



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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WATER MANAGEMENT REPORT SHOWS PROGRESS

The 2019 Santa Cruz County Santa Cruz County Water Resources Management Status Report shows County residents' continued leadership when it comes to responsible water management practices.

Among the accomplishments in 2019 were adoption of groundwater management plans for two critical water basins which helped place the County on a path toward water sustainability, securing major funding for a potential mid-County recycled water project to protect and enhance groundwater resources, and leadership in water conservation as residents continued to serve as a national model even as the County emerged from severe drought.

Even though the number of County residents has grown by roughly twice the population of Capitola since 2000, residents are using less water today than they were 20 years ago. Water use also remains well below 2013 pre-drought levels, showing the effectiveness water-efficient fixtures and landscaping widely deployed during the drought years.

In 2019, both Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency and the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency made significant progress on groundwater management plans. The Pajaro Valley Basin plan was approved by the state Department of Water Resources, becoming the first plan adopted for a critically overdrafted basin in the state. The Mid-County Groundwater Agency plan was adopted locally and is pending review by DWR.

A key element of the Mid-County Groundwater Agency plan is Pure Water Soquel, a proposal to use purified wastewater to protect groundwater supplies and prevent seawater intrusion. During 2019, the State awarded the District a \$50M grant under its Prop 1 Groundwater Grant Program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded low interest loans through its Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program, and the State approved \$36M through its Seawater Intrusion Control Low-Interest Loan Program.

In other developments, the County's Water Quality Laboratory expanded its analytical capabilities targeted at local water issues, and steelhead densities throughout the County showed signs of increasing, indicating an ongoing recovery from the drought years. To read the report and to learn more about local water management efforts, go to

www.santacruzcounty.us.