

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



MEDIA CONTACT:

Jennifer Murray, 831-515-2802

jennifer@millermaxfield.com

SANTA MARGARITA GROUNDWATER BASIN CONDITIONS IMPROVED IN 2023, THANKS TO WET WINTER AND RECORD LOW DEMAND

GROUNDWATER AGENCY'S 2023 WATER YEAR ANNUAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE CA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

(April 29, 2024) SCOTTS VALLEY, CA –The Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) reported Water Year 2023 was a very good year that saw improvements in groundwater sustainability indicators, according to the [Annual Report](#) the agency submitted to the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) this spring.

The 2023 Water Year, which ran Oct. 1, 2022, to Sept. 30, 2023, was one of the wettest on record and had a positive impact on the groundwater basin, a source of water for Scotts Valley Water District, San Lorenzo Valley Water District, over a dozen small water systems and approximately 800 private domestic wells.

According to the report, the 2023 Water Year saw precipitation above normal nearly every month of the rainy season and cumulative stream flows much higher than average. The groundwater table influences surface water flow in the San Lorenzo River Watershed, which is a primary water source for the San Lorenzo Valley and the City of Santa Cruz, and supports important natural habitats.

Rainfall data for the 2023 Water Year:

- 71.0 inches of rain at Boulder Creek, 140% of average
- 53.8 inches of rain in Scotts Valley, 130% of average
- 241,000 acre-feet (AF) of annual flow measured on the San Lorenzo River at Big Trees in Felton, 250% of average

From a water-use perspective, demand was the lowest in nearly 40 years. Approximately 3,702 AF of water was used in the Basin during the time period. It also marked the lowest groundwater use dating back to 1985 at 2,361 AF. The wet year also allowed the Basin to use more surface water for supply, leaving groundwater in storage for future needs. As a result, groundwater storage, increased substantially during the Water Year.

Projects to improve the conditions in the groundwater basin were implemented during the year, including water use efficiency programs by Scotts Valley Water District and San Lorenzo Valley Water District to reduce overall demand, as well as improvements to San Lorenzo Valley Water District's water storage tanks to reduce losses of water. A monitoring well network was also constructed during the year to improve the assessment of groundwater basin conditions through time.

Following Board approval at its Feb. 29, 2024, meeting, the Annual Report was submitted to DWR on March 7, 2024. The report describes the water year conditions and water year use, what SMGWA achieved toward implementing elements of its state-mandated groundwater sustainability plan, and what the results were for those efforts.

ABOUT SANTA MARGARITA GROUNDWATER AGENCY

The Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) oversees groundwater management of the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin in Santa Cruz County, California. The agency was formed in 2017 by the San Lorenzo Valley Water District, Scotts Valley Water District and the County of Santa Cruz to comply with the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014. The SMGWA Board of Directors includes two representatives 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 private well owner representatives. Learn more at www.smgwa.org, on [Facebook](#) and on [Instagram](#).

###