

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 31, 2013, FEBRUARY 1, 2013

Prepared on January 8, 2013

ITEM NUMBER: 22

SUBJECT: Executive Officer's Report to the Board

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This item presents a brief discussion of issues that may interest the Board. Upon request, staff can provide more detailed information about any particular item.

TECHNICAL/STATUS REPORTS

Groundwater Assessment and Protection (GAP) Six-month Update

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On May 3, 2012, the Water Board approved the allocation of Guadalupe and PG&E settlement funds for the Groundwater Assessment and Protection (GAP) component of Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP), the Central Coast Water Board's regionally-scaled water quality monitoring and assessment program. At that time, the Water Board requested staff provide an update of initial implementation actions within approximately six months. The following provides that update, and includes a synopsis of CCAMP-GAP implementation and coordination activities to date and a forecast of planned actions.

Domestic Well Project: In December, Water Board staff secured the services of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to sample 80 to 120 domestic wells within the Pajaro and Salinas Valleys in coordination with the State Water Board's Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA) Program Priority Basin Project – Shallow Aquifer Assessment. The CCAMP-GAP domestic well project is funded via a \$50,000 grant from CCAMP-GAP and \$20,000 in federal matching funds provided by USGS. In preparation of the project, staff discussed the pending project with Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Luis Obispo County environmental health department staff and followed up with an informational letter to the county Board of Supervisors describing the project. Water Board staff will continue to coordinate with the county health departments as the water quality data is generated.

Well sampling activities began in December and will continue through February/March 2013. Domestic wells will be selected for sampling based on a spatially distributed grid pattern and the resulting data will be used by USGS to conduct an unbiased assessment of shallow aquifer conditions. The resulting data may be used to conduct more focused outreach and sampling in areas identified as high risk with regard to nitrate or other drinking water pollutants. Water quality analyses for the CCAMP-GAP portion of the Domestic Well Project are consistent with the monitoring requirements listed in Table 3 "Groundwater Sampling Parameters" for the three (Tiers 1, 2 and 3) monitoring and reporting programs associated with the Central Coast Water Board updated Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (Agricultural Order No. RB3-2012-0011). This will result in consistent regional data between the Domestic Well Project and Ag Order monitoring requirements and facilitate the use of analytical results from the Domestic Well Project to satisfy the Ag Order groundwater monitoring requirements. Arsenic analysis will be conducted in addition to the Table 3 parameters given the prevalence of arsenic in drinking water supply wells regionally and statewide. Water Board staff will provide analytical

results to the well owners and renters along with "A Guide for Private Domestic Well Owners"¹ and supporting information explaining the results and where to go for additional information.

Funding: Water Board staff negotiated an agreement with The Bay Foundation of Morro Bay to manage the CCAMP-GAP endowment and operating funds (i.e. CCAMP-GAP Funds). The basic services provided by The Bay Foundation include managing the fund investment portfolios, providing quarterly financial updates and disbursing funds for project implementation. Water Board staff chose The Bay Foundation to manage CCAMP-GAP funds because of its ongoing effective management of both CCAMP and Low Impact Development (LID) funds. In addition to the financial benefits associated with lower management fees provided by The Bay Foundation, having The Bay Foundation manage CCAMP-GAP funds enables more efficient programmatic coordination via a single foundation and potential sharing of available funds with CCAMP. Following ratification of the funding agreement with the Bay Foundation in early December, fund transfer requests were submitted to move the remaining available Guadalupe and PG&E settlement funds from their respective foundations to The Bay Foundation. As of the writing of this status report, the fund transfer requests were still pending.

Regional Monitoring Program Outreach and Development: Water Board staff is engaging in ongoing outreach to and coordination with local agencies/programs implementing drinking and groundwater basin monitoring throughout the Central Coast Region. Since June 2012, staff has met with ten such agencies or districts and has verbal commitments from four agencies/districts to begin uploading regional groundwater monitoring data to the State Water Board's GeoTracker GAMA program database.² Data capture from these agencies/districts would include historical and ongoing regional-scale groundwater quality and water surface elevation data from over 100 agency-owned monitoring wells within 11 groundwater basins/subbasins. In support of this effort, Water Board staff has also developed and is pursuing a proposal for the development of a GeoTracker GAMA regional monitoring program module to facilitate the integration and management of existing and future regional monitoring programs and associated data. This proposal is currently undergoing internal management review to be followed by coordination with State Board Executive and GAMA Program staff.

As part of the regional monitoring program effort, staff is also currently coordinating with the Monterey County Environmental Health Department to upgrade its water quality laboratory information management system (LIMS) to make it compatible with the GeoTracker GAMA Electronic Deliverable Format (EDF). This will facilitate the upload to GeoTracker of Monterey County Water Resources Agency regional groundwater monitoring data and county drinking water data for water systems below the public water system threshold of 15 service connections.

Additionally, Water Board staff developed and launched the CCAMP-GAP webpage located at the following link that is accessed from the Central Coast Water Board's home page:

http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb3/water_issues/programs/gap/index.shtml

The CCAMP-GAP webpage contains a brief description of the program, an information portal to groundwater and drinking water related information and programs, and will be used to inform stakeholders of special projects and groundwater related issues. Staff will continue to build on the webpage as CCAMP-GAP evolves and grows.

¹ Informational document compiled (Revised April 2011) by the SWRCB, Division of Water Quality, GAMA Program regarding domestic well use and construction/destruction requirements in California and includes supporting information related to water quality testing and interpretation, treatment, and water quality (well head) protection.

² Including (asterisk indicates verbal commitments): Santa Cruz County, *Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PVWMA), *Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD), Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), San Luis Obispo County (Public Works and Environmental Health), Santa Barbara County Public Works, *San Benito County Water District (SBCWD), Monterey County and the *Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA)

Salt and Nutrient Management Planning Integration: One of the primary components of the pending Salt and Nutrient Management Plans (SNMPs), as required by State Water Board's Recycled Water Policy (Resolution No. 2009-0011), is the development and implementation of groundwater basin/sub-basin (i.e. regional) monitoring programs. In many cases throughout the region, participating SNMP stakeholders consist of local agencies or private entities that are subject to compliance monitoring requirements pursuant to Central Coast Water Board waste discharge requirements (WDRs or permits, including reclamation requirements and NPDES permits) for municipal or industrial discharges. Consequently, CCAMP-GAP staff is coordinating with Point Source Program (i.e. permitting) staff and external SNMP stakeholders to facilitate the development and implementation of sustainable, consistent, and coordinated regional groundwater monitoring programs in the Central Coast Region that are integrated with WDR/discharge-related compliance monitoring requirements. As part of this effort, CCAMP-GAP staff has prepared an outreach letter to the SNMP lead agencies outlining our expectations and potential opportunities associated with the pending SNMP regional groundwater monitoring programs.

Internal and External Coordination/Outreach: Water Board staff is coordinating with various internal and external programs/stakeholders on a number of regional and statewide groundwater and drinking water quality related fronts.

- Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Planning - Staff participated in the development of an internal cross-programmatic IRWM coordination strategy led by our Grants Program lead staff, Katie McNeill. There is currently about \$600 million in available Proposition 84 grant funding statewide as part of the IRWM Round 2 Implementation Project Solicitation grant process. A group of cross-programmatic staff have been tasked with coordinating with IRWM Regional Management Groups, acting as regional liaisons to consistently communicate our regional goals/priorities and help facilitate the selection and implementation of projects that address our highest priorities. In particular, CCAMP-GAP staff is the regional liaison for one of the six ongoing IRWM processes and helped develop a conceptual project proposal addressing drinking water needs of disadvantaged communities for inclusion within the Greater Monterey County IRWM. Participation in these efforts by cross-programmatic staff is ongoing. (See Item 13 of the December 6, 2012 Central Coast Water Board Agenda for more information.)³
- Salt and Nutrient Management Planning (SNMP) – In conjunction with the IRWM coordination strategy, a group of cross-programmatic staff have also been tasked to participate in the various SNMP stakeholder process.⁴ Due to the regional groundwater monitoring component of the pending SNMPs, CCAMP-GAP staff is taking a more active role in this effort. In addition to implementing the integrated WDR and regional monitoring strategy as discussed above, CCAMP-GAP staff is the regional liaison for three of the six ongoing SNMP processes and has developed and given several formal presentations to various stakeholder groups regarding the SNMP process and Central Coast Water Board expectations.
- Drinking Water Issues – Staff is participating in the ongoing discussion and development of regional and statewide strategies addressing the symptoms of the nitrate groundwater pollution problem, with emphases on water systems below the public water system threshold of 15 service connections and addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities. In particular, staff continues to participate in the Governor's Drinking Water Stakeholder Group and is engaging in ongoing coordination with local stakeholders regarding drinking water sampling programs for small water systems and disadvantaged

³ http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2012/december/Item_13/item_13.pdf

⁴ A number of the pending regional SNMP efforts are partially funded as a component of the IRWM program planning efforts and are therefore coordinated/related regional efforts.

community identification/outreach. In addition, staff recently reviewed and provided comments on two internal drafts of the State Water Board's final report/recommendations to the legislature in response to the SBX2-1 UC Davis Nitrate Study.

- Department of Water Resources Water Plan – The Department of Water Resources is currently updating the California Water Plan (update 2013). The plan, updated every five years, “provides a collaborative planning framework for elected officials, agencies, tribes, water and resource managers, businesses, academia, stakeholders, and the public to develop findings and recommendations and make informed decisions for California's water future.” Staff drafted the regional report for the Central Coast to ensure the findings and recommendations within the plan reflect our most significant water quality problems and are consistent our regional goals/priorities. The review and development of this report is ongoing. Staff is also participating in a topic-based Groundwater Caucus as part of Water Plan update.
- Aquifer Storage and Recovery – CCAMP-GAP staff is providing cross-programmatic support to Point Source Permitting staff on the application review and permitting of aquifer storage and recovery projects to help facilitate regional and statewide consistency.
- Healthy Watersheds Assessment – Water Board staff is participating in a regional project to translate our vision goals into assessment questions and indicators that will be used to measure and evaluate the overall health of our watersheds and groundwater basins over time and make informed decisions. One of the primary goals of the project is to identify and evaluate relationships between land management, aquatic habitat health, and groundwater quality. (See Item 13 of the December 6, 2012 Central Coast Water Board Agenda for more information.)⁵

Moving Forward: Over the next six months to a year, CCAMP-GAP staff will focus on implementation of the domestic well project and ongoing coordination with regional stakeholders and State Board to pilot the upload of regional monitoring program data to GeoTracker GAMA. In particular, staff will be coordinating with the USGS and GAMA Program on the review and dissemination of domestic well water quality data and may develop a more focused outreach and sampling effort within the Pajaro and Salinas Valleys based on the resulting data. The development and implementation of domestic well sampling projects within other parts of the region is also an ongoing process with an emphasis on the Santa Maria Valley and San Juan Bautista and Hollister basins as high-risk focus areas. Ongoing coordination with local and state agency programs to leverage this priority work will be a crucial component of our efforts given there is a growing regional and statewide discussion regarding the need for regional groundwater monitoring and drinking water program outreach and sampling for water systems below the public water system threshold of 15 service connections with an emphasis on nitrate pollution and disadvantaged communities. Staff will also continue to coordinate with internal and external stakeholders as outlined above on an as needed priority basis. Per the initial CCAMP-GAP Project Proposal and Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Work Plan, Water Board staff will provide annual updates to the Water Board during regularly scheduled public meetings.

⁵ http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2012/december/Item_13/item_13.pdf