



# County of Santa Cruz

## Health Services Agency – Environmental Health

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY - Call 711 <http://www.sceeh.org>  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



### Drought Response Working Group – Meeting Summary

Meeting 2, 6/16/2022, 9am

Hybrid via Microsoft Teams and Redwood Room (701 Ocean Street room 520)

#### Participants:

Working Group Members: Edan Cassidy (SMGWA), Frank Cheap (WAC), Jon Kennedy (MGA), Paul Lego (WAC), Brian Lockwood (WAC), Stephen Rider (PV Water), Rachel Smith (RCAC), Becky Steinbruner (at-large small water system customer)

Additional participants: Sean Abbey (Santa Cruz County, Water Quality Specialist), Tatiana Brennan (Santa Cruz County, OR3), Julia Ekstrom (Ca., Dept. Water Resources), Erin McCarthy (Santa Cruz County, Water Resources Planner), Sierra Ryan (Santa Cruz County, Water Resources Manager), Nathan Salazar (Santa Cruz County, Environmental Health Specialist)

**Presentation by Nathan Salazar: Well Permits.** Presentation topics included data collected on well permit applications, forms used for permit applications, completeness of well data in GIS database, and utility of that information.

#### Discussion topics:

- County will not rely solely on well GIS information to inform outreach and planning for SB552 compliance because that information is incomplete.
- Important to consider disadvantaged communities and access to funding.
- Rural residential well information is difficult to track.
- PV Water tracks well completion reports received from DWR; data entries in their spreadsheet date back to 1997; driller logs and e-logs can be helpful.
- Depth of seal and depth of screening are important to know.
- A future conversation may be needed about policy changes related to new wells.

#### Action items and recommendations:

- Recommendation to update and improve the well database; the backlog of wells will require the most work; there are relatively few new wells being installed.
- Build resources/capacity (e.g., funding and interns) to update and analyze the well data
- Focus on well completion reports; depth of seal and depth of screening; driller logs and e-logs can be helpful when available
- Staff to post GIS web link and presentation materials

**Presentation by Erin McCarthy: Basic Components of a Well Mitigation Strategy.** Presentation topics included existing state tools to identify disadvantaged communities (DACs), areas

vulnerable to drought, and areas vulnerable to water supply and water quality problems; areas of concern based on local expertise; and, interim and permanent mitigation strategies for wells impacted by drought.

Action items and recommendations:

- Look at available vulnerability assessment tools in combination with local knowledge.
- Physical vulnerabilities are primary layer of assessment. First identify areas that are vulnerable to water supply and water quality problems, and then build on that with other vulnerability indicators like socioeconomic characteristics.
- Remove Pajaro Dunes area from disadvantaged categorization. Served by City.
- Consider building an email listserve that people can sign up for.
- Review costs of mitigation strategies.
- Consider whether storage tanks should be included in strategies because most private wells have storage tanks already.
- Group to review and provide feedback on Interim and Permanent Mitigation Strategies Table.

**Presentation by Sierra Ryan: Funding Secured for Drought Response Tasks.** Presentation topics included tasks to be completed with grant funding that will be received by the County for drought preparedness and response including:

- Building well data collection and mapping resources
- Outreach to notify private well users about resources available
- Building a drought resources web portal (e.g., dry well reporting tool)
- Well inspections including well soundings and water quality testing,
- Water treatment systems for disadvantaged community members
- Hauled water for residents in need
- Resiliency feasibility studies for long-term planning solutions

Key discussion items and recommendations about outreach and education:

- Outreach and education are potentially the most important tasks.
- Increase budget for outreach
- Brainstorm on outreach strategies at the August Working Group meeting.
- Address public concern about County regulation
- To develop outreach strategy: Define goal, gather information, identify multiple outreach strategies, identify and leverage experts, community groups and relationships to effectively reach all potentially affected communities.
- Ideas for strategies:
  - Leverage advocacy groups that are already connected
  - Pay community leaders to help with outreach
  - Leverage existing resources and events such as Board of Supervisors, agricultural groups, Connect the Drops, DWR and CERT rural community lists
  - Look to RCAC, SHE, CWC and LCJA as experts in outreach to disadvantaged communities

- DWR to look into leveraging existing agreement w RCAC for outreach assistance
  - Consider email listserve, but don't rely solely on email
  - Outreach in Spanish and English
  - Learn from PV Water outreach strategies (quarterly bilingual newsletters, social media and radio ads)
  - Hold workshops throughout the County; include open discussions in which County staff are not present
  - Similar to the process used for Santa Margarita Basin planning, facilitate conversations between communities to hear diverse perspectives, concerns, and challenges; removes barriers so that conversation can focus on issue at hand.
- Key discussion items and recommendations about role of County:
    - Provide funding to support connection to larger water systems; long-term solution.
    - Coordinate with State for financial support for consolidation. DAC's will have issue with the high cost of consolidating.
    - Expect people to be concerned about starting a process that they can't stop (consolidating).
    - Incentivize voluntary metering. There are benefits to metering but some will resist due to concerns about being taxed, loss of privacy, and costs.
    - As alternative to developing a County-supported web portal for well users, consider referring people to the State portal that already exists.
- Next meeting on July 20, 2022 will focus on small water systems including survey responses from small water system representatives and a presentation from LAFCO.