

**SANTA MARGARITA
Groundwater Agency**

**Sustainably Managing our
Local Groundwater Resources**

Groundwater Sustainability Plan Amendment

Board of Directors Meeting

October 22, 2026

General Business 4.2

REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT FOUNDATION

a subsidiary of Community Foundation Santa Cruz County



**MONTGOMERY
& ASSOCIATES**

Water Resource Consultants

Overview of GSP Amendment (1)

GSP Section	Highlights of Changes
Overall Document	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increased number of sections from 6 to 10 to improve navigation through document2. Updated all available data and planning documents over last 5 years
Executive Summary	
1. Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Revised sustainability goal2. Updated Basin authorized representative
2. Plan Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Added description of City of Santa Cruz anadromous salmonid habitat conservation plan
3. Basin Setting	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. No significant changes – generally updated temporal data
4. Groundwater Conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Significant addition to interconnected surface water sections to establish relationship between groundwater levels and surface water flows, especially at end of dry season
5. Water Budgets	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Updated water budgets to capture “current conditions” since SGMA passage2. Added a projected groundwater budget without climate change

Overview of GSP Amendment (2)

GSP Section	Highlights of Changes
6. Monitoring Networks	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increased groundwater level monitoring network from 12 up to 23 wells2. Reduced streamflow monitoring network3. Eliminated Glenwood area from groundwater dependent ecosystem (GDE) tracking4. Replaced County field GDE monitoring with publicly available satellite-based monitoring
7. Sustainable Management Criteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Integrated groundwater level and interconnected surface water monitoring2. Reduced constituents of concern to total dissolved solids, arsenic, and nitrate3. For groundwater extraction, combined use in the Monterey, Lompico, and Butano formations in a single “confined” aquifer. Tracking extraction in the Santa Margarita Formation as the unconfined aquifer.4. For groundwater extraction using a 5-year trailing average to allow for conjunctive use operations

Overview of GSP Amendment (3)

GSP Section	Highlights of Changes
8. Projects and Management Actions	1. Reduced projects and management actions from 20 down to a total of 4
9. GSP Implementation	1. Updated the next 5-year budget projection 2. Eliminated metering of private wells as a GSP implementation action
10. References and Technical Studies	1. Updated new references and studies 2. Still post-GSP adoption work needs to be done to confirm links to these references
Appendixes	1. Updated appendixes with time-related data (e.g., hydrographs) 2. Added new data on new representative monitoring points 3. Will need to add an appendix of comments/responses to amended GSP prior to submission

Comments Received

Commenter	Comment(s) or Recommendation
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	1. Include table of the numerical targets of the City of Santa Cruz Habitat Conservation Plan and analysis showing relationship between groundwater levels and streamflow that demonstrates the groundwater levels support the target baseflows.

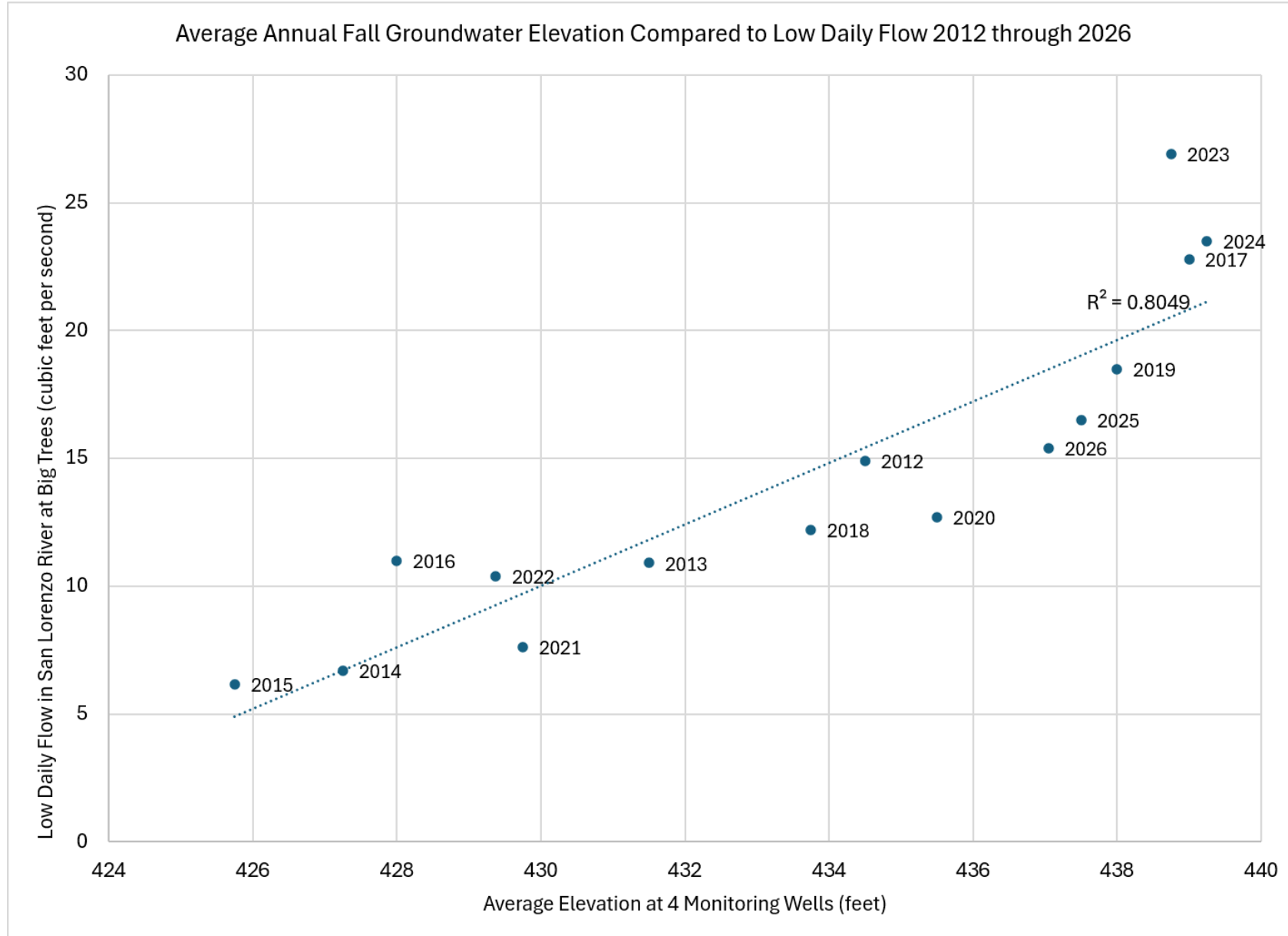
San Lorenzo River Flow Goals

	Minimum Flow in the San Lorenzo River below Tait Street (cfs)								
	Rearing Baseflow					Migration		Spawning ¹	
	Hydrologic condition 5 80-100% (driest)	Hydrologic condition 4 60-80% (dry)	Hydrologic condition 3 40-60% (normal)	Hydrologic condition 2 20-40% (wet)	Hydrologic condition 1 0-20% (very wet)	Adult ²	Smolt Migration ³	Spawn	Incubate
Jan	8	8	15.8	16.4	17.5	17/25.2	10		
Feb	8	8	15.9	16.7	18.0	17/25.2	10		
Mar	8	8	16.3	17.3	18.2	17/25.2	10		
Apr	8	8	17.2	17.9	18.4	17/25.2 ⁴	10		
May	8	8	17.7	18.2	18.5		10		
Jun	8	8	16.6	18.1	18.5				
Jul	8	8	12.4	15.8	18.2				
Aug	8	8	9.8	11.9	16.4				
Sep	8	8	9.0	11.1	13.3				
Oct	8	8	9.8	11.4	13.3				
Nov	8	8	12.5	14.1	16.4				
Dec	8	8	15.1	16.2	17.6	17/25.2			

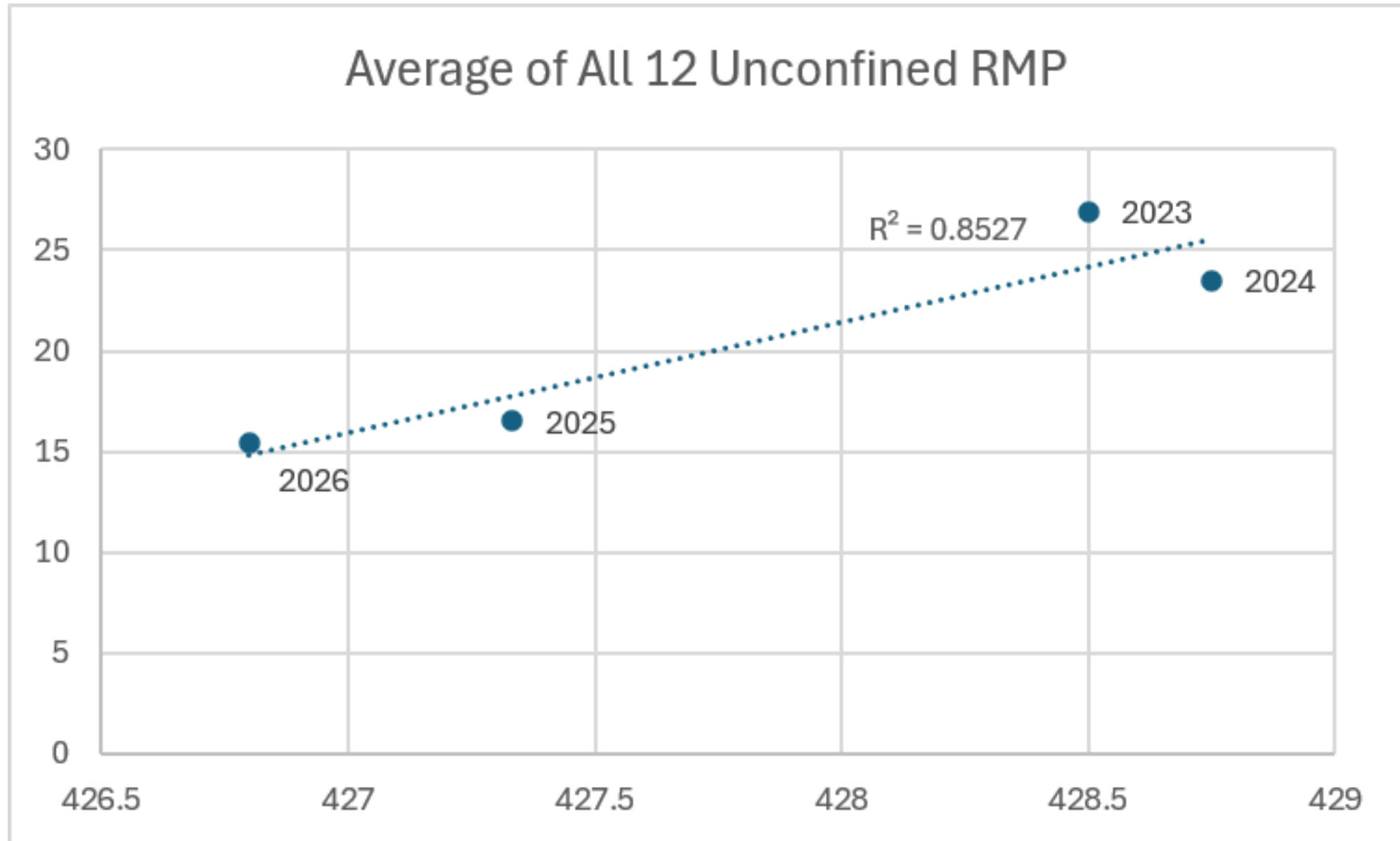
¹ No spawning occurs in this reach.

² Adult migration flows may be reduced to 3 consecutive days a week if storage levels in Loch Lomond Reservoir fall below the following levels (MG): Dec 1900 MG; Jan 2,000 MG; Feb 2,100 (MG); Mar 2,200 (MG). Further

Version in GSP with 2026 data added



More recent data that may be added to GSP



Comments Received

Commenter	Comment(s) or Recommendation
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	2. Reconsider allowing 2 consecutive years of groundwater level exceedances. At a minimum, define groundwater levels that would trigger increased monitoring and identify management actions before significant impacts occur.

Well Name	MT using 2014	MT using 2013	Diff using 2013 to 2014 (ft)
SLVWD Quail MW-A	413	413	0
SLVWD Quail MW-B	453	457	4
SMGWA-6	320	325	5
SLVWD Olympia 1	340	349	9
SMGWA-3	387	387	0
SMGWA-4	342	345	3
SMGWA-5	515	515	0
SVWD TW-18	469	469	0
SMGWA-2	389	392	3
SLVWD Pasatiempo MW-2	512	516	4
SVWD AB303 MW-1	477	478	1
SVWD SV4-MW	396	399	3
SMGWA-8	313	320	7
SVWD #9	333	340	7
SLVWD Pasatiempo #3 (Estrella)	337	337	0
SLVWD Pasatiempo MW-1	337	337	0
SVWD #10	289	286	-3
SVWD #11A	294	294	0
SVWD AB303 MW-2	387	387	0
SVWD AB303 MW-3A	354	354	0
SVWD TW-19	327	337	10
SVWD Canham Well	427	433	6
SVWD Stonewood Well	840	841	1

3.3 Annual Assessment Procedures

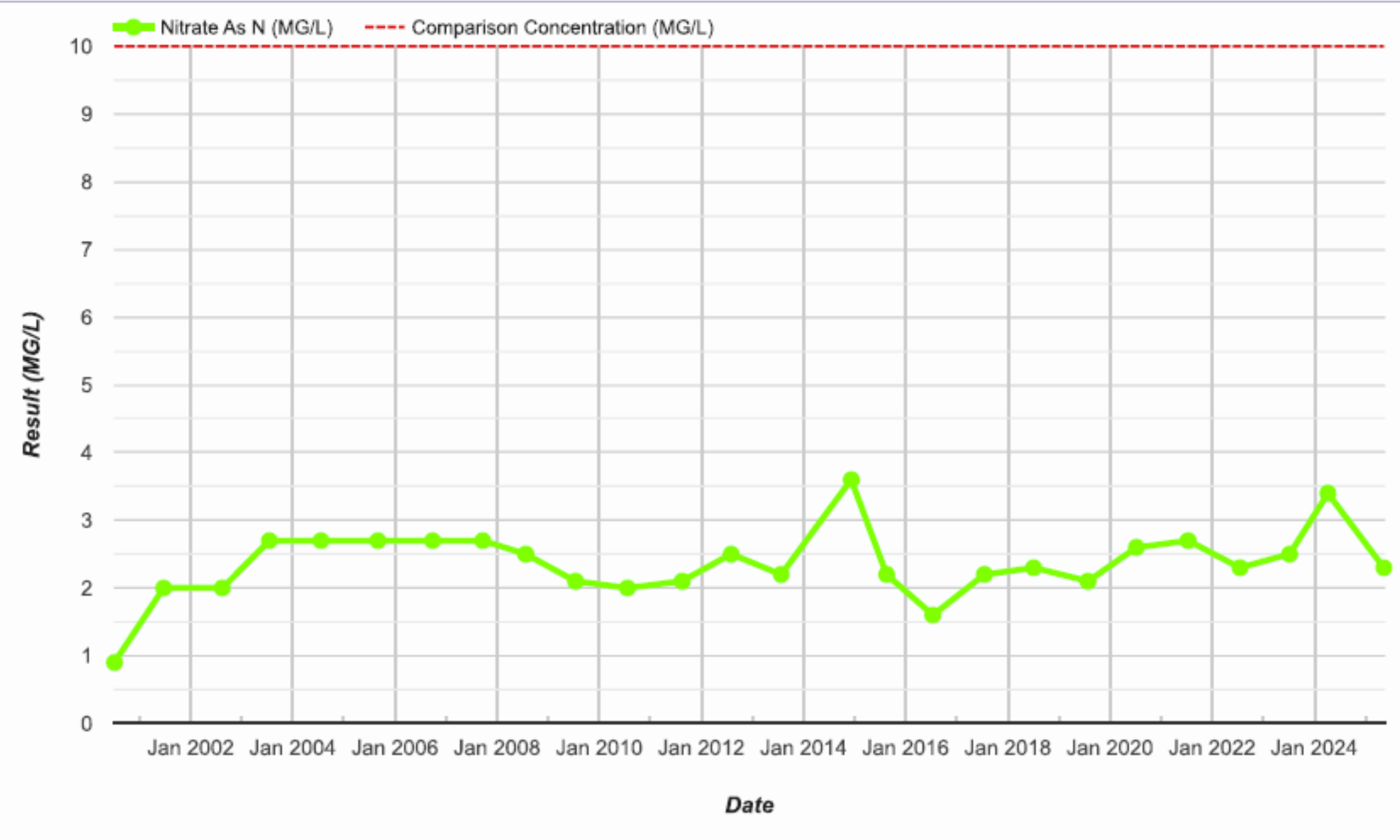
District staff will perform the Annual Assessment in April of each year following these procedures.

- **The team conducting the Annual Assessment consists of staff performing the following roles:**
 - District staff: gathers key inputs and historical data, analyzes potential supply and demand gaps; provides insight on demand trends and future production capacity.
 - District hydrogeologist consultant(s): provides groundwater condition information.
 - District Board/Committee: Staff presents information and any anticipated water shortages to the District's Board and/or committee and receives their feedback.
- **Each spring, evaluate rainfall for the first part of the water year plus the four prior water years**
 - Determine if there is a rainfall trigger per Table 2.
- **Obtain and review the SMGB Annual Report from the previous water year and consult with District's hydrogeologist(s) to determine if annual conditions trigger water shortage conditions:**
 - Hydrographs of groundwater levels to determine trends for both extraction and monitoring wells,
 - Compare groundwater levels against Minimum Thresholds for RMPs, and
 - Total well pumping data aggregated by aquifer and District.
- **Determine the type of water shortage and corresponding stage.**
- **Develop a recommendation to present to the District Board.**
- **District's Board makes a final determination on which water shortage stage to declare and implement.**
- **Develop and implement appropriate communication protocols and response actions.**
- **Submit Annual Assessment to DWR by July 1**

Comments Received

Commenter	Comment(s) or Recommendation
Chris Berry, City of Santa Cruz	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide more context in the document that the minimum rearing flows in the City's Anadromous Salmonid Habitat Conservation Plan do not provide optimal habitat for all life stages of special status fish species. Conjunctive use planning needs to consider the biological effects of these downstream uses.<li>2. Allowing 5 mg/L nitrate at 3 wells could make it challenging to meet San Lorenzo River compliance targets for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). Consider an interim, lower threshold.

RESULTS FOR W0604410014 - CA4410014_025_025



What Comes Next?

- SMGWA begins implementing amended GSP upon Board Adoption
- SMGWA begins preparing annual report using amended GSP for SMC evaluation – report due by April 1, 2027
- SMGWA to submit amended GSP by January 3, 2026
- DWR has 20 days to post on SGMA Portal, which begins a 75-day public comment period
- DWR has up to 2 years for amended GSP review
 - DWR took just under 17 months to complete initial SMGWA GSP review



Board Discussion and Public Comment

Staff requests authorization to submit the amended Groundwater Sustainability Plan, subject to final editorial revisions, no later than January 3, 3027

