

TO: WATER SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WSAC)
FROM: HEIDI LUCKENBACH
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON SOQUEL CREEK WATER DISTRICT ACTIVITIES
DATE: MARCH 18, 2015

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

Cooperative Agreement with City of Santa Cruz (City) The Cooperative Agreement was put on hold pending findings by a District-led peer review of their groundwater conditions. The peer review was accepted at their July 15 Board meeting. The Cooperative Agreement is now moving forward and will be presented to the Board on March 17, 2015. (The agreement will also be presented to City Council, likely at an April meeting.)

Basin Implementation The next meeting of the Basin Implementation Group (BIG) is scheduled for March 25. The BIG will continue to discuss the requirements for forming a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) per the new Groundwater Sustainability Act as well as manage the progress of the groundwater modeling effort. No significant progress has been published on the model to date.

CA State Legislation on Groundwater The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) task force on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation is tentatively scheduled to meet on March 13, 2015. The District and their consultant, Hydrometrics, will be attending on behalf of this region, Region 5.

As part of the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act that was signed on September 16, 2014 and effective January 1, 2015, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is conducting field assessments of selected areas in California to gain better understanding of the issues and challenges local agencies will be facing. DWR staff met in Santa Cruz on February 18, 2015 with staff from the County of Santa Cruz, Soquel Creek Water District, Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, Central Water District, City of Santa Cruz, and Scotts Valley Water District. Water agency staff discussed several areas of concern including basin boundaries and the facilitation process for developing a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA). DWR was very receptive to agency concerns and explained that they will have funds available to help agencies with the facilitation process, recognizing that the Santa Cruz region is much further along than other agencies. Next steps include drafting the scope for a facilitated program to address the various issues (e.g., basin boundaries) and other issues related to the formation of the GSA. DWR is interested in working collaboratively on the process.

SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPLY

Water Supply Alternatives In 2014 the District, with the assistance of Kennedy/Jenks Consultants, completed a process of evaluating water supply alternatives outside of the scwd2 Regional Seawater Desalination Project that included the following:

- Mid-County Desalination;
- DeepWaterDesalination;
- Mid-County Groundwater Replenishment;
- Santa Cruz Regional Groundwater Replenishment;

- San Lorenzo River Surface Water Transfer with Existing Infrastructure; and,
- San Lorenzo River Surface Water Transfer with Infrastructure Upgrades at Graham Hill Treatment Plant.

The District had Black and Veatch conduct an independent peer review of the reasonableness of the project assumptions/definitions and cost estimates. Black and Veatch presented their draft peer review report to the Board at the February 17 Board Meeting and a revised draft, incorporating Board comments, will be included in the March 17 meeting for acceptance. Primary findings included: there were no fatal flaws with the original work; the two groundwater replenishment projects warrant additional project definition; all of the projects have unresolved and yet to be understood issues relating to permitting, water rights, funding capacity and stakeholder agreements.

Recycled Water The District is currently evaluating the use of recycled water for Groundwater Replenishment. The District Board approved preparing a grant application for a recycled water study at its May 20, 2014 meeting. Having received similar approvals by Santa Cruz City Council, the City and District split the cost to prepare grant applications and submitted two separate applications at the end of 2014 to the State Water Resources Control Board to further study recycled water end uses in both agency's jurisdictions. Both agencies received verbal notification in early March 2015 that grant funding was approved and have since issued separate Request for Qualifications (due March 20) to hire a consultant to conduct the work.

A tour of Santa Clara Valley Water District's (SCVWD) Advanced Water Purification Facility was held on February 18, 2015. Several District Board Members, County Supervisor Aides, and staff from several Santa Cruz water agencies participated to learn more about the treatment facility and the efforts of the SCVWD in diversifying their water portfolio while maximizing use of existing water streams.