



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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Groundwater Awareness Week

When Santa Cruz County residents turn on their taps, many may not know that they are using water pumped from local groundwater aquifers. This vital source of local water is not as visible in the same way that creeks, rivers and reservoirs are, but it is an invaluable community asset that is worth protecting all year and celebrating during National Groundwater Awareness Week March 6-12.

Water service customers of Soquel Creek Water District, Scotts Valley Water District and Central Water District, as well as local private well owners, currently rely *solely* on groundwater aquifers as their water source.

Water service customers of the City of Santa Cruz Water Department, San Lorenzo Valley Water District, Lompico County Water District and City of Watsonville receive water from both surface water sources, typically local creeks and rivers, and groundwater. During most of the year, the flow in the creeks is supplemented by slow release from groundwater.

Over the last several decades, more water has been drawn from the local groundwater aquifers than is naturally replenished by rain soaking into the ground. This has put coastal groundwater aquifers in a state of overdraft and at risk for seawater intrusion, which occurs when seawater fills the void left by overdrafted groundwater. Currently, seawater is moving inland underground, threatening to contaminate drinking water wells. Protecting local groundwater resources requires long-term solutions including continued water conservation, regional cooperation, and developing additional water sources.



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The three major groundwater basins in the County are the Pajaro Valley, the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin, and the Santa Margarita Basin. Local agencies are working collaboratively to sustainably manage these basins through the development of three separate Groundwater Sustainability Agencies. These Agencies, which are required by State law, will ensure the basins reach sustainability by 2040.

Do your part to conserve the groundwater in our aquifers by following the water conservation tips at www.watersavingtips.org. Learn more about groundwater sustainability and upcoming meetings at www.midcountygroundwater.org, www.pvwater.org, and www.svwd.org.

The Water Conservation Coalition of Santa Cruz County is a partnership among all of the local Water Districts in Santa Cruz County as well as the County Water Resources Program, Ecology Action and other groups who share a passion for water conservation and public education.