



# California Regional Water Quality Control Board

## Central Coast Region



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### MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

TO: Central Coast Regional Water  
Quality Control Board

FROM: David LaCaro – Environmental  
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DATE: July 23, 2010

### UPDATE ON THE LOS OSOS GROUNDWATER BASIN ISJ WORKING GROUP'S ACTIVITIES

#### Background:

Domestic water for the Los Osos community is produced by three main water purveyors, Golden State Water Company (GWSC), Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSD), and S and T Mutual Water Company (S&T). A relatively small quantity of drinking water comes from individual private wells, mostly in outlying rural areas. To resolve a formal complaint that was filed in the San Luis Obispo County Superior Court by the Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSD), the three main water purveyors and San Luis Obispo County entered into an Interlocutory Stipulated Judgment (ISJ) on August 5, 2008. The ISJ allows for the parties to cooperatively assess, develop, and implement a plan to adequately address water rights and use in the Los Osos Basin. The County's participation in the ISJ working group allows coordinated efforts between the construction of the wastewater project and water management in Los Osos.

#### Los Osos Groundwater Basin Update:

The ISJ working group notified the public of their efforts through the May 5, 2010 Los Osos Groundwater Basin Plan Update (Update). The Update included various activities that the ISJ working group will investigate and consider to balance the basin. Further, the ISJ working group plans to incorporate these actions as part of the subsequent Los Osos Groundwater Basin Management Plan (BMP). The ISJ working group included two attachments with the Update:

- Water Quality Monitoring results Summary, November 2009 – January 2010, Los Osos Valley groundwater Basin. Cleath-Harris Geologist, Inc. April 2010.

- Peer Review of the Los Osos Groundwater Model, Technical Memorandum. Stetson Engineers, Inc. May 3, 2010.

### **Current Activities**

More recently, the ISJ working group agencies have participated in funding groundwater modeling research, project cost analysis, and feasibility studies for various projects associated with the reduction of seawater intrusion and basin balance. The following projects are actions to reduce or relocate water production, to help achieve overall basin balance.

**Golden State Water Company and Los Osos CSD Intertie** –GWSC and LOCSD currently own and operate a water distribution intertie facility located in the center of the LOCSD service boundary. More recently, both organizations approved an agreement that allows upgrades to the current antiquated intertie facility. The upgrades will improve the existing intertie's capacity and functionality. A design has been completed for the upgraded intertie facility. Furthermore, the organizations will update their existing intertie agreement to allow for legal sharing and transfer of water between organizations. The intertie will be upgraded once an organization has sufficient capability to provide upper aquifer water to the other purveyors for blending. The potential for water sharing through this intertie will be dependent on the completed BMP, any contractual agreements between participating organizations, and the state of distribution system hydraulics.

**South Bay Boulevard Upper Aquifer Well Installation** – The LOCSD installed the South Bay Boulevard Upper Aquifer Well in early 2009. The purpose of the installation is to use the South Bay Boulevard Lower Aquifer Well to blend upper and lower water, increasing production in the eastern portion of the basin. The upper aquifer well is currently non-operational as the LOCSD is currently waiting for optimal blending conditions.

**Golden State Water Company Well Pumping** – GSWC has begun the process of shifting pumping eastward to its Los Olivos Well and South Bay Well. This shift in pumping draws from both the upper and lower aquifers away from the area of seawater intrusion and has effectively reduced lower aquifer pumping by 180 acre-feet per year (AFY)

**GSWC Rosina Well Site** – GSWC is in the process of designing a treatment facility at its Rosina Well site. This treatment facility will facilitate the reduction of nitrates from the basin's upper aquifer and allow blending with lower aquifer water. This activity will result in increasing upper aquifer usage and decreasing lower aquifer usage, further reducing the potential for seawater intrusion.

**Water Conservation Activities** – All three water purveyors and the County of San Luis Obispo are working together and separately to promote water conservation activities in the Los Osos region.

San Luis Obispo County: The County has adopted water conservation ordinances requiring retrofit-upon-sale of indoor fixtures. The ordinance also requires that redevelopment of existing homes retrofit indoor fixtures to offset the new water demand at a 2:1 ratio. Additionally, the planned wastewater project is conditioned to implement water conservation measures to meet a goal of 50 gallons per capita per day of indoor water use within the wastewater service area.

LOCSD: The LOCSD approved several water conservation practices on July 1, 2010. Three of these measures were allocated \$30,000 and include contracting with an auditor to determine high water users in the water service area to assist in future water use reductions, develop a self-audit program for direct use by the District water customers, and enhancing community water conservation educational efforts. In addition, the LOCSD directed the Utility Advisory Committee to research and develop a retrofit rebate program and directed District staff to develop ordinances amending the District's code, specifically relating to water conservation and wastewater.

GSWC: GSWC has implemented a number of measures to encourage water conservation in the community of Los Osos, such as approving a recent tiered rate structure, which has been shown to decrease consumption, providing numerous low flow toilets to Los Osos residents in 2009, and implementing a rebate program for high efficiency toilets and clothes washers.

S&T: S&T is currently pursuing a water meter installation program for their customers. This program will educate customers of their water usage and will encourage their customers to reduce their indoor and outdoor water consumption.

ISJ Working Group: The ISJ working group has been teaming with Science Discovery educational program for the past two school years on the implementation of a school education program that is designed to educate the community's youth on the importance of water conservation. The water purveyors are committed to continue this important program in the upcoming school years.

The ISJ working group is implementing these actions as interim or first steps toward achieving overall basin balance and abating seawater intrusion. The updated intertie facility and agreement will allow the free movement of water within the basin, which will reduce pumping activities in the most critical seawater intrusion zones. The upper well installation and blending opportunities add further reductions of pumping in this portion of the aquifer. The implementation of water conservation measures in combination with San Luis Obispo County's efforts will reduce water usage and seawater intrusion, and allow a more accurate account of water use in the basin or a better understanding of

the basin output for efficient basin management and balance. The ISJ working group continues to assess water management alternatives, their associated costs and feasibility. The ISJ working group remains on course to complete the draft BMP by the end of 2010. Regional Water Board staff is involved in development of conservation efforts, as well as the wastewater management project, and will continue to push for water use rates and patterns that restore the hydrologic balance in the basin, to repel seawater intrusion.

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