

Ways to be a Good Citizen of the Aquifer

A solid blue shape that starts as a thin line on the left side and expands diagonally upwards to the right, filling the bottom half of the slide.

- Resource Management
- Erosion, Habitat, Streams
- Maintenance
- PWO Concerns (letter from public)
- Staying Informed

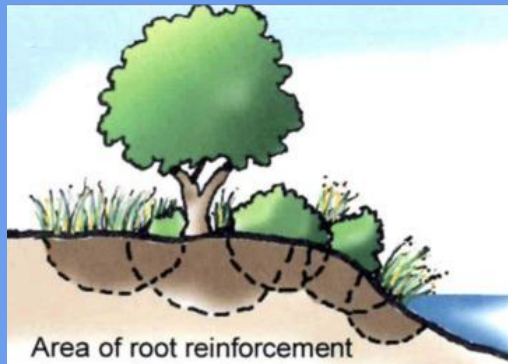
Resource Management

- Low Flow Fixtures
- Drought Tolerant Landscaping
- Keep Water Where it Falls- Swales & Permeable Surfaces
- Rain Barrels
- Slow it. Spread it. Sink it!
- For More Information - <http://www.rcdsantacruz.org>



Erosion, Habitat, Streams

- Maintain Hills and Slopes
 - a. Terraces
 - b. Proper Use of Plastics (use bark, cardboard, bio materials instead)
 - c. Plants
- Proper Road Maintenance and Drainage (drains, culverts, ditches)
- Be Mindful (septic or ground)
 - a. Cleaners, Medications, Paint, fertilizer, pesticides and motor oil
 - b. Nitrates in Septics
- Do Not Hinder Streams (dumping, daming, altering)



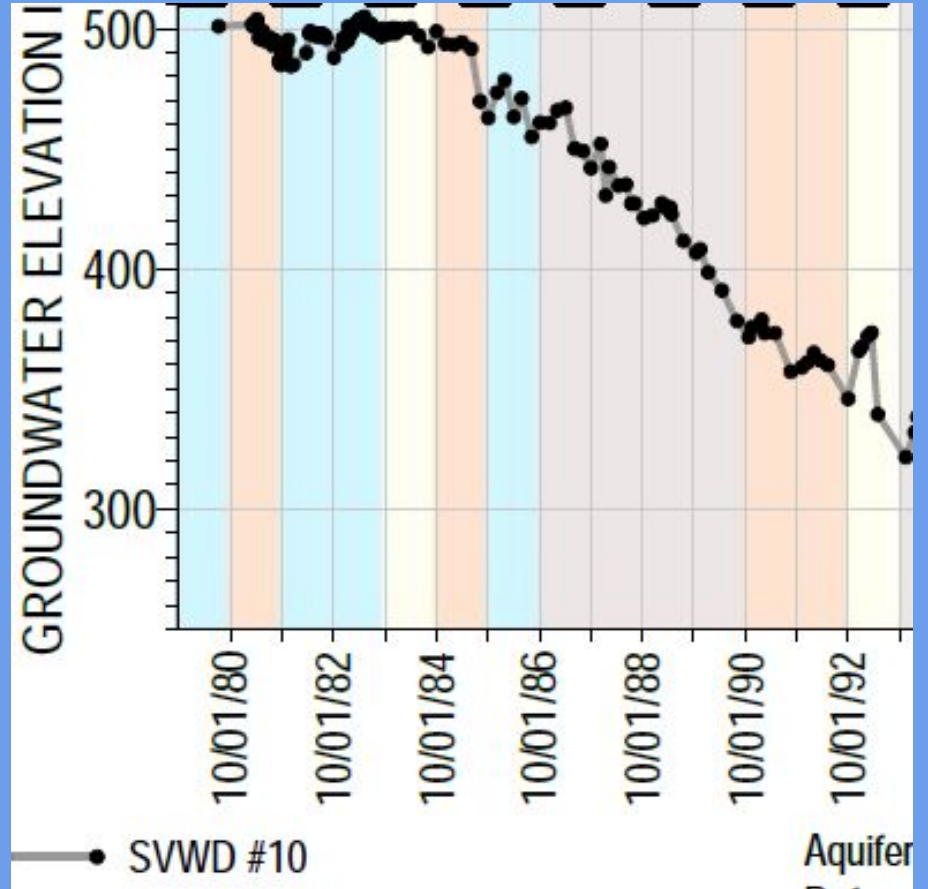
Maintenance

- An annual well maintenance check (bacteria and quality)
- Routine Maintenance Practices
 - a. Check the well cover or well cap
 - b. Regular cleaning
 - c. Keep area around well clean and clear
 - d. Monitor for changes and fix immediately (well light, water levels, odors)
- Use qualified professional if unsure
- Keep Logs

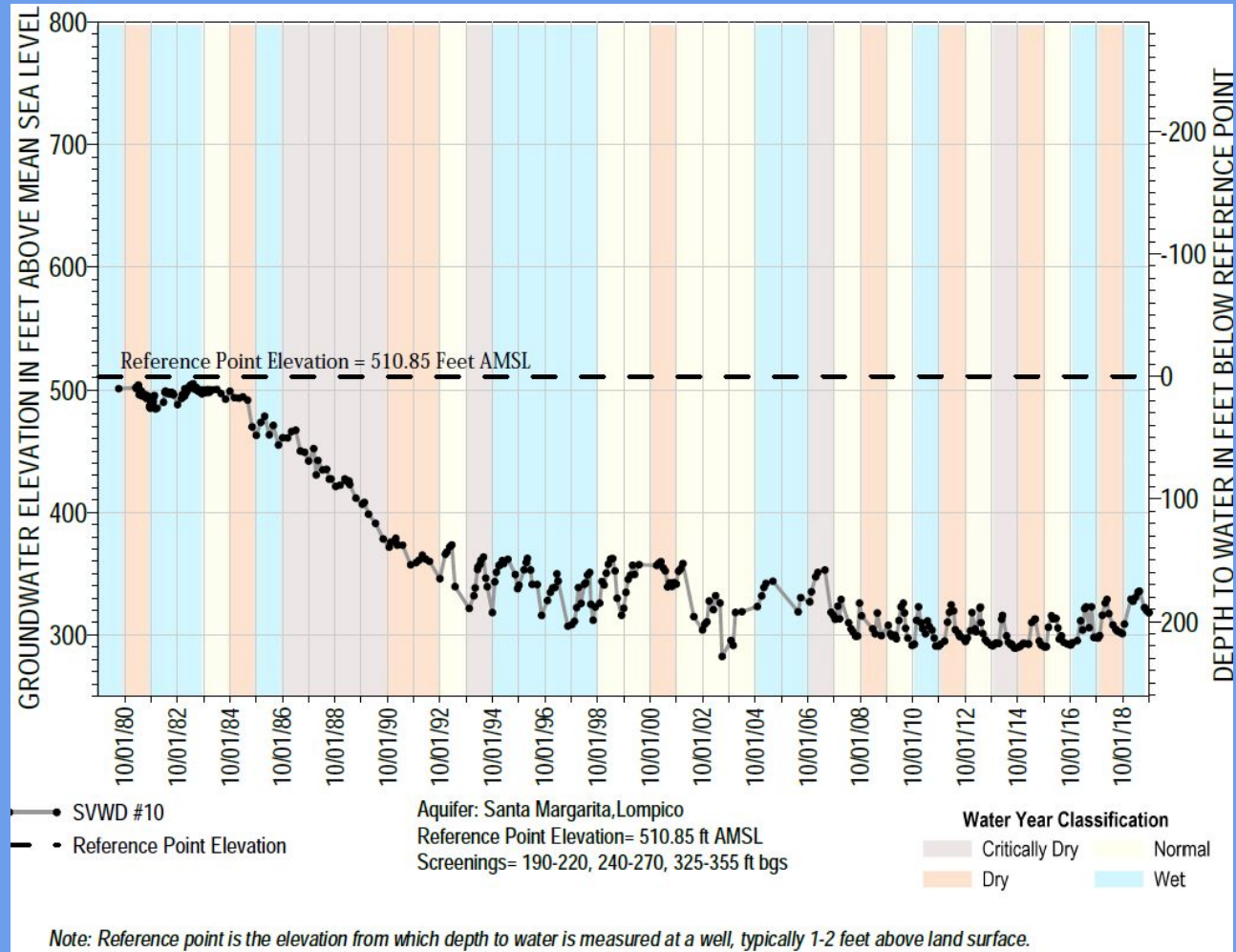


Some final notes focused on
the typical concerns of
Private Well Owners

- Indications in the news previously had been that Well levels were declining locally



- However aquifer levels appear to have stabilized. Good news!



- An example of the reductions in groundwater extraction achieved so far

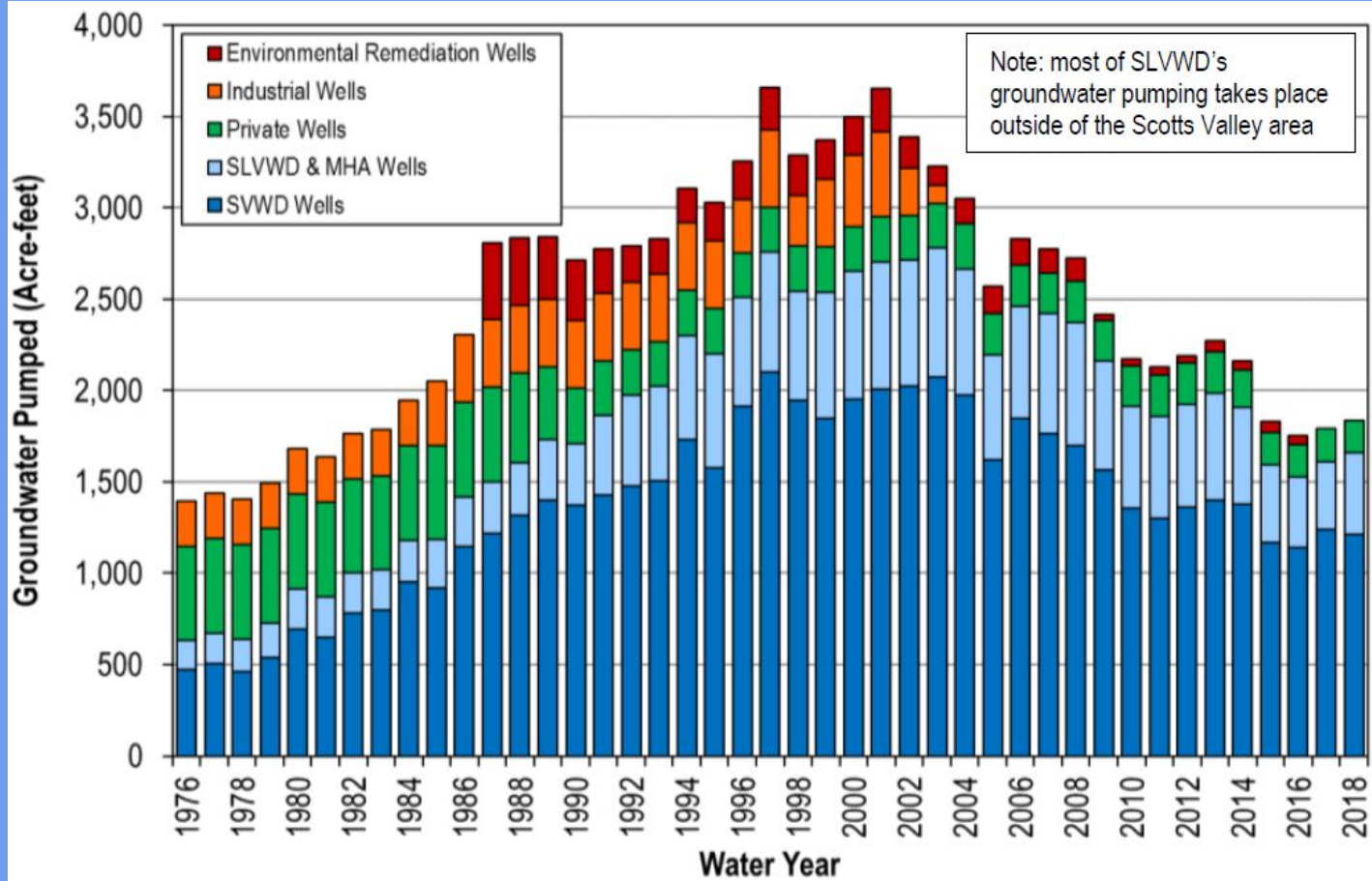


Figure 2-34. Scotts Valley Area (South of Bean Creek) Groundwater Extraction by User Type

- Chart of the somewhat isolated regions of the Santa Margarita aquifer

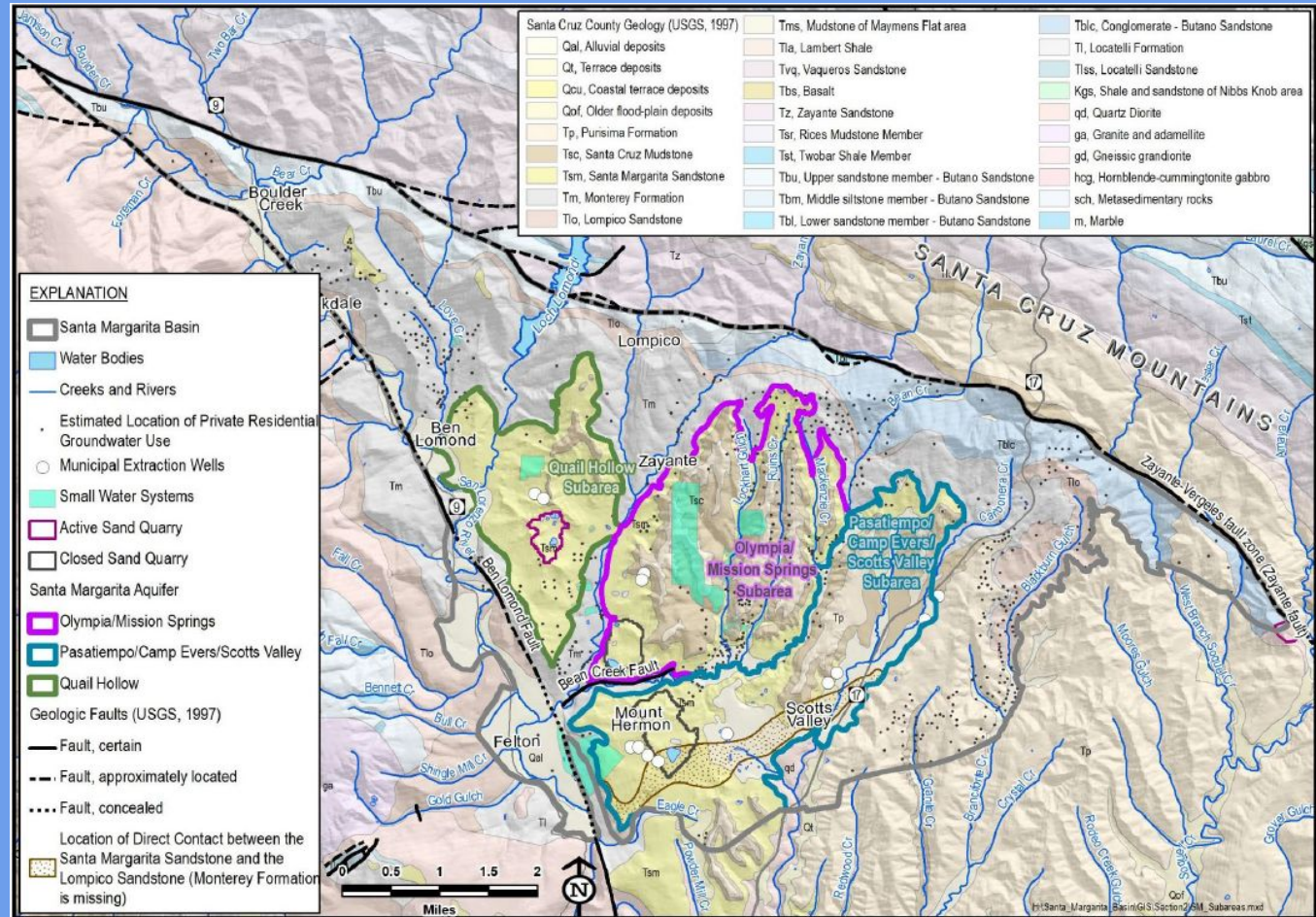


Figure 2-36. Santa Margarita Aquifer Subareas

- Plus there are interesting new projects being considered with features such as:
 - a. “Conjunctive use”
 - b. “In lieu recharge”

Basically the idea is to share water between systems to make more use of the surface water and so pump less groundwater.

- In summary:
- Your well water seems generally secure on average.
- However you may want to consider acquiring on site water storage capacity of 10,000 gallons or so, connected up to your home water system.
- Make sure that the tank(s) can be easily refilled via a water tender and easily withdrawn by firetrucks when needed.
- This will provide for both fire safety for emergencies and water supply backup during the next severe drought.

Notes on some PWO Concerns continued...

- Metering: SGMA does not authorize the metering of de minimis residential wells, but makes it likely for private wells used for commercial, industrial, or agriculture. Will there be a de minimis Burden of Proof? Stay vigilant with us.
- Taxes & Fees: There are no management taxes or fees on de minimis private residential wells planned AND our basin management plan does not appear to require any large, expensive projects seeking funding solutions. But, under SGMA Taxes & Fees ARE allowed, if “justified”. We already have participants that support this! GOAL: As PWO representatives, we would wholeheartedly support a final basin management plan that contains clear prohibition of future taxes or fees on de minimis residential wells.
- What PWOs Contribute: In fact, we would love to see an acknowledgement that our de minimis use, along with the rainwater recharge based on average property size and topography, is a net-positive for the basin.

- **Fiscal Oversight:** Scrutinizing spending reduces pressure for Taxes & Fees on PWOs. We continue to question specific proposed expenses... like a Sensitivity Analysis (study) that would gauge the effect of eliminating (destroying) all private wells. Why bother to spend scarce money on studying potentially unreliable miles of pipe through mountains, forests & creeks to connect PWOs to a water district?
- **Barriers to ESSENTIAL Participants:** Virtual meetings do not allow many average PWOs to be able to follow the process, ask questions, and provide their feedback. Mountain internet connections are often not available or robust enough to support “Zooming”. No one who telephones in (unable to see the visual materials) can follow along for 3+ hour meetings. Past meetings such as this evening would ordinarily fill a large room with concerned citizens and their outpouring of opinions. That helps to make board members think hard about projects requiring funding predicated on charging us for our own water.

Letter from Nick Vrolyk:

PRIVATE WELL OWNER CONCERNS

PLEASE ENTER INTO PUBLIC RECORD

12/01/2020

To: Members of the Public and all Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency Board Members

From: Nick Vrolyk Private Well Owner

Dear Members of the Board,

My name is Nick Vrolyk and for over 40 years now I have lived on acreage west of Scotts Valley. I paid to have my well drilled and I paid for and installed my own septic system. I paid to have electrical poles installed by PG&E and I paid to have the propane pad and tanks installed.

First the ground rules about which I am writing this letter: I am talking specifically about only those domestic wells that provide up to 2 acre feet per year of water for domestic use only. This use is for 4 households or less on one well (also known as De minimis wells). The reason for this is that the County & State have rules that apply to 5 or more households on one well (mutual water systems) and those that are using more than 2 acre feet per year or are running a commercial or agricultural endeavor.

My main objective is that I want to go on record as opposing any fee, tax or charge of any kind that this board, or any future board or government entity may be contemplating charging, today or in the future to Private Land Owners like myself for the water that we pump from our wells.

Here are the reasons why we should not be charged a fee to pump our own water:

- 1 - We pay to drill our well.
- 2 - We pay for our pumps and infrastructure and storage tanks.
- 3 - We pay the electric bill to run our pumps.
- 4- We pay to maintain our water system.
- 5 - We pay to have the water quality checked.
- 6 - We pay for our sewage (septic) system.
- 7 - We pay to maintain our sewage (septic) system.

Take the following example and let's analyze further why we should not be charged any fees:

Most Private Well Owners live on 1 acre or more.

If 1 inch of rain falls on their 1 acre it will collect about 27,154 gallons per year.

At 20 inches of rain (very low for our area) 1 acre collects about 543,000 gallons per year.

A household of 4 uses about 500 gallons per day or 182,500 gallons per year. (A large portion of this usage goes back into the ground through the septic system). That means that the homeowner's 1 acre parcel produces over 360,500 net gallons to the aquifer per year.

Based on this example the Private Well Owner is a net supplier of water and not a user at all. Most own much larger parcels and thus produce even more water to recharge the aquifer.

The reason that this is so important is that the government is planning at some point in time to charge Private Well Owners a tax (fee) for managing the groundwater basin. These private well owners already manage their portion of the groundwater basin more efficiently than any government agency could. The private well owners do this management at their own expense and at no cost to the government agency. There is no justification for any government agency to levy a tax (fee) on Private Well Owners.

Please make sure that each board member has a copy of this letter and that it is made available to the general public.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Nick Vrolyk
Scotts Valley, CA

Staying Informed

- Attend Meetings & Be Vocal
- Email Board Members or PWO Reps
- Read Quarterly Email (to start shortly)
- Volunteer for the Well Sounding Program
 - a. Contact Sean Abbey: Sean.Abbey@santacruzcounty.us
- Next Meeting will be held on December 9th at 5:30 p.m
 - a. Board Meeting
 - b. Workshop Format
 - c. Breakout Sessions (promote conversation)
- <https://smgwa.org/>
 - a. PWO Section - <https://smgwa.org/resources/pwo/>
 - b. Sign up for the SMGWA email listserve (bottom of page)

Q & A