

VOLUNTARY GROUNDWATER MONITORING PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

What is groundwater and why is it important to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Watershed?

Groundwater is water below the ground surface stored in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand, and rock. Groundwater is contained in formations known as aquifers, which consist of materials such as sand and gravel that are permeable (having large connected spaces between the materials that allow water to flow through). The area where water fills the aquifer is known as the saturated zone, and the top of this zone is known as the water table.

Groundwater resources have long played a significant role in the development, growth and sustainability of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Watershed with a large portion of the annual water demand met by local groundwater resources.



What is the Well Impact Compensation Program and why is it being undertaken?

The Record of Decision (ROD) outlines mitigation requirements for the reduced project which includes casino and 200 room hotel ("Project"). These mitigation measures include a Well Impact Compensation Program to compensate neighboring well owners for impacts to well operation based on interference drawdown caused by Project pumping. Known property owners within a 2-mile radius of the proposed Project pumping well have been notified of the Well Impact Compensation Program. There are several hundred wells within 2 miles of the Project.

Compensation to property owners through the Well Impact Compensation Program requires the well owners to determine any adverse effects to their wells through self-monitoring. The Sotoyome Resource Conservation District (SRCD) has developed the Groundwater Monitoring Program ("GMP") to assist the property owners with monitoring activities. Participants will be trained by the SRCD to use electronic equipment to monitor the groundwater level in their wells.

Who is eligible to participate?

According to the ROD, in order to be eligible to participate in the Well Impact Compensation Program, the well owner must own a well within 2 miles of the Project well (located in the southern portion of Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed). Additionally, "the well owner must provide the Tribe with documentation of the well location and construction (diameter, depth, screened interval, pump type, etc.), and that the well was constructed and usable before project pumping was initiated."

Well Owners Pumping more than 100 acre feet/year:

As specified in the ROD, well owners within the 2-mile radius that pump more than 100 acre-feet/year, in order to qualify for reimbursement of increased electrical and maintenance costs, the "well owner must provide proof of the actual annual volume of water pumped and/or the electrical usage associated with the pumping," in addition to the above well information requirements.

Will participating in the GMP cost a well owner anything?

No. There will not be any fees or costs for participating in this program, other than that of your own time to monitor.

Will the GMP be measuring how much groundwater a well owner uses?

No measurement of the amount of groundwater pumped will be taken. The measurements will document the depth to groundwater in the well only.

Will someone try to curtail a well owner's groundwater use if they participate in the GMP?

No. The groundwater monitoring program is a free, non-regulatory, voluntary program to measure groundwater levels only throughout the 2-mile radius area of the Project site. Groundwater use is not being measured as part of this program.

VOLUNTARY GROUNDWATER MONITORING PROGRAM FAQs (CONTINUED)

What is required from a well owner if they want to participate?

Willingness to allow SRCD to monitor the well and be on site if necessary during the monitoring visits. Participating well owners will sign a permit-to-enter letter indicating the frequency of the visits and other details. Additionally, participants will be required to keep a Monitoring and Well Information Binder, provided by SRCD, in which monitoring data collected will be recorded. The Binder will also contain construction specifications on the well and monitoring protocol fact sheets, among other relevant data and agency information.

If a well owner chooses to participate, what is the frequency and duration of visits?

An initial site visit is necessary to measure well specifications and to establish a survey datum. This may take up to one hour and will be completed by SRCD. Subsequent monitoring visits will be conducted by the SRCD on a quarterly basis. The actual measurements and monitoring will be taken by SRCD to ensure quality assurance protocols are followed and to get the most accurate data possible. For subsequent visits, SRCD will be on the property up to 30 minutes for each visit to take measurements of the water depth, depending on the number of wells on the landowner's property. The well owner will be contacted at least 48 hours in advance of each visit to make final arrangements.

How are well measurements taken?

Measuring groundwater levels is a relatively simple process, but needs to be done in a consistent and objective manner to ensure results can be tracked over time. Four types of devices may be used to measure groundwater levels: a steel tape, an electrical well sounding device, a pressure transducer, and a Sonic water-level meter. During the initial visit to a well, the SRCD will operate a few of the devices to establish measurements. The SRCD will notate which devices are most effective at each well in the Monitoring and Well Information Binder and will use those specified devices for taking measurements during subsequent monitoring days.

What if a well owner wants to take their own water-level measurements? Will this be allowed?

Although the SRCD will show the process of well water-level monitoring and data recording to all program participants during the initial site visit, SRCD staff will be taking all subsequent measurements to ensure quality assurance and control of the collected data. If a well owner is currently collecting their own water-level measurements, the SRCD asks that this data be kept separate from the SRCD-collected data and not stored in the Monitoring and Well Information Binder. Due to the large number of participants and equipment liability issues, the SRCD will not be loaning monitoring equipment to individual well owners to take their own measurements.

How will the information collected be used? Will a well owner's privacy be protected?

If the well owner decides to file a claim, they will give a copy of the Information Binder in its entirety to water experts Wagner and Bonsignore, who will keep the information confidential while they analyze the monitoring data and determine the degree of compensation to the well owner. It may be determined that there is no significant impact from the Project's well to the property owner's well, in which case no compensation would be given. For the well-owners who have collected their own data, Wagner and Bonsignore, would likely have to conduct a site specific visit and verify the well owners' collection methods to determine if the data collected is accurate and valid.

What if a well owner decides to quit the GMP? What are the benefits of participating in the GMP?

Volunteers can leave the program if they choose. However, gathering data over long periods of time is critical to understanding groundwater level trends. The longer the data are collected, the better understanding Wagner and Bonsignore will have when analyzing any effects that the Project well may be having on a landowner's well. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in the GMP.

How does a well owner get more information about participating in the GMP?

Please contact the Project Manager Kevin Cullinen at 707-569-1448 x103 or kcullinen@sotoyomercd.org or the Project Coordinator Kari Wester at 707-569-1448 x 101.

More VOLUNTARY GROUNDWATER MONITORING PROGRAM FAQs

Where can a well owner view the ROD, showing where the mitigation requirements are discussed?

The ROD can be found on the www.gratoneis.com website along with all of the other EIS documents. The Water Resources mitigation section is located on pages 27 to 31 in the ROD document (pgs 31 to 35 in the pdf). These documents can also be accessed through www.gratongroundwater.com.

If I do not pump 100 acre-feet/year, am I still eligible for compensation under the program?

Well owners pumping less than 100 acre-feet/yr are still eligible for the Compensation Program. However, according to the ROD, well owners pumping 100 acre-feet/yr or more may also be eligible for compensation specifically for increased electrical and maintenance costs due to potential impacts caused by the Project well. Though the larger water users "must provide proof of the actual annual volume of water pumped and/or the electrical usage associated with the pumping". The SRCD **will not** be taking water usage measurements. The SRCD will only be measuring the distance to the groundwater level in the well.

How will degree of compensation be determined?

To determine the degree of compensation due to the Project, at a minimum, the following criteria will be considered:

- a) The well owner's pumping water level change (decrease) resulting from the Project's well.
- b) Reduction in well performance as indicated by a decrease in water output.
- c) Increase in energy cost for pumping due to the Project's well. Note: increased electricity use will only be considered for those pumping more than 100 acre feet, per the ROD. If water levels and pump output fall, the same amount could be pumped over a longer time, requiring more electricity.
- d) Decrease in the area of slotted well casing available to accept groundwater, due to a lowering of the water table.
- e) Age of well casing and well equipment such as pump and motor. Consideration will be given to the manufactures specifications for the well equipment. The well itself, could have a useful life of 40 or more years.

For determining compensation for replacement, reconstruction and loss of function the construction well material used will be considered.

Is more detailed information about the monitoring and claiming process available?

The SRCD's presentation which explains the monitoring program is located at www.gratongroundwater.com. In addition, once the SRCD contacts a well owner to participate in the program, a Monitoring and Well Information Binder will be provided which includes all information needed by the well owner. Claims will be considered on a case by case basis as there are various factors affecting different wells. Importantly, the Project is under construction and will not commence significant pumping for at least 12 months (note that minor temporary pumping by the construction contractor has occurred and will continue throughout construction). The administrative structure for handling claims is under development. Any future claim can be submitted to the SRCD which will be forwarded for review and consideration. All claims will be considered.

Will the SRCD provide or make any well information available to any other party for any reason and/or will any of the well owner's private information be disclosed or published as part of anything other than the GMP?

The SRCD will not make well related information available to any other party. All groundwater data collected will remain with the well owner on site (in the Monitoring and Well Information Binder) at all times. However, if a well owner decides to file a claim, then you, the well owner, will need to provide Wagner and Bonsignore the collected groundwater level data (including the well driller's log if available), and some standard personal information (name, address, contact info). The SRCD will not be a part of the transfer of data at the time of the compensation claim. Please note however that under the California Public Records Act, the SRCD may be required to provide basic information, such as GMP participant names and addresses, to any public entity that submits a request.

More VOLUNTARY GROUNDWATER MONITORING PROGRAM FAQs

Can I participate in the program with the condition that I must be present whenever my well is being monitored?

Yes.

Is there a typical period of time over which the monitoring takes place a year, 5 years, 10 years, longer?

Monitoring should ideally begin as soon as possible to allow for a year of data to be collected before the opening of the Project. Monitoring should continue for 6 months to a year, possibly longer, following the start of the Project well pumping.

Where can I find more information about pumping from the Project and pumping by other from other groundwater users within the Santa Rosa Plain Sub-Basin?

Please refer to www.gratongroundwater.com under "Documents" for a graph and chart with this information..

Can a well owner obtain questions and answers that others are asking about the Program?

Please refer to this FAQs sheet that, if needed, will be updated periodically.