

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: SHARE AND COLLECT INFORMATION ON PROGRAMS PROTECTING GROUNDWATER QUALITY

BACKGROUND

In an effort to better inform the public and policy makers the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Central Valley Water Board) adopted a resolution directing staff to develop a groundwater quality protection strategy. Developing a Groundwater Quality Protection Strategy (Strategy) for the Central Valley is NOT initiating a new regulatory program. Our intent is to develop an organized description of existing and emerging groundwater programs that the Central Valley Water Board and other agencies are implementing to protect groundwater quality. Our goal with this process is to produce a document through active stakeholder participation that will be readily available to the public and policy makers. This document will serve as the Central Valley Water Board's road map on where we are and where our current and emerging programs will move into the future to address groundwater within the Central Valley, including how the Central Valley Water Board will coordinate efforts with other agencies that have regulatory authority over groundwater.

Groundwater is a critically important resource to the Central Valley Region. The second largest contiguous groundwater basin in the United States and the largest groundwater basin in California is within the Central Valley Region. Groundwater accounts for almost 50 percent of the domestic (private) and public drinking-water supply in the Central Valley. Some groundwater supplies throughout the Central Valley have been degraded or polluted which, in part, may be due to historical practices of the agriculture and dairy industries; commercial, industrial, and military discharges; failing septic systems; and other discharges to land. With the population of the Central Valley expected to grow, groundwater's importance to the Central Valley Region will not diminish.

As part of developing a groundwater strategy it is important to acknowledge the Central Valley Region's mission and function. The mission of the Central Valley Water Board is to preserve and enhance the quality of California's water resources for the benefit of present and future generations. The Central Valley Water Board does not have any water right authority and this Strategy will not address any issue involving groundwater rights, including water use or the volume or quantity of groundwater associated with that use. The primary duty of the Central Valley Water Board is to protect the quality of the waters within the Region for all beneficial uses. This duty is implemented by formulating and adopting water quality plans (Basin Plans) for specific ground or surface water basins and by prescribing and enforcing requirements on all agricultural, domestic, and industrial waste discharges. These requirements involve adopting Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) which specify acceptable levels of pollutants that may be discharged, special studies to be conducted, and a monitoring program to assess compliance (may include groundwater monitoring.)

As part of the Central Valley Water Board's functions we oversee many regulatory programs that address ground and surface water. Groundwater programs have historically focused on discharges that could be associated with an individual or easily identifiable source. Traditionally, the Central Valley Water Board did not directly regulate diffuse sources such as agricultural practices; rather these activities were regulated through conditions established in Basin Plans until recently with the development of the Dairy and Irrigated Lands Regulatory (ILRP) Programs.

To begin to develop a Groundwater Strategy, we need to identify current programs protecting the beneficial uses of groundwater. Table 1 below identifies existing programs administered by the Central Valley Water Board and Table 2 identifies other agencies programs. Tables 1 and 2 may not look complete. This is where we are looking for stakeholder input to identify:

- ❑ Other agencies groundwater protection programs
- ❑ Overlaps between the Central Valley Water Board and other agencies programs
- ❑ Conflicts between the Central Valley Water Board and other agencies programs
- ❑ Deficiencies in protection of groundwater quality
- ❑ Gaps in regulatory oversight of groundwater quality

Summary of Central Valley Regional Water Board Programs To Protect Beneficial Uses of Groundwater (Table 1)

Water Board Activity	Program	Current Activities Related to Program	Effected (or potentially effected) Entity(ies)
Planning	Develop Central Valley salinity management plan	- Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) Water Board formed committees to assist in developing policy - Contracts are in place to evaluate economic impacts of not addressing salinity, assessing data gaps	-Agencies -Wastewater dischargers -Stormwater dischargers -Agriculture -Groundwater purveyors
Planning	Develop Central Valley Drinking Water Policy	-Working with interested stakeholders to evaluate policy alternatives	-Wastewater dischargers -Stormwater dischargers -Agriculture
Planning	Unified Statewide Aquifer Storage & Recovery Projects	-Coordination with State Water Board	
Planning	Onsite Waste Water Treatment Regulations/Waiver	-Coordination with State Water Board	-Agencies -Landowners
Assessment	Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment Program (GAMA)	-Cooperate with the State Water Board Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment Program (GAMA)	
Implementation - Monitoring	Waste Discharge to Land – issue Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs)	-WDRs include groundwater monitoring requirements for land discharges	-Agencies -Dischargers -Agriculture
Implementation – Monitoring	Landfills and Mining - Wastes applied to land that must be contained	-WDRs include groundwater monitoring requirements, specific requirements for waste management unit design	- Agencies - Dischargers - Landowners
Implementation – Monitoring	Site Assessment & Cleanup	-Oversee investigation & cleanup of soils and groundwater pollution	-Dischargers -Landowners
Implementation – Monitoring	Underground Storage Tank Program	-Regulation and cleanup of underground storage tanks and their releases	-Agencies -Owner/Operators -Dischargers
Implementation - Monitoring	Confined Animal Facilities WDR General Order for Existing Milk Cow Dairies	-Require waste and nutrient management plans -Phased approach to groundwater monitoring	-Dairies
Implementation	Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP)	-Abate and Control discharges of pollutants from irrigation and stormwater runoff -Long-term ILRP Program Development ~ Existing Conditions Report (incl groundwater) ~Long-term Program Advisory Workgroup	-Agriculture

Summary of State, Local, and Other Agencies Actions/Programs To Project Beneficial Uses of Groundwater (Table 2)

Agency	Action and/or Program	Current Activities Related to Action	Effected (or potentially effected) Entity(ies)
Dept of Public Health	Regulation of Drinking Water Systems	-Regulates operation of community water systems -Oversee sanitary surveys of water sources -Oversee federal well head protection program	-Water purveyors -Public water consumers
Dept of Pesticide Regulation	Regulation of Pesticide Sales and Use	-Regulates all aspects of pesticide sales and use - Regulation of Groundwater Protection Areas (GWPA) ~Permit Requirements and Use Restrictions in areas determined vulnerable to pesticides	-Agriculture
Dept of Toxic Substances Control	Regulation of Hazardous Waste	-Regulation of hazardous waste sites -Oversee cleanup of hazardous waste	-Agencies -Owners/operators -Dischargers
Dept of Water Resources	Water Quantity and Water Quality Planning	-California Water Plan updates -Technical and funding assistance for local groundwater management and integrated regional water management	-Agencies -Water users
Dept of Fish & Game	Wetland Protection	-Support cooperative conservation planning and wetland resource protection	-Agencies -Landowners
Energy Commission	Water Conservation Activities		
Integrated Waste Management Board	Regulation of waste disposal	Waste Compliance and Mitigation Program	-Agencies -Owners/operators
Dept of Food & Agriculture	Ensure delivery of safe food and fiber through responsible environmental stewardship	-Fertilizer Research and Education Program	
County Environmental Health	-Water Well Permitting -Small Public Water Systems -Onsite Waste Water Treatment Systems	-Permitting and inspection of water well constructions, reconstruction, or destruction -Permitting, monitoring, and inspection of public water systems serving fewer than 200 connections -Permitting for installation and repairs of Onsite Waste Water Treatment Systems	-Landowners -Water Purveyors

Agency	Action and/or Program	Current Activities Related to Action	Effected (or potentially effected) Entity(ies)
County Agriculture Commissioners	Regulation of Pesticide Applications	-Permitting for application of restricted pesticides: listing areas of treatment, location/size, pesticide to be applied, etc	- Agriculture and Commercial Applicators
Counties	Local Groundwater Ordinances		
Water Districts	Local Groundwater Management Plans		
United States Geological Society	Groundwater Resources Program	Regional Groundwater Studies	
United States Bureau of Reclamation	Water and Environmental Resources Division	Water Resources Planning and Operations Support Group	
California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley	Water Management Plan	Drafted framework for implementation of water management planning for the San Joaquin Valley	

NEXT STEPS

Following stakeholder workshops in August 2009 Central Valley Water Board staff will begin to develop a draft Strategy. The Strategy will incorporate information from the workshops with stakeholder's perspective on prioritizing the Central Valley Water Board's existing and emerging programs and identification of other agencies groundwater programs.

Central Valley Water Board staff will circulate the draft Groundwater Strategy for the Central Valley Region in late September 2009 for stakeholder review. We will conduct stakeholder workshops in mid October 2009 to solicit additional stakeholder input to assist us in finalizing a draft Strategy to be presented to the Central Valley Water Board at the first meeting of 2010. We are looking for stakeholder input throughout this process.