

Board Meeting Recap: November 2021

Groundwater Sustainability Plan adopted

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency held a board meeting Wednesday, Nov. 17, via all-remote, web- and phone-based access due to the coronavirus prevention guidelines. At the meeting, the Board of Directors adopted the [Groundwater Sustainability Plan \(GSP\)](#) and will submit the GSP to the state Department of Water Resources for review and approval.

A key responsibility of the [Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency](#) is to develop, adopt and submit a GSP for the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin (Basin), as required by California’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. SMGWA member agency staff, with support from technical experts and input from Basin stakeholders, prepared the draft GSP, which was first presented at the SMGWA’s Board of Directors meeting in July and subsequently opened for a two-month public comment period to solicit feedback from Basin stakeholders and the general public. A total of 39 public comments were received.

“All the hard work, long meetings and late nights paid off with a great plan for water sustainability,” said SMGWA Board Chair Chris Perri. “But the real win was bringing together all these different communities, cooperating with good hearts and minds for the greater good!”

Informed by the public comments, the final GSP will guide long-term management of the groundwater basin to ensure a reliable and resilient water supply for community needs and the environment. The plan provides the basis for ongoing management of the Basin by SMGWA to achieve sustainability in a 20-year planning horizon and maintain sustainability over a 50-year implementation horizon, as specified by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

The Basin forms a roughly triangular area between Felton, Ben Lomond and Scotts Valley. This Basin is a source of drinking water for Scotts Valley Water District, San Lorenzo Valley Water District, over a dozen small water systems and approximately 1,100 parcels served by private wells. Additionally, the groundwater table influences the surface water in the San Lorenzo River, a primary drinking water source for the city of Santa Cruz and home to endangered species.

SMGWA’s effort on groundwater sustainability is increasingly important as the region, similarly to the whole state, experiences another drought. The Basin’s GSP must be submitted to the California Department of Water Resources by Jan. 31, 2022.

The December SMGWA board meeting has been canceled. The board will next meet in January 2022. To learn more about the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency and upcoming events, visit our website at www.smgwa.org.