come into compliance; summary of small water systems in County that would potentially be affected; options include consolidation with larger system which is expensive and difficult, treatment at source (expensive and other issues), point of use treatment (liability issues with verifying water quality inside the residence); small water companies would be challenged and would need financial and operational assistance.

Ryan: met with Senator Laird and some California Mutual Water Companies representatives; \$100M proposed financial assistance for entire state which is not nearly enough and would be difficult for small systems to obtain; City of Watsonville would be challenged and is a disadvantaged community; Senator Laird is aware of the associated problems.

Gillespie: disposal costs would also need to be considered, in addition to initial treatment

Lego: we have people who've been drinking this water from our system for 75 years, proposed levels are lower than other places; fighting on economic grounds

Gillespie: 50 MCL is total chromium

Lego: goal of state is to get close to public health goal (which is zero);

Lockwood: other contaminants are well known (e.g., nitrate); we could apply that money to other known contaminants

Ryan: treatment for chrom 6 is a unique treatment, only getting at that contaminant and not others; could consider other ways to build support

Steinbruner: State Water Board public comment period is open; other treatment options discussed. Interested in helping on a committee.

Lockwood: Will County submit comment letter?

Ryan: may communicate with cities and consider doing a joint letter

Lockwood: other organized groups might submit letter

Steinbruner: some meeting participants are proposing lower levels

Lockwood: there is some misinformation spread as well.

### 3. Discussion of Commission Agenda Efficiency

Limit Commissioner Report times, move regular updates to written memos under consent.

Ryan: planning to improve efficiency by having GSA updates submitted in writing; and will limit Commissioner reports

Lockwood: can also limit timing of presentations and can bring topic back if needed

## **G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS and UPDATES**

### 1. Well Ordinance Update Process

See attached materials.

Ryan: will request 2 Commissioners to participate on Well Ordinance Update Technical Advisory Committee; John Ricker will also help with this process

Slides posted on WAC website: County Code Chapter 7.70 (Water Wells) and Chapter 7.73 (Individual Water Systems) will be most affected by update. Cities have own permit process that we coordinate on; outline of process proposed; list of technical advisory member representation; outline of meetings; summary of well permits issued; seeking approval on technical advisory committee representation.

Lockwood: GSAs and PW Water both listed.

Ryan: Santa Margarita and Mid-County would likely have 1 person and PV Water would likely have one.

Gillespie: staff or Board members?

Ryan: staff with technical knowledge

Steinbruner: Central Water District and small water systems not represented.

Ryan: meant to be technical advisors and not stakeholder committee. Meant to be set up so that all types of well users will have a representative that also has a technical advisory role.

Lockwood: participated in similar meetings years ago; including well drillers was important and they represent many of the well users

Lego: I would be willing to work with WAC representatives to make sure small water systems are considered

Lockwood: we are over time; can we continue for 10 min?

Group: yes

Ryan: 3 commissioners can talk to each other privately; the two on this committee could talk with another commissioner; I've talked to Commissioner Largay because his role with Land Trust and their role in landownership, ag tenants, conservation.

Lockwood: consider 3 commissioners; Soquel Creek is called out for Public Utilities?

Ryan: because Soquel Creek has a carve out in Code 7.70 so they might be a good rep for public utilities

Lockwood: will meetings be public or closed?

Ryan: meant to be closed but will have one public forum

Steinbruner: City of Watsonville not included?

Ryan: they do their own well permitting

Lego: what action is needed?

Ryan: guidance, identify Commissioners

Lockwood: reads recommended actions in agenda

Lego: **move to approve staff to move forward with TAC membership as proposed and appoint Largay and Gillespie to TAC and Lego will advise them on small water systems**

Lockwood: for GSAs, we have 2 Commissioners so PV Water rep would have to be one of my staff, or would I be representing WAC or PV Water.

Ryan: PV Water is what I had in mind

Lockwood: Could appoint Casey.

Ryan: will look into that.

Motion by Lego

Second: Commissioner Wilson

All in favor

## **H. CORRESPONDENCE**

None

## **I. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTION ON ITEMS AFFECTING WATER:**



None

**J. ITEMS OF INTEREST**

No discussion

**K. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

1. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:12pm



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**Subject:** October 4, 2023 Water Advisory Commission Consent Agenda

**Title:** Drought Response & Outreach Plan (DROP) Update

### Background

On September 23, 2021, Senate Bill (SB) 552 was signed into law. SB 552 requires that “a county shall establish a standing county drought and water shortage task force to facilitate drought and water shortage preparedness for state small water systems and domestic wells within the county’s jurisdiction”. The Water Advisory Commission voted to adopt the responsibility for implementing SB 552 and receives quarterly updates on the progress of implementation.

[Senate Bill 552 Compliance \(scceh.org\)](http://scceh.org)

### Updates:

- County Staff prepared a grant application (attached) to implement some of the priorities outlined in the DROP. The primary goals of the grant will be to:
  - Strengthen water resource management capacity through GIS improvements to the existing well layer and a feasibility assessment of small water system interties and consolidation.
  - Foster understanding and transparency in the consolidation process by producing a comprehensive brochure for stakeholders
  - Provide efficient project coordination, communication, and reporting.The grant is being provided through the Department of Water Resources County Drought Resilience Planning Grant Program of 2023, and the request amount is \$125,000.
- County staff continues to update the support webpages for both [Private Well Owners](#) and [Small Water Systems](#), which includes a link to the states “Be Well Prepared” webpage. Much of the guidance from the state is similar to the county’s and supports the recommendations we provide.

- Sierra Ryan continues to represent interests of local government at the State [Drought Response Interagency Partnership \(DRIP\) Collaborative.](#)

By: Sierra Ryan

Water Resources Program Manager

**Application Cover Sheet**

Application for County Drought Resilience Planning Grant, 2023

The County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency

Of 701 Ocean Street room 312 Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

Of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, does hereby apply to the California Department of Water Resources for a grant in the amount of \$ 125,000.

For the following project under the Small Community Drought Relief Program:

Santa Cruz County Drought Response and Outreach Plan Improvement

By \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of authorized representative)

Monica Morales, Director of Health Service  
(Print or type name of authorized representative) (Title)

Telephone (831 ) 454-4000 E-mail Monica.Morales@santacruzcounty.us

**Brief Proposal Description:**

The Santa Cruz County Drought Response and Outreach Plan Improvement project embodies the County's proactive approach to drought management, sustainability, and community engagement. The project will enhance the County's Drought Response and Outreach Plan (DROP) by addressing the following gaps identified by the Drought Response Working Group.

- Strengthen water resource management capacity through GIS improvements to the existing well layer and a feasibility assessment of small water system interties and consolidation.
- Foster understanding and transparency in the consolidation process by producing a comprehensive brochure for stakeholders
- Provide efficient project coordination, communication, and reporting.

**Applicant's Representatives**

**Project Name** Santa Cruz County Drought Response and Outreach Plan Improvement

**Primary Project Contact**

Name Sierra Ryan Title Water Resources Program Manager

Address 701 Ocean Street room 312, Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

Telephone (831\_) 345-5202 FAX (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail sierra.ryan@santacruzcounty.us

**Alternate Project Contact**

Name Andrew Strader Title Environmental Health Director

Address 701 Ocean Street room 312, Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

Telephone (831\_) 454-2200 FAX (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Andrew.Strader@santacruzcounty.us

**Alternate Project Contact (Not Applicable)**

Name N/A Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Organization: County

(city, county, water district, non-profit, etc.)

Attach a copy of the applicant's charter and the names and titles of its officers.

**Note: Santa Cruz County is a general law county, not a charter county.**

**Summary of Project Costs**

Provide a summary of the financing information about the proposed project, including cost share (if applicable).

		% of Total Cost
Total Cost of Project:	\$ <u>125,000</u>	
Amount Requested:	\$ <u>125,000</u>	<u>100</u>
Amount of Cost Share <sup>(1)</sup> :	\$ <u>0</u>	_____
Amount of Federal Contribution:	\$ <u>0</u>	_____
In-kind Contributions:	\$ <u>0</u>	_____
Amount to be Funded by Other Sources:	\$ <u>0</u>	_____

(Describe below in table.)

Sources of funds from partner agencies for this project, if applicable:	<b>Name of Source</b>	<b>Status of Funds<sup>(2)</sup></b>
<b>Amount</b>		
\$		
\$		
\$		
\$		
Total: \$		

## **Project Proposal, Tasks, and Budget**

### **1. Title of Project**

Santa Cruz County Drought Response and Outreach Plan Improvement

### **2. Project Management**

The Santa Cruz County Drought Response and Outreach Plan Improvement project will be overseen by the County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency in collaboration with its Water Advisory Commission. The project will be managed by a dedicated project team comprising individuals with expertise in water resource management, GIS, community engagement, and administration. Regular updates will be provided to stakeholders at the Water Advisory Commission meetings, and to DWR through quarterly reports to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the project's lifecycle. The following individuals and groups will have direct responsibility over project activities:

**Project Director:** Monica Morales, Director of Health Services. Monica holds the authority to execute agreements and amendments authorized by the Board of Supervisors. She also helps to guide how the individual programs work towards the Health Services Agency mission to promote and ensure a healthy community and environment by providing education, outreach and comprehensive health services in an inclusive and accessible manner.

**Project Manager:** Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Program Manager. Sierra has 15 years of grant management experience in the field of water resources. She joined the County of Santa Cruz in 2015 and became the Water Resources Program Manager in 2020. She has led numerous State grants, including several from the Department of Water Resources. Sierra leads the County's efforts to manage water sustainably as well as overseeing the Local Primacy Agency that regulates the local small water systems. She also serves on the State's Drought Response Interagency Partnership Collaborative. She will manage the program, delegate tasks, and ensure that deliverables are provided within the timeframe and budget defined in the scope.

**Other Cooperators:**

**Sean Abbey, Water Quality Specialist.** Sean Abbey has worked for the County in the drinking water regulatory program since 2020. He is a certified Water System Operator and worked in that role previous to joining the County. Sean is the staff person leading the implementation of the Drought Response and Outreach Plan. He will be working with Sierra to meet the objectives of the project.

Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (HSA) Administrative Services staff. Grant administration will be in the capable hands of the HSA Administrative Services staff. They have the necessary institutional capacity and extensive administrative support experience, including the successful management of multiple State funded grants.

Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission. The Water Advisory Commission is the County's alternative to a Drought Task Force. They are a long-established body with the authority to advise the Board of Supervisors on issues relating to water. In 2021 they resolved to take on the responsibilities outlined in Senate Bill 552. The 7-member body includes one representative each from the 5 Supervisorial Districts, one representative of large water utilities, and one representative of small water systems. The Commissioners collectively have decades of work experience in various aspects of water management. The Commission receives drought updates at each of their meetings.

### **3. Scope of Work and Project Description**

The Santa Cruz County Drought Response and Outreach Plan Improvement project embodies the County's proactive approach to drought management, sustainability, and community engagement. The County of Santa Cruz, in its commitment to sustainable water resource management and climate resilience, is seeking a grant from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to enhance its Drought Response and Outreach Plan (DROP). The Drop was written with extensive input from a Drought Response Working Group, established to meet the requirements set forth under SB 552. More information is available at the website

<https://scceh.com/NewHome/Programs/WaterResources/DroughtResponse/SenateBill552Compliance.aspx>.

The County has already taken significant strides by adopting the DROP on December 13, 2022, as endorsed by the Board of Supervisors. Building upon this foundation, the County is dedicated to further fortifying its drought response strategies by addressing gaps that have been systematically identified and prioritized by the Drought Response Working Group and included in the DROP. The proposed project aims to refine the County's DROP, ultimately enhancing water security and resilience in the face of recurring drought challenges.

**Project Components:** The project will focus on three key components, which will span the entire County:

- **Administration:** Efficient project coordination, communication, resource allocation, and reporting will be ensured. Activities include grant administration, communication with the grant manager, invoicing and reporting provided to DWR, and updates provided to the Water Advisory Commission.
- **GIS Improvements and Water System Assessment:** The County of Santa Cruz is proposing two GIS exercises for funding through this grant, which will each help inform future activities.
  - There has been significant effort to compile a usable 'production' well layer for the County of Santa Cruz, but the current state of the wells layer is not meeting the needs of the Water Resources division. The layer was



first created in 2005 by combining various well layers that were being maintained by county staff within different departments and partner agencies, and in 2009 the DWR wells layer was combined with the county's layer. The main issue with the current wells layer is many wells lack a type and status field (see image below) and are classified as "OTHER" for their type "UNKNOWN" for their status. Water resources staff would like a layer that can be filtered on just production wells (wells used for irrigation and domestic uses).

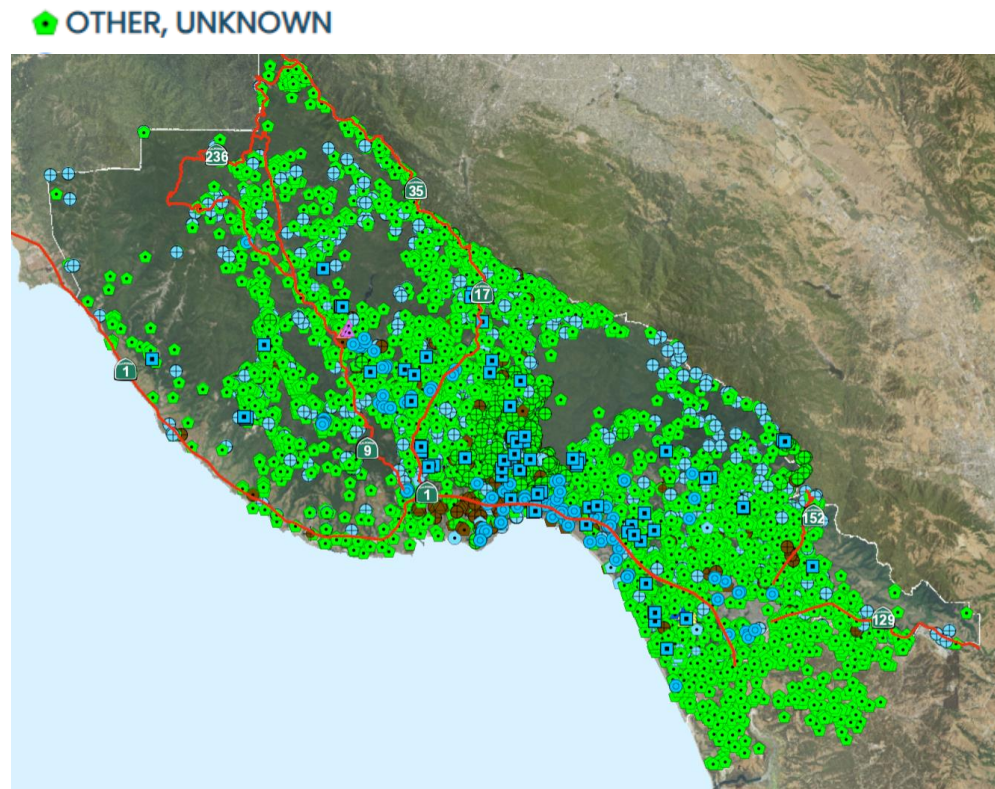


Figure 1: Screenshot from GIS well layer covering the entire County

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed a web site that maps the locations of wells and has data on the Well Completion Reports:

<https://dwr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=181078580a214c0986e2da28f8623b37>. The DWR app has links to 'Water Well

Drillers Reports' which is similar to the County's GISweb app (<https://gis.santacruzcounty.us/gisweb/>). A majority of the DWR wells are mapped to the center of a PLSS Section (one square mile). There was a considerable effort by the county to go through the DWR wells in 2009 and correct the positional accuracy.

The goal of the 2023 well layer update project is to leverage the work done by DWR to classify the wells in their layer as "Production" (as

compared to how they are identified as Other and Unknown in the county's layer) and use the information to update the well type and status in the existing county's layer. We will maintain the positional accuracy of the county's wells layer and transfer the type and status from the DWR layer to the county's layer.

- The other GIS exercise is an assessment of the feasibility of interties or consolidation as a solution to water supply or water quality challenges for state small and small community water systems throughout the County. Defining the distance and terrain between small systems and larger ones will help the County determine when resources should be invested into assessing consolidation, and when that option is physically and/or financially infeasible.
- **Consolidation Process Clarification:** Consolidation is often seen as a long-term water shortage mitigation strategy for both domestic wells and struggling small water systems. The steps and cost associated with consolidation are not transparent, and for individuals and state small water systems with no professional management, the challenges are impenetrable. This component will lead to the development of a comprehensive brochure outlining the consolidation process for interested well owners and water systems.

The County of Santa Cruz acknowledges the imperative of proactive drought management, considering the region's susceptibility to water scarcity. The County is not connected to any State or Federal water projects and thus must ensure resilience independently. The adoption of the DROP was a pivotal step toward a more robust and comprehensive drought response strategy. Furthermore, the action by the Water Advisory Commission to oversee drought response demonstrates the County's commitment to sustainable water governance. By addressing the identified gaps and refining the DROP, the County will bolster its capacity to navigate and mitigate the impacts of drought.

#### **4. Project Objectives**

**Goals and Objectives:** The primary goal of the Santa Cruz County Drought Response and Outreach Plan Improvement project is to enhance the County's Drought Response and Outreach Plan (DROP) by addressing gaps identified by the Drought Response Working Group during the DROP development. The project aims to optimize water resource management and community resilience in the face of recurring drought challenges. The activities undertaken through this project will specifically help with vulnerability/risk assessments, and the evaluation of feasible long-term mitigation strategies, both of which meet the objectives of the funding guidelines.

The Santa Cruz County Drought Response and Outreach Plan Improvement project aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Enhance the County's DROP by addressing gaps identified by the Drought Response Working Group.
- Strengthen water resource management capacity through GIS improvements to the existing well layer and a feasibility assessment of small water system interties and consolidation.
- Foster understanding and transparency in the consolidation process by producing a comprehensive brochure for stakeholders.

## **5. Task Breakdown**

### **Task 1: Administration:**

Efficiently manage project activities, communication, and resource allocation.  
Provide quarterly reports and invoices to the DWR Grant Manager.

Budget: \$15,000

Schedule: Jan 2, 2024 – December 31, 2025

### **Task 2: GIS Layer Improvements to Fill Data Gaps:**

#### **2a. Well Database Update**

One data gap identified during by the Drought Response Working Group is a comprehensive GIS well layer that provides key data and links to documentation for wells within the County. The existing well layer has several significant deficiencies that greatly limit its utility to staff.

**Step 1: Update Type and Status field in county's wells layer.** We need to identify ways that we can link the county's Layer with the DWR layer. For example, the "Log\_Number" field in the county's layer matches the "WCR Number" field in the DWR layer for some records. The two tables could be joined, and attributes transferred to the County's layer to update the type and status fields. We need to develop a count of how many records we can get to match, and how many of the unknown wells can be updated in the county's layer.

**Step 2: Redesign the wells layer attributes (data model).** Staff determined that we could benefit from adopting the DWR layer attribute table structure and appending fields that we would like to keep from the county's well layer to the end of the table. This will require developing an attribute table crosswalk between the two layers. Having the DWR structure will allow for appending future updates to the DWR layer to the county's layer. We will also be able to keep historical data fields in the well layer that relate back to county records.

**Step 3. Load the data into the new table structure.**

**Step 4. Well layer update workflow.** Develop a workflow for staff (interns, extra help) going forward to do research to update the well status and type in target areas.

**Step 5. Add back in public water system wells to the county’s well layer.**

The larger system wells were pulled out of the wells layer and staff would like them loaded back in.

Budget: \$65,000

Schedule: April 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025

**2b. Water system intertie and consolidation feasibility assessment**

Many of the State Small and Small Community Water Systems in the County of Santa Cruz were created due to the remote locations of the populations that they serve. In some cases, that physical isolation makes otherwise attractive options such as interties or consolidation with larger water systems, economically or physically infeasible. One gap identified in the DROP is information on the systems for which interconnection is not an option. The evaluation will involve measuring the minimum distance between a small water system and the nearest large neighboring system, and using simple cost estimate formulas, assess the financial feasibility of interties.

Budget: \$25,000

Schedule: July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025

**Task 3: Consolidation Process Flow Clarification:**

Task Description: Clarify the process for consolidation by outlining the requirements on the water system wishing to consolidate by the larger system that will be absorbing it, the County, the State Division of Drinking Water, and the Local Agency Formation Commission. Develop a comprehensive “how-to” brochure outlining the consolidation process for interested stakeholders.

Budget: \$20,000

Schedule: April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

**6. Schedule**

Task	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
<b>Task 1: Administration</b>	X*	X*	X*	X*	X*	X*	X*	X*
<b>Task 2a. Well Database Update</b>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X*
<b>Task 2b. Water system intertie and consolidation feasibility assessment</b>			X	X	X	X	X*	
<b>Task 3: Consolidation Process Flow Brochure</b>		X	X	X	X	X*		

Assumed Start Date: January 2, 2024
Assumed End Date: December 31, 2025
* Indicates a Deliverable

## 7. Budget

Task	Cost
<b>Task 1: Administration</b>	\$15,000
<b>Task 2a. Well Database Update</b>	\$65,000
<b>Task 2b. Water system intertie and consolidation feasibility assessment</b>	\$25,000
<b>Task 3: Consolidation Process Flow Brochure</b>	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$125,000

## 8. Deliverables

- Quarterly progress reports and invoices
- Enhanced GIS well layer available through the County's GIS Web application
- A consolidation/intertie feasibility assessment report
- A consolidation process brochure
- Final report and post-completion report



# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY -Call 711 [www.scceh.com](http://www.scceh.com)  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



**Subject:** October 4, 2023 Water Advisory Commission Consent Agenda

**Title:** Groundwater Sustainability Agency Updates

### Background

There are three groundwater basins in the County that are subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act due to the amount of groundwater pumped, the number of people dependent on that basin, and the impacts that long-term pumping has had on the condition of the basin. The following updates come from the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies tasked with managing and monitoring those basins.

### Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency

#### Grants

- Staff and consultants are continuing to work on the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) financing application, and based on the EPA's current schedule, PV Water could have access to in Q1 2024.
- Department of Conservation (DoC) Multibenefit Land Repurposing Grant program, which includes \$8.89 million in funding for PV Water and partners the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, the University of California, Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz County Land Trust, the Pajaro River Flood Management Agency, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, and the Nature Conservancy: Staff has reviewed the draft agreement and provided comments to DoC Staff; a full day, onboarding meeting occurred on September 25 in Moss Landing.

#### College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project

- Construction
  - Weir Structure - Sheet pile installation completed in June and was followed by excavation of soil and then installation of tiebacks (soil nails)
  - Water Treatment Plant

- Decanting lagoons: Treated the soil with cement to bring it to proper compaction. Pile driving (to support future facilities) completed on Friday, September 15.
  - Santa Cruz County approved PV Water’s well permit applications in early September.
    - Treated Water Pipeline - As of September 15, the contractor installed approximately 28%, 8,900 linear feet of pipeline.
- Environmental
  - Biological, Cultural, and Native American monitoring is taking place.
  - Worker environmental training continues.
- Adaptive Management Plan
  - Hydrologic monitoring, waterfowl monitoring, and steelhead surveys occurred this year and/or continue to occur. Waterfowl surveys have been conducted on at least 20 separate days since the beginning of this year. The annual vegetation survey is scheduled to occur in early October.
- Outreach Activities
  - Are ongoing and include two exhibits at the Santa Cruz County Fair (Harvest Building and Ag. History Project). Staff presented to the Rotary Club of Watsonville in July and to the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau’s Public Policy Committee in September. Please check <https://www.pvwater.org/construction>; regularly for construction related updates.

#### Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge & Recovery Projects

- Design: Ongoing, geotechnical surveys scheduled to occur in early October.
- Harkins Slough Recharge Basin Recovery Wells 2022 Project: The contractor has replaced the first two pumps, and the remaining 2 pumps should be replaced soon. The drilling of three “recovery wells” commenced on September 21.

#### **Santa Margarita Basin Update**

- The Santa Margarita Board is scheduled to meet on October 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Construction of a dedicated monitoring network consisting of seven wells to help fill data gaps has been completed.
- Dry season streamflow monitoring at five locations to improve understanding of groundwater contributions to stream baseflow is ongoing through October.

## **Mid-County Basin Update**

- The Mid-County Board met on September 21<sup>st</sup> and received an update on the development of a well registration and meter installation program.
- Dry season streamflow monitoring at six locations and shallow groundwater well monitoring at 10 locations adjacent to streams to improve understanding of groundwater contributions to stream baseflow and surface water/groundwater interaction is ongoing. The streams will be monitored through October.
- The 5-year evaluation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan has begun. The MGA Board will receive an update on the evaluation at its December 14, 2023 meeting.
- GSP implementation is progressing. A DWR grant is partially funding implementation of multiple Projects and Management Actions identified in the GSP.
  - A project lead by Soquel Creek Water District, called the Park Avenue Transmission Main/Bottleneck Improvements, to upsize infrastructure to improve system reliability and allow more flexibility to reduce groundwater extraction from coastal wells and shift groundwater extraction further inland is nearing completion.
  - Technical studies are ongoing in a collaboration between the City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District to inform and advance the implementation of selected high priority Projects and Management Actions.
  - A project lead by the City of Santa Cruz for the design of two permanent Aquifer Storage and Recovery facilities in the Beltz Well Field has begun the design phase.

By: Sierra Ryan

Water Resources Program Manager





# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

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**Subject:** October 4, 2023 Water Advisory Commission Item G1

**Title:** Well Ordinance Update Status

### Recommended Action:

1. Receive Update.

### Background

At the August 2, 2023 Water Advisory Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to form a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and begin contacting potential members. All potential TAC members were contacted via email and sent the attached 2-page description of the process.

### Updates:

Staff have contacted potential TAC members and received the following responses:

Representative Group	Person	Status
Disadvantaged Community	John Erickson	CWC declined to participate on the TAC but has asked us to keep them updated and share materials/drafts.
Small farmers		Unconfirmed
Working lands/Agriculture		Unconfirmed
Well Driller	Aaron Lingemann	Confirmed
Well Driller	Dave Landino	Confirmed
Water Advisory Commission	Bryan Largay	Confirmed
Water Advisory Commission	Nate Gillespie	Confirmed
SMGWA/MGA	Rob Swartz	Confirmed
PV Water	Brian Lockwood	Confirmed
Biotic resources -NMFS	Rick Rogers	Confirmed
Biotic resources -CDFW	Jessie Maxfield	Confirmed
Public utilities/Soquel Creek	Brice Dalhmeier	Confirmed
Department of Water Resources	Ben Brezing	Confirmed

Once the TAC is finalized, Sierra will begin scheduling meetings.

Sierra attended the Western Groundwater Congress which was held in Burbank by the Groundwater Resources Association. There was a panel session on well permitting which was very well attended. Key takeaways are that all counties are struggling with this right now and trying to navigate the process, DWR has not taken a leadership role in addressing issues of well interference or surface water depletion, and that most counties are working independently and there is very little work underway to provide consistency between counties.

Presented by: Sierra Ryan

Water Resources Program Manager



# County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency - Environmental Health

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
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[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



## Santa Cruz County Well Ordinance Technical Advisory Committee

### **Purpose:**

Santa Cruz County Environmental Health staff are convening a Well Ordinance Technical Advisory Committee (Well TAC) to provide County Staff with guidance, recommendations, and feedback regarding technical and policy matters pertaining to the update of the Water Wells and Individual Water Systems chapters of the Santa Cruz County Code:

[Water Wells Chapter \(7.70\)](#)

[Individual Water Systems Chapter \(7.73\)](#)

### **Goal and Objectives**

The goal of the TAC is to help staff develop an ordinance that provides protection against adverse impacts of well construction and use, while not creating an undue burden to applicants.

The resulting updated ordinance should meet the following objectives:

- 1) Follows all applicable laws and regulations.
- 2) Honors the core tenants of the County General Plan which includes recognition of agricultural land as an essential and irreplaceable resource for future generations.
- 3) Is equitable in its consideration of impacts to groundwater users, including the public trust.
- 4) Facilitates communications with Groundwater Sustainability Agencies and recognizes their mandate to sustainably manage their groundwater basins.
- 5) Acknowledges the impact that climate change is having on water resources.

### **Representative Groups**

In order to ensure that County staff have adequately considered the impact to various uses and users of groundwater, representatives from the following interested parties have been invited to participate in the TAC:

- Working lands/Agriculture
- Well Driller
- Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission
- Groundwater Sustainability Agencies: Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency, Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency, Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
- Disadvantaged Community
- Biotic resources: NOAA Fisheries and CDFW

- Large Public Water Systems
- Department of Water Resources

**Commitment**

County staff are looking for staff-level TAC members who can commit to attending five hybrid meetings of 2-3 hour duration over the next year, with an optional sixth meeting if there are significant changes after the ordinance is reviewed by the County Planning Commission and the California Coastal Commission. The meeting topics are expected to be as follows, dates for the first two meetings will be set once the TAC participants are confirmed:

<b>Meeting Number</b>	<b>Meeting Topics (Subject to Change)</b>
<b>Meeting 1</b>	1) Introductions, ground rules, goal, expectations 2) Intro to well ordinance, reasons for update 3) Code update process 4) Topics for future in-depth discussion
<b>Meeting 2</b>	Focused meeting on groundwater: 1) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, GSAs, GSPs 2) Groundwater emergencies 3) Metering of non-de minimus new and replacement wells 5) Areas of declining GW levels/quality and new wells
<b>Meeting 3</b>	Evaluating surrounding impacts: 1) Discuss where/how wells may impact Public Trust values 2) Review existing protections and what other Counties have done 3) Determine when additional evaluation and/or protections are needed 4) Consider impacts to surrounding wells 5) How to include Karst
<b>Meeting 4</b>	TAC reviews draft language and assessment of impacts to staffing, permit turnaround time, and fees.
<b>Public Workshop</b>	
<b>Meeting 5</b>	Review Final language
<b>Optional Meeting 6</b>	Final review after changes from Planning Commission, Coastal Commission, Board of Sup