

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



### MEDIA CONTACT:

Jennifer Murray, 831-515-2802  
jennifer@millermxfield.com

## GET TO KNOW GROUNDWATER DURING GROUNDWATER AWARENESS WEEK

**(March 10, 2023) SCOTTS VALLEY, CA** – The National Ground Water Association (NGWA) and The Groundwater Foundation have announced that [Groundwater Awareness Week](#) (GWAW) is this week, March 5-11. GWAW was established in 1999 to highlight the responsible development, management, and use of groundwater and to celebrate local groundwater efforts across the country.

Locally, the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin sits beneath communities in the San Lorenzo Valley and Scotts Valley areas. 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.

Groundwater is a critical component of California's water supply, accounting for 40 percent in a normal year and up to 60 percent during dry conditions. Groundwater serves as a resource for many different industries and uses, including urban and rural communities, and ecosystems across the state.

Groundwater basins serve as the state's water savings account and are intended to provide a reliable water source during drought conditions when we have less rain and snowpack. In fact, the state's groundwater basins have the capability of storing 850 million acre-feet to 1.3 billion acre-feet of water, or 8 to 12 times the combined storage capacity of all major above ground reservoirs in California.

As California continues to experience climate-driven weather extremes, including longer and more intense drought periods and major storm cycles, understanding groundwater conditions and managing groundwater so it is available for future generations is crucial. Local and regional agencies throughout California are working hard to fill data gaps with improved monitoring, planning, project implementation, and work with their local communities on a path towards groundwater sustainability.

To help ensure long-term sustainable groundwater conditions, the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act](#) (SGMA) of 2014 set forth a statewide regulatory framework for improving the management of our critical groundwater resources. SGMA required the formation of local GSAs that are now in place throughout the state to develop and implement groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) to manage groundwater pumping and recharge.

A key responsibility of the [Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency](#) (the GSA in North Santa Cruz County) is to develop, adopt and submit a GSP for the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin (Basin), as required by California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. 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 SMGWA board adopted its [Groundwater Sustainability Plan](#) in 2021 and submitted it to the State for review in early 2022.

For more information, visit the California Department of Water Resources [SGMA website](#), interactive groundwater [StoryMap](#), and view this [educational groundwater video](#).

### ABOUT SANTA MARGARITA GROUNDWATER AGENCY

The Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) is a joint powers authority comprised of the San Lorenzo

Valley Water District, Scotts Valley Water District and the County of Santa Cruz, to oversee the groundwater management activities in the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin in Santa Cruz County, California. The agency was established in 2017. The Board of Directors of the SMGWA includes two board members from each of the member agencies, one from the City of Scotts Valley, one from the City of Santa Cruz, one from the Mount Hermon Association Community Water System and two well owner representatives. Learn more at [www.smgwa.org](http://www.smgwa.org), on [Facebook](#) and on [Instagram](#).

###