

Carpinteria Groundwater Basin Management and Invitation for Public Input on Proposed Groundwater Fee

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To protect and regulate groundwater supplies across the state and avoid long-term economic impacts, California passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in 2014. This enacted a framework to help avoid overdraft and manage these shared resources at the local level. SGMA requires any groundwater basin classified as high- and medium-priority by the state Department of Water Resources (DWR) to create a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) and develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to avoid undesirable results. GSAs must reach sustainability within 20 years of adopting their GSPs.

The Carpinteria Valley Water District (District) has been monitoring water quality and water levels in the Carpinteria Groundwater Basin (CGB) since 1999, with records dating back to the 1940s for older wells that were previously monitored by the US Geological Society (USGS). Based on decades of observations, known extraction by the District, estimated extraction from private well pumpers, various groundwater models, and the number of stakeholders dependent on our valuable groundwater resources, the CGB was re-evaluated and designated as a “high priority” by DWR in 2019.

As a result, the Carpinteria Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CGSA) was formed in 2020 through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the Carpinteria Valley Water District, City of Carpinteria, Santa Barbara County Water Agency and County of Ventura to implement and develop a GSP, which will serve as a road map for ensuring the basin will be operated sustainably. The CGSA is distinct from its member authorities and has a separate structure for its Board of Directors, with the potential for an 8-member Board. The CGSA will ensure long-term sustainable groundwater use through planning, regulation, and oversight and develop the GSP for submission to DWR by the end of 2023.

Additional roles of the CGSA may include developing new projects to study and understand the groundwater basin’s hydrologic characteristics, registering and metering groundwater wells, implementing rules and regulations, and assessing fees to cover the costs associated with ensuring the goals and metrics outlined in the GSP are met and sustained. Fortunately, the District was granted \$1.9 million from the State on behalf of the CGSA to develop the GSP, and for drilling new monitoring wells to better understand groundwater levels and water quality.

However, for non-GSP activities the Agency currently is operating on loans and cannot continue without establishing a revenue source to support ongoing GSA operations and administration. A rate study to help develop a fair and equitable cost recovery fee for properties that sit atop the basin is in development. The fee proposal will be discussed at upcoming public meetings. The public is invited, and encouraged, to learn more about the CGSA and the proposed fee and attend these meetings:

- Thursday, May 26, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.: on Zoom/Phone. Zoom and phone information is posted at carpgsa.org.
- Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.: In person at Lion’s Park located at 6197 Casitas Pass Rd., Carpinteria, CA 93013. (For language and other accommodations, please contact the District by 3 p.m. Monday, June 13.)

Ensuring long-term groundwater sustainability is important to everyone from homeowners to business owners, to those in agriculture, and beyond. Groundwater is a vital component of our local water supply portfolio, especially as naturally occurring water supplies across California are drying up due to drought and climate fluctuations. In addition, without proper management, our groundwater basin could be susceptible to seawater intrusion, which many other coastal basins throughout California have experienced. Prudent groundwater management will contribute to a reliable and sustainable source of water for future generations. Everyone has a stake in local groundwater resources regardless of whether you have a well or not, so we hope that community members will consider participating and provide input before the CGSA Staff & Board of Directors.

We hope that you will be a part of this conversation about preserving our groundwater resources at one or both community meetings on May 26 and June 14. With the continued absence of rain, we are asking our customers to recognize the situation, be mindful of your water consumption, and make conservation a way of life. Use our water wisely and find ways to further reduce your water footprint.

For District updates, please visit our website at cvwd.net, follow us on [Twitter @CarpWater](#), or Carpinteria Valley Water District on [Facebook](#) and [Nextdoor](#). Monitor your water use and sign up for leak alerts at eyeonwater.com/signup and e-mail conservation@cvwd.net with any questions. For CGSA updates, please visit <https://carpgsa.org> and sign up for email updates at <https://carpgsa.org/public-info/learn-more/>. For any CGSA related questions, e-mail sgma@cvwd.net.