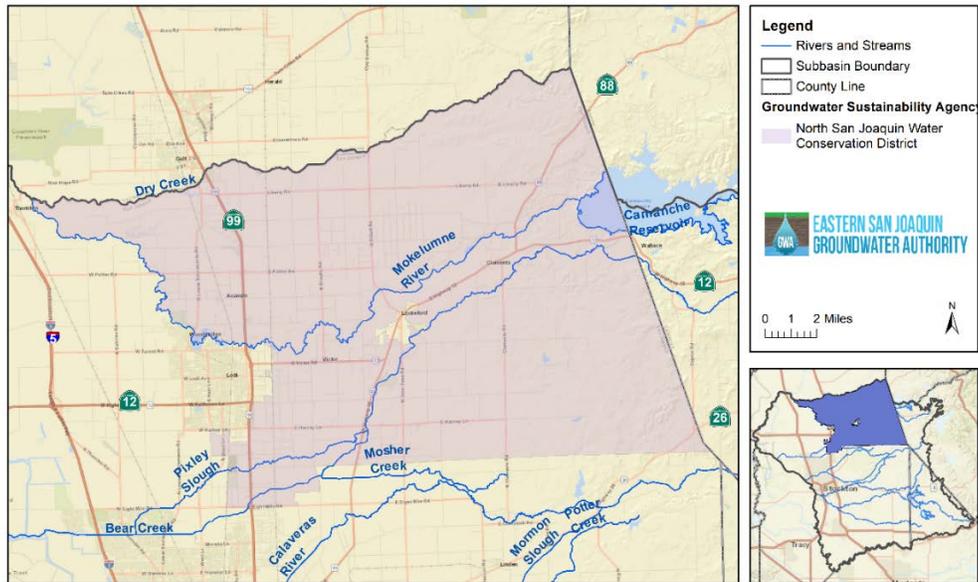


NORTH SAN JOAQUIN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

WELCOME TO THE NEWSLETTER!

North San Joaquin Water Conservation District covers 150,000 acres in northern San Joaquin County on both sides of the Mokelumne River. You are receiving this newsletter because you own land in the District. There is a lot going on in the District these days and we want to keep you informed! We hope this newsletter is useful to you and encourage you to visit our website at nsjgroundwater.org and attend our monthly Board of Directors meetings – 2pm the last Monday of each month at the Lodi Library.

Groundwater Sustainability Agency: North San Joaquin WCD



PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO PUMP GROUNDWATER

What We All Need to Know about “SGMA”

In San Joaquin County, many people depend entirely on ground-water for their domestic and/or irrigation water supply. Local water managers have known for decades that we were drawing water from our aquifers faster than it was being replenished by nature or other means. You or your neighbors may already have had to deepen the wells on which you rely.

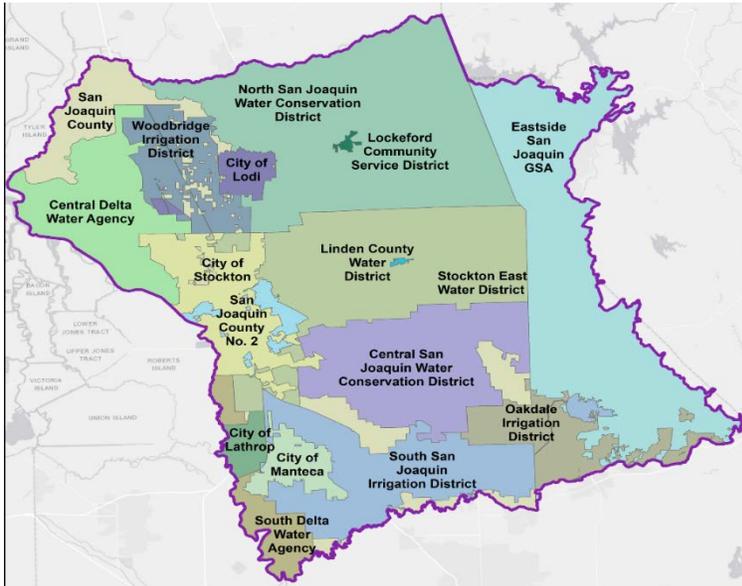
To address conditions like this around California, in 2014 the state legislature passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Under SGMA, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is required to identify “critically overdrafted groundwater basins.” The aquifer underlying most of San Joaquin County (called the “Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin”), is considered critically overdrafted. SGMA gives subbasins like ours until January of 2020 to come up with a plan to manage groundwater sustainably by 2040.

If we can’t come up with a plan ourselves that DWR considers acceptable, the State Water Resources Control Board will assume management of our groundwater.

The first step in meeting SGMA requirements was for each subbasin to form one or more Groundwater Sustainability Agencies, or GSAs. In the Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin cities and water districts, including the North San Joaquin Water Conservation District, formed 17 GSAs. These GSAs then formed a joint powers authority, the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority. The next step is for the GSAs to work together on a Groundwater Sustainability Plan, or GSP. Development of that plan is now underway. The plan must explain how we will avoid “undesirable results” in our subbasin.

SGMA lists six “undesirable results” we must avoid:

- Chronic lowering of groundwater levels
- Reduction in groundwater storage
- Seawater intrusion
- Degraded water quality
- Land subsidence
- Depletion of interconnected surface water (streams or rivers that lose flows to adjacent aquifers)



DID YOU KNOW?
NORTH SAN JOAQUIN WCD
IS THE LARGEST OF THE 17
GROUNDWATER
SUSTAINABILITY AGENCIES
THAT OVERLIE THE EASTERN
SAN JOAQUIN SUBBASIN

The law allows GSAs to determine for themselves the “thresholds of significance” for each of these six items. Thresholds are the limits that we set to ensure our basin is being managed sustainably. For example, in the case of chronic lowering of groundwater levels, we need to determine a level below which we don’t want our groundwater to fall. This decision, and others, have the potential to dramatically change the way groundwater is used, and relied on, in our area. It is important for the public to participate in the GSP process. The Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority (GWA) meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m. at the Robert J. Cabral Agricultural Center 2101 E. Earhart Avenue. A technical advisory committee meets before the GWA, at 9 a.m. These meetings are open to the public. In addition, a Groundwater Sustainability Workgroup meets approximately monthly. This

Workgroup represents a diverse mix of members who represent the broad interests of groundwater users in the subbasin as well as the diverse social, cultural and economic elements of the population. During the meetings, stakeholders learn about the GSP’s development, share questions, and provide comments to the project’s consulting team. To learn more, go to: <http://www.esjgroundwater.org>. Click on the “Get Connected” button at the top of the main webpage to subscribe to receive email notices for meetings.

Landowners can also participate by attending NSJWCD Board Meetings. NSJWCD is working hard to maintain local control of groundwater by implementing projects that use available surface water. **The more surface water we use to meet demand – the less groundwater we pump and the easier it is to achieve “sustainability” under SGMA.**

WANT SOUTH SYSTEM WATER? JOIN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #3

Grant Funding Available for On-Farm Irrigation Facilities

Many landowners understand that access to surface water increases property values and can prevent pumping restrictions. These landowners are leading the way to modernize the NSJWCD South System.

Funding Improvements to the South System

The NSJWCD South System was constructed in the 1960s to deliver river water to lands located south of the Mokelumne River and east of Lodi. The system includes a pump station on the river, seven miles of pipeline that runs south to Pixley Slough, and conveyance through parts of Pixley Slough and Bear Creek. In recent years, the South System was rarely used to deliver surface water because deferred maintenance and outdated equipment made

the system inefficient and expensive to operate. Now, the District is building a new, modern South System to deliver water at a lower cost.

In February 2018, NSJWCD asked landowners to approve an assessment that would generate funds to rebuild the South Pump Station and slip-line and pressurize the entire South System pipeline. The proposed assessment did not pass (49% in favor, 51% opposed). Landowners said it was too expensive.

During Summer 2018, the District and landowners went back to the drawing board and came up with a less expensive plan. The new plan involves forming the South Water Users Improvement District No. 3 (ID #3). ID#3 members will pay an annual acreage assessment to raise

funds to complete the new South pump station and repair the pipeline. Unlike the prior plan, landowners along the pipeline and Pixley Slough and Bear Creek will have to pressurize the water with on-farm booster pumps. There are grant funds available for on-farm facilities.

How Can I Join ID# 3?

Landowners with property located near the South System that want surface water are encouraged to contact the District: Email nsjwcd@outlook.com or call

Joe Valente, President: 209-481-0611

Dave Simpson, Secretary: 209-479-0653

A map of the South System is available on the District's website. 2,000 acres have already signed up; membership will be capped at 4,000 acres. Below are some general details about ID#3:

1. Lands that join have first-priority for South System water.
2. 2,500 acres must join to move forward.
3. Lands that join will pay an assessment of \$50/acre/year for 10 years, whether water is available or not, to pay to complete the new pump station and make conveyance system repairs.
4. Lands that take surface water must pay a per AF water charge for operational costs. Water rates are set annually and are currently \$50 per acre foot.
5. Landowners can decide to increase assessments for new facilities or repairs with a majority vote.
6. Landowners must construct facilities necessary to take water from the pipeline, ditch, or channel. Diversions must be metered. Landowners pay for turn-outs, on-farm facilities and meters, but grant funding is available.

7. Lands that do not join now can join later until the 4,000 acre cap is reached. Lands that join later must pay any prior billed assessments.

Participation in ID#3 is entirely voluntary, NSJWCD will only assess those who sign the petition and agree to become a part of the improvement district.

How Can Landowners Get Grant Funds?

Grant funding is available from the state to help landowners pay for the new facilities and upgrades to their irrigation systems to use surface water.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) administers the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET), a grant program that is designed to fund improvements to irrigation systems that reduce greenhouse gases and conserve water. **SWEET funding of up to \$100,000 per landowner is available, with no required match.** More information about how to apply, projects that are eligible, and funding restrictions is available on CDFA's website at:

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/sweet/>.

Beginning in late-2018, CDFA will begin requesting applications from landowners. Applications will be due in February 2019, and funding recipients will be announced in late-Spring of 2019. The District strongly encourages all landowners interested in joining ID No. 3 to apply for SWEET funding to upgrade their irrigation systems.

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE PROJECTS UP AND RUNNING ON THE NORTH SIDE

The Tracy Lake and Costa Groundwater Recharge Projects

NSJWCD marked a significant milestone in 2017-2018 by operating two recharge projects north of the river.

The Tracy Lake Groundwater Recharge Project: 2018 marked the first year of operation of the Tracy Lake Groundwater Recharge Project. The \$2.3 million project, was financed with a \$300,000 federal grant and \$2,000,000 from landowners of 1,300 acres of irrigated vineyard. The project includes a new, modern pump station on the north side of the river, downstream of Woodbridge. During Summer 2018, the district pumped water from the river into South Tracy Lake (a natural lake that dries up in the summer). Landowners pumped some of the water out of the lake and used it for irrigation of grapes in-lieu of pumping groundwater, accomplishing in-lieu recharge. The remaining water percolated through the bottom of the lake for direct recharge. The water used was previously stored in Camanche Reservoir

during the winter under NSJWCD's water right, then released from storage and conveyed downstream to the new pump for summer diversions. Energy costs to pump the water from the river were less than \$10 per AF.

The Costa Recharge Project: During Fall 2017 NSJWCD, in partnership with Sustainable Conservation, used surface water to flood a 20-acre vineyard off Woodbridge Road for groundwater recharge. 145 AF of water was recharged in less than 10 days post-harvest. The project will operate again in 2018 on a larger scale, with additional groundwater monitoring funded by the Lodi Winegrape Commission Research Committee.

The North System: NSJWCD has a North Pump and pipeline that runs along Acampo Road. The District is looking for landowners interested in surface water to move forward with plans to repair and operate the North System. **Please contact the district if interested.**

“DREAM” PROJECT UPDATE

Background: The Demonstration Recharge Extraction and Aquifer Management (DREAM) project is “pilot” groundwater banking project involving San Joaquin County, NSJWCD, and East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD). The project involves “in-lieu” groundwater recharge. “In-lieu” recharge happens when a farmer that would normally pump groundwater uses surface water instead – leaving groundwater in the basin.

The DREAM Project concept: (1) EBMUD delivers EBMUD surface water to NSJWCD; (2) Farmers in NSJWCD use the water for irrigation instead of groundwater; (3) EBMUD gets a “groundwater banking” credit for half of the water it provided (4) NSJWCD returns water to EBMUD in the future based on the credits, with restrictions to protect the basin. The main goal is to get a “two for one” benefit for our groundwater basin with additional surface water and funding for water delivery facilities that we can use to improve groundwater conditions.

Because the DREAM Project is a small-scale pilot project, only 1,000 AF will be delivered and no more than 500 AF will be extracted and returned to EBMUD. Extractions will occur in the same location where the surface water is delivered and only in the winter months. The pilot project will take several years to complete.

Recent Progress: In June 2018, NSJWCD completed construction of a new pump station on Pixley Slough to deliver EBMUD surface water to irrigate crops. The facilities were tested for 10 days during July 2018, with about 40 acre-feet of water used for irrigation. The remainder of the water to be delivered under the DREAM Project (up to 960 AF) will be delivered in future years. The facilities to deliver extracted groundwater to EBMUD have not yet been constructed. EBMUD has paid for the new DREAM Project facilities, which can also by NSJWCD to deliver NSJWCD water to farmers.

Groundwater Monitoring: San Joaquin County performs monthly groundwater level monitoring on wells located within a two-mile radius of the DREAM Project. The County is collecting this data to evaluate the effectiveness of the project over time, and also to ensure the project does not cause injury when groundwater is extracted. A Monitoring Committee made up of representatives of landowners and local agencies will review this data once the project is fully operational and can direct that the project stop extracting groundwater if there are any adverse impacts.

NSJWCD

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North San Joaquin Water Conservation District Board of Directors:

Joe Valente, Tom Flinn, David Simpson, Marden Wilber, Charles Starr

Visit Our Website: www.nsjgroundwater.org

Regular Monthly Board Meeting: Last Monday of each month, 2pm, Lodi Public Library Community Room