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County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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SUSAN A. MAURIELLO, J.D., COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

Date: January 22, 2016 11:56 AM
Release: Immediately
Contact: John Ricker
Water Resources Division Director
454-2750

WATER FORUM HIGHLIGHTS COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS FOR WATER MANAGEMENT IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

On January 28, the public is invited to a discussion of local water resources and environmental protection featuring leaders from across Santa Cruz County.

Water is one of our most precious common resources. As water managers and community members work to address water issues for their community, they are finding that the most effective approaches involve reaching out and working together on regional solutions. "Connecting the Drops: Working Together for Water" will bring together a variety of voices for a discussion featuring keynote speaker John Laird, California's Secretary for Natural Resources, as well as information stations on water recycling, groundwater management, water conversation, and watershed management. The event is free and open to the public.

"As someone who works on water policy on a day-to-day basis, I know that water conservation and supply reliability are some of the primary concerns of Californians everywhere," Laird said. "It is good to see leaders from my home county coming together to address these issues, and I am pleased to be part of this discussion."

"Working with all the water and resource agencies throughout the county, it is great to see how well we all work together in addressing complicated and interrelated issues," said John Ricker, Water Resources Division Director for the County of Santa Cruz. "We look forward to the forum and an opportunity to share an overview of all that good work."



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Water issues have a significant impact on Santa Cruz County residents and the environment. Within four years, the drought has reduced streamflows in the San Lorenzo River to historic lows while drying up other streams and sharply lowering water levels in Loch Lomond Reservoir, threatened the water sources of several small water systems, and driven county residents and businesses to reduce water use to some of the lowest levels in the state.

Local water resource issues extend beyond the drought, with most of the county's groundwater basins depleted by over-pumping, coastal water quality degraded by urban runoff and leaky sewer systems, salmon and steelhead populations diminished by low streamflow, sediment and loss of large wood in the stream, and wetlands and riparian corridors diminished by land development and agricultural use.

Local governments, water agencies, and community members have responded in a variety of ways, including initiating community water dialogues in Santa Cruz, the Mid-County area and the Pajaro Valley; implementing some of the highest levels of residential and agricultural conservation in the state; expanding the use of recycled water; restoring groundwater recharge, constructing interties and promoting exchange of water among districts; and pursuing state funding to help reduce local costs to address these issues. Connecting the Drops will highlight and bolster these ongoing efforts.

This event is presented by County of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission, Regional Water Management Foundation, City of Santa Cruz, City of Watsonville, City of Scotts Valley, City of Capitola, Scotts Valley Water District, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, Central Water District, Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, San Lorenzo Valley Water District and the Soquel Creek Water District.

WHAT: Connecting the Drops: Working Together for Water

WHEN: Thursday, January 28, 7 p.m.-9 p.m. (Open House starts at 6:30 p.m.)

WHERE: New Brighton Middle School auditorium, 250 Washburn St., Capitola



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