

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: What is it and how does it affect us?

Learn more at: <http://scwa2.com/sgma> or call: (707) 451-6090

What's the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act?

Effective January 1, 2015, this law established a robust framework for the sustainable management of groundwater resources for the first time in California's history. Groundwater is a critical component of the state's water supply portfolio, and if effectively managed, this resource will help protect communities, farms, and the environment against the impacts of prolonged dry periods and climate change. SGMA recognizes that management is most effective when done at the local level by local agencies with adequate information, tools, resources, and authorities.



SGMA requires medium- and high-priority groundwater basins in the state to be managed by local agencies that have formed a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) by June 30, 2017. After a GSA forms, it must develop and implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), or an alternative plan, that will meet SGMA's long-term groundwater sustainability goals. The law allows for limited state intervention when necessary to protect groundwater resources.

What's a Groundwater Sustainability Agency?

A GSA is one or more local agencies that must implement SGMA's provisions. A local agency is any local public agency that has water supply, water management, or land use responsibilities within a groundwater basin. Any local agency or combination of local agencies overlying a groundwater basin can elect to be a GSA. A combination of local agencies may form a GSA through a joint powers agreement (JPA), or a memorandum of agreement or other legal agreement (MOU). A water corporation regulated by the Public Utilities Commission or a mutual water company may participate in a GSA through a memorandum of agreement or other legal agreement. Non-agency parties can be incorporated into the decision-making process for the GSA, or in certain cases, they may wish to form a new GSA-eligible agency.

GSA formation requires a local agency to:

- 1 Determine if their basin is subject to SGMA;
- 2 Identify the GSA-eligible agencies for their basin and coordinate/collaborate with them;
- 3 Understand their basin conditions, and the local expertise, resources, and information available for groundwater management;
- 4 Identify and engage key stakeholders;
- 5 Evaluate new tasks and authorities, and explore who wants to do what;
- 6 Evaluate and propose a GSA governance model.

Step 1

Form local Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)

June 30, 2017

Step 2

Adopt Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)

Jan. 31, 2022

Step 3

GSA achieves groundwater sustainability goal

20 years after GSP adoption

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: What is it and how does it affect us?

Learn more at: <http://scwa2.com/sgma> or call: (707) 451-6090

What does a GSA do?

Becoming a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) involves assuming a range of new tasks and authorities in order to manage groundwater and implement the objectives of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). What authorities each GSA assumes will be one of the important decisions to be made during the local implementation of the law. The range of tasks and authorities for a GSA include:

Coordination: Regardless of the governance model that is chosen, the GSA will need to coordinate with other local and regional agencies in its basin and its neighboring basins.

Public outreach & stakeholder engagement: A GSA is required to maintain a list of interested stakeholders, and engage them during GSP development and implementation.

GSP development: Every priority basin will be required to develop and implement one or more GSPs. If multiple GSPs are developed for the same basin, a coordination agreement will be required.

Monitoring & reporting: Additional monitoring of groundwater levels, water quality, or subsidence will likely be needed to track progress toward (or deviation from) meeting the sustainability objectives of the GSP. DWR will require that the GSA submit annual basin status reports substantiating this progress.

GSP implementation: The GSP will be actionable through new authorities and tools intended to achieve groundwater sustainability in a basin within the SGMA timeline. These *could** include the imposition of pumping fees, measurement of groundwater extraction at individual wells, issuance limits on new well permits, or investment in water management strategies.

Enforcement: A GSA will need to enforce the provisions adopted in its GSP, which *may** include payment of fees, reporting on groundwater use, or restrictions on groundwater pumping.

* It will be up to the local GSA(s) with the input of the local groundwater users and stakeholders to determine what particular authorities and tools will be used to successfully achieve the GSP objectives.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: What is it and how does it affect us?

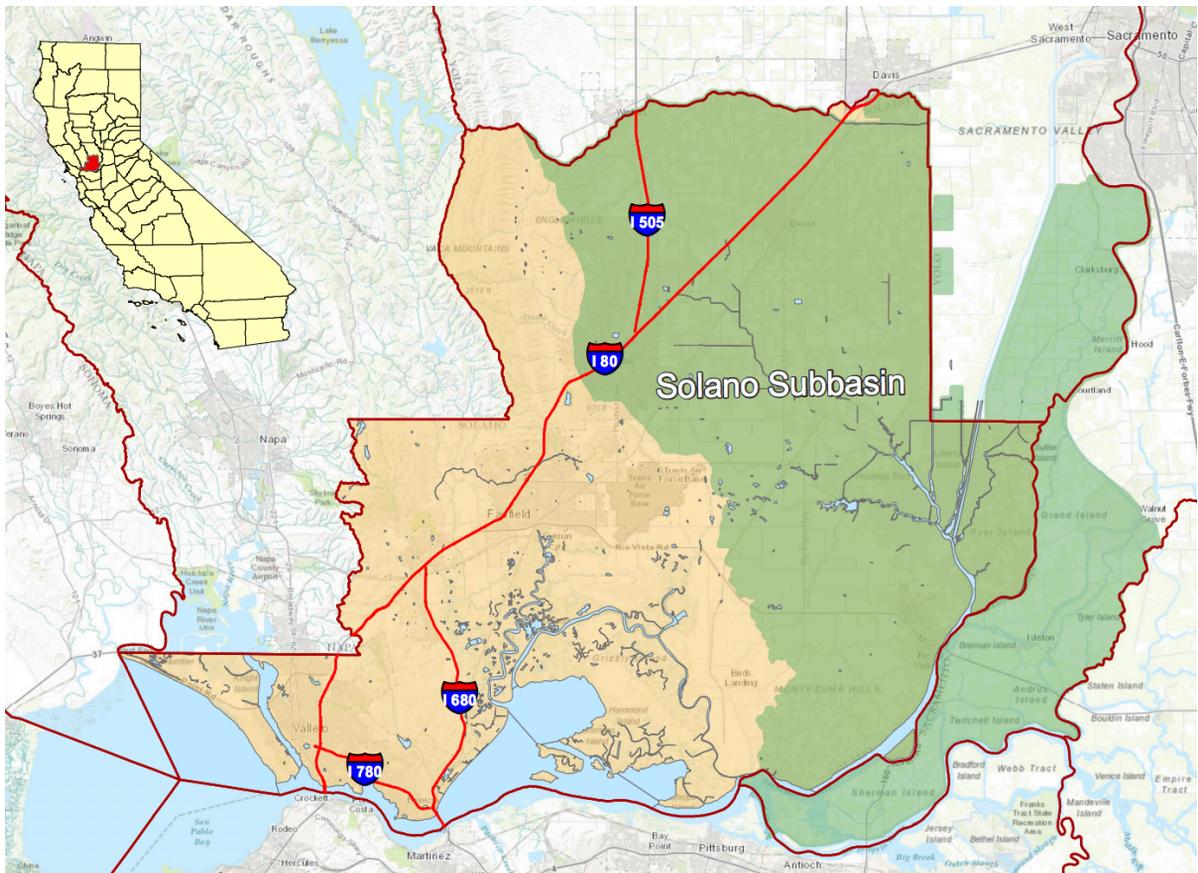
Learn more at: <http://scwa2.com/sgma> or call: (707) 451-6090

What's happening in Solano County?

In Solano County, the state has designated the Solano Subbasin as medium-priority, and thus subject to SGMA. The Solano Subbasin is contained mostly within Solano County, but portions are also within Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Its boundaries are defined by Putah Creek on the North, the Sacramento River on the East (from Sacramento to Walnut Grove), the North Mokelumne River on the Southeast (from Walnut Grove to the San Joaquin River), the San Joaquin River on the South (from the North Mokelumne River to the Sacramento River), the Lower Members of the Great Valley Group on the Northwest, and the Suisun-Fairfield Valley Basin on the Southwest. The Solano Subbasin underlies the Cities of Dixon, Rio Vista, and Vacaville, and is pumped regularly for local agricultural and municipal uses. The two other groundwater basins in Solano County - the Suisun-Fairfield Valley Basin and the Napa-Sonoma Lowlands Subbasin - are not designated as priority basins, so are not subject to SGMA.

The formation of a GSA(s) in the Solano Subbasin that have the widespread support of the eligible agencies, groundwater users, and stakeholders requires two interrelated processes:

- 1 Inter-agency coordination:** The convening of GSA-eligible agencies to identify and implement an appropriate long-term governance approach for the GSA.
- 2 Public stakeholder engagement:** The engagement of groundwater users and other stakeholders to ensure that local concerns and interests are included in the GSA and GSP formation processes.



Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: What is it and how does it affect us?

Learn more at: <http://scwa2.com/sgma> or call: (707) 451-6090

What are local agencies doing?

Local agencies are expected to collaborate and coordinate their GSA formations on a basin-wide scale to sustainably manage groundwater at a local level. The Solano County Water Agency (SCWA) has hired a facilitator (Ag Innovations) to support this process, and in 2016, the facilitator worked with representatives from GSA-eligible agencies and local agriculture stakeholder representatives to form a GSA Advisory Group in the Solano Subbasin to identify constituency interests, concerns, and recommendations relating to GSA formation. The Advisory Group has released meeting notes and recommendations (available on the above website), and the hope is to convene an actual GSA governing board with two public stakeholder seats in early 2017. The GSA board will continue to seek input from and coordinate with other agencies and public stakeholders.

What's the role of local stakeholders?

Successful implementation of SGMA will support the health and vibrancy of the region's communities, farms, and environment while maintaining local control over local groundwater resources. A substantial amount of groundwater use in the Solano Subbasin occurs on farms, and to a lesser extent on rural residences, thus the sustainable management of groundwater requires that local agencies and groundwater users work closely with one another from the start. Toward this end, SCWA and its partner agencies are working with a facilitator to solicit the input of farmers and ranchers, well-owners, businesses, environmental groups, and other stakeholders during the GSA formation process. In addition to the two proposed public agriculture representative seats on the GSA Board, there will be ongoing stakeholder engagement to understand and involve groundwater users and other interested parties and their concerns in SGMA implementation.

Get involved:

1 Public input and update workshops:

will be held in December:

**December 13
6:30-8:30PM**

Rio Vista High
School, 410
South 4th St.
Rio Vista, CA

**Dec 15
6:30-8:30PM**

Ulatis Com.
Center, 1000
Ulatis Dr.
Vacaville, CA

**Dec 16
12:00-1:30PM**

Online / call in
[www.uberconference.com/
solano-sgma](http://www.uberconference.com/solano-sgma)
(707) 605-0732

- 2 **Website:** sign up for our mailing list, get details about additional engagement opportunities, and access more information at:

<http://scwa2.com/sgma>

Get resources:

1 CA DWR Groundwater Website:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/>

2 A Handbook to Understanding and Implementing the Law:

[http://www.watereducation.org/publication/
2014-sustainable-groundwater-management-
act](http://www.watereducation.org/publication/2014-sustainable-groundwater-management-act)

3 CA Water Foundation:

<http://californiawaterfoundation.org/resources/>

4 CA Roundtable on Water & Food Supply:

<http://www.aginnovations.org/crwfs>

5 Maven's Notebook:

<http://mavensnotebook.com/>

