

Board Meeting Recap: Aug 2020

SMGWA Board Makes Significant Progress on Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Despite a massive wildfire impacting a large portion of the area, Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency held two back-to-back board meetings on Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 26 and 27, as planned. The meetings, including public comment and participation on agenda items, again were conducted via all-remote, web- and phone-based access due to the coronavirus outbreak.

On Wednesday, the board learned how groundwater model can incorporate climate change scenarios to predict future groundwater conditions.

On Thursday, the Board continued working to establish minimum thresholds, measurable objectives and undesirable results for sustainability indicators in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), which are required by the State.

The Board addressed several elements of the GSP:

- Review of the draft significant and unreasonable statement for interconnected surface water, and the approach for establishing minimum thresholds.
- Discussion on the undesirable results for degraded groundwater quality, including debating different ways to calculate these results. An arithmetic moving average would give equal weight to each of the last 10 years, while an exponential moving average would be weighted heavier to more recent years. The Board favored the arithmetic method because SGMWA is taking a more long-term view of basin water quality, while local water districts manage immediate concerns.
- Discussion about chronic lowering of groundwater levels focused on minimum thresholds and measurable objectives, and provided direction for developing undesirable results.

In addition, staff and board members gave a report on the Surface Water Technical Advisory Group meeting. The meeting included participation from regulatory agencies, including Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Water Resources, NOAA Fisheries, to provide input. Staff from the County of Santa Cruz and City of Santa Cruz also made presentations about fisheries management and conservation planning in the Basin.

The Board also received an update on Section 2 of the GSP. The Board members were asked to review the draft document and provide comments over the next two months, after which the next revision is presented at a future Board meeting, likely in November.

The next SMGWA Board of Directors meeting will be held Thursday, Sept. 24 at 5:30 p.m. More information at smgwa.org.



**SCOTTS VALLEY
WATER DISTRICT**
