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SANTA ROSA PLAIN • PETALUMA VALLEY • SONOMA VALLEY

GROUNDWATER
SUSTAINABILITY AGENCIES

March 17, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sonoma County Groundwater Agencies Hosts Rate and Fee Study Community Meetings

Santa Rosa, CA – Sonoma County's three groundwater sustainability agencies, Petaluma Valley, Sonoma Valley and Santa Rosa Plain, will hold a series of community meetings focused on funding options for implementing recently approved Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). Presenters will also briefly review the GSP adopted in each basin and discuss basin conditions.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is the 2014 law requiring local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to form in California's high and medium priority groundwater basins and requiring GSAs to develop and implement GSPs.

The GSPs were adopted in December 2021 by the Boards of Directors of the GSAs following more than 50 public meetings in each basin. The GSPs, largely grant funded and completed over two years, assess the conditions of each groundwater basin, analyze basin sustainability over a 50-year period, establish criteria to protect groundwater users and the environment and identify projects and actions needed to ensure sustainability by 2042.

SGMA allows GSAs to levy fees to pay for planning, programs and operations. Possible funding options could include charges on parcels, wells or groundwater use. In Petaluma Valley and Sonoma Valley, local government agencies and special districts provided start-up funding for the first five years of the GSAs' formation and operation.

In Santa Rosa Plain, a fee study adopted in 2019 resulted in a groundwater user fee equivalent to $19.90 per acre foot of actual or estimated groundwater pumped annually. Since 2019, municipalities in the Santa Rosa Plain basin and Sonoma Water have paid the user fee. Contributions to the GSA by the County of Sonoma and Sonoma Water have covered the fees that would have been paid by rural residents, agriculture, golf

courses, businesses and other pumpers. The new fee study is reassessing this fee and providing the GSA Board other fee options, based on the costs of GSP implementation.

In order to comply with SGMA and implement the GSPs, fees may be adopted in June 2022.

COMMUNITY MEETING INFORMATION

The first series of community meetings will be held from 5:30 pm to7:30 pm virtually through Zoom.

Tuesday, March 22 – Santa Rosa Plain Basin Rate and Fee Study community meeting
Register in advance for this webinar:
https://scwa-ca-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3TqBeJFbTj2c19kA2mBWqQ

Tuesday, March 29 – Sonoma Valley Basin Rate and Fee Study community meeting
Register in advance for this webinar:
https://scwa-ca-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DZbZxQP8SS2ip9yrAbkADw

Wednesday, March 30- Petaluma Valley Rate and Fee community meeting
Register in advance for this webinar:
https://scwa-ca-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yzoOR06dR2-9rwel_h6ttg

While the community meeting format will be similar in each groundwater basin, content will be specific to each basin. People needing accommodations should contact andrea.rodriguez@scwa.ca.gov as soon as possible.

The second series of community meetings will recap the need for groundwater management and revised funding options based on feedback from the first series of meetings and from the GSA Boards. The meetings will be held from 5:30-7:30 p.m., locations to be determined.

Tuesday, April 26 – Santa Rosa Plain Basin Rate and Fee Study community meeting (Windsor area)

Wednesday, April 27 - Santa Rosa Plain Basin Rate and Fee Study community meeting (Santa Rosa area)

A third meeting for the Santa Rosa Plain Basin will be held in the Rohnert Park area. Date and location will be provided once final.

Thursday, May 5 - Sonoma Valley Basin Rate and Fee Study community meeting

Thursday, May 12 - Petaluma Valley Rate and Fee community meeting

Visit www.sonomacountygroundwater.org to find your GSA basin and learn more.

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