



# California Regional Water Quality Control Board

## San Francisco Bay Region



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Governor

**TO:** Bruce H. Wolfe  
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**FROM:** Mary Rose Cassa  
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**DATE:** May 5, 2008

**SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA GROUNDWATER AWARENESS MONTH**

State law establishes May as California Groundwater Awareness Month and states the commitment of the Legislature to protect and improve the management of this precious and limited resource. Groundwater Awareness Month is a celebration of California's valuable resource and an opportunity to reflect on groundwater's value and its contributions to our lives.

In 2005, staff presented information highlighting California Groundwater Awareness Month (Attachment 1) and the importance of recognizing the importance of protecting and improving groundwater quality as part of California's efforts to promote wise, balanced, and sustainable use of all water resources. The 2005 staff report gave a general overview of the role and importance of groundwater and placed the issues of groundwater use, protection, and ambient monitoring in the context of the State and Regional Water Boards' Strategic Plan as well as global, national, and statewide groundwater issues. This memorandum provides an update regarding groundwater issues, with a focus on interactions between groundwater and surface water.

In 2004, Region 2 staff created the Groundwater-Surface Water Interaction Workgroup within the Groundwater Committee, with the following mission:

To preserve, enhance, and restore water quality through a comprehensive understanding of the hydrologic cycle, with particular focus on collaborative engagement between surface water and groundwater staff, and facilitating an increased knowledge of surface water and groundwater interaction.

The Workgroup set forth the following goals:

- Evaluate existing scientific knowledge and identify gaps in our knowledge to establish the basis for eventual guidance
- Develop a long-term, integrated perspective based on a systematic, scientific assessment to help in addressing multiple concerns
- Develop blueprints for action (fact sheets)

*Preserving, enhancing, and restoring the San Francisco Bay Area's waters for over 50 years*

The following is a partial list of current and former staff members who have participated in the Workgroup: Mary Rose Cassa, Michael Rochette, Dale Hopkins, Habte Kifle, Ben Livsey, Andree Greenberg, Christine Boschen, Tobi Tyler, Alec Naugle, David Elias, Nancy Katyl, and Keith Roberson. Staff from San Mateo County and Santa Clara Valley Water District have also been involved.

Workgroup members have evaluated ways in which groundwater-surface water issues are addressed in the Region, and have collaborated to share information. The Workgroup has produced two fact sheets to highlight concerns regarding the interactions between groundwater and surface water (Attachments 2 and 3). In addition, Workgroup members have participated in several conferences by making oral presentations and presenting posters, listed in the following table:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Title</b>
April 2005	Geological Society of America	<i>Groundwater and Surface Water Interactions: Hydrogeology and Water Quality in the San Francisco Bay Region</i> (oral presentation)
October 2005	Estuary Conference	<i>Groundwater-Surface Water Interaction: An Emerging Issue in Regulatory Decision-Making and Resource Management</i> (poster)
October 2005	Estuary Conference	<i>Investigation and Control of Contaminated Groundwater Discharges to Surface Water in the San Francisco Bay Region</i> (poster)
October 2007	Estuary Conference	<i>Stormwater Regulation and Groundwater/Surface Water Interaction</i> (poster)

### **What's ahead?**

During a recent in-house training on the subject of land-use planning, Workgroup members identified key partners for an effort to help better integrate the groundwater element into local general plans. This activity was identified during the early scoping phases of the Workgroup (see "Educational Materials and Outreach" in the table on the reverse of the initial fact sheet). The Workgroup will expand its coordination with key local governments to encourage their use of a groundwater element in their general plans.

The Workgroup will continue to develop fact sheets, with Stream and Wetland Permitting as the focus for the next one. The issues include protecting beneficial uses of surface waters, wetlands, groundwaters, marshes, and mudflats. In addition, landscape- and watershed-level water quality functions such as those related to flood control, water supply, pollutant filtration, and maintenance of biodiversity need to be addressed.

### **Attachments:**

1. Staff Memo: California Groundwater Awareness Month (May 2005)
2. Fact Sheet: Groundwater-Surface Water Interaction (October 2004)
3. Fact Sheet: Stormwater Regulation and Groundwater-Surface Water Interaction (January 2008)