South American SUBBASIN

SOUTH AMERICAN SUBBASIN SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

FALL 2025

New Community Groundwater Monitoring Pilot Program Launched

State program partners with SASB domestic well owners

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is partnering with Sacramento County, the South American Subbasin (SASb) Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), and local domestic well owners to launch a pilot groundwater monitoring program. The program is part of the state's groundwater monitoring enhancement effort and actions to increase drought resiliency.

The voluntary program, aimed at domestic well owners, schools, and small water systems, offers training, equipment, and support for monitoring groundwater levels. The goal of the effort is to build community knowledge and statewide monitoring coverage, while remaining flexible to meet local needs and interest.

The program only measures groundwater levels, NOT water use and participation is completely voluntary.

Monitoring information will be submitted to DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Portal Monitoring Network Module and available for use by SASb GSAs to fill data gaps and better understand the drinking water aquifer.

The monitoring results will also be publicly viewable on the SGMA Data Viewer Map Application. The viewer will provide a visual representation of changes over time.

Importantly, this information will assist volunteer participants in understanding their own water supply.

Informational Meeting

To launch the pilot effort, the state and local Monitoring Pilot Program team members held a public meeting in late September with the SASb Domestic Well Advisory Group (DWAG) and other interested well-owners to share more details about the pilot, respond to questions and recruit potential participants.

Figure-0-1: Monitoring Pilot Program team members get ready to meet with SASb domestic well owners at the Sept. 24, 2025, public meeting held at the Sacramento County Vineyard Treatment Plant.

Three levels of volunteer participation are offered. **Level A [Learn]** provides training and educational materials to improve understanding of an individual well and local groundwater conditions

In **Level B [Contribute]** participants will also receive training and educational materials as well as a long-term monitoring equipment loan the allows the participant to collect data and share it with DWR.

As in Levels A and B, participants **in Level C [Collaborate**] will receive training and educational material; however, the state DWR collects and manages data for the well owner.

Support from the state includes an assessment of well & site suitability for participation in the pilot, long-term equipment loans, training on how to measure & submit data and technical support and troubleshooting. *(Continued on next page)*

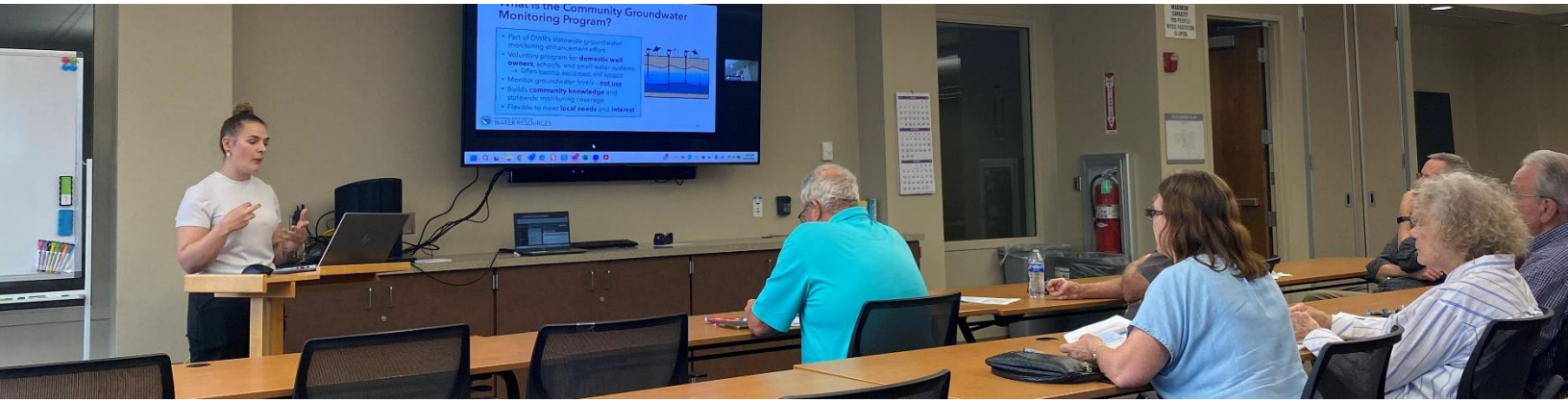


Figure 2 - Zoe Kanavas, a team leader from the state DWR Water Justice Office, provides an overview of the Pilot Program to SASb domestic well owners.

(Pilot program continued …)

Privacy

Several audience questions focused on well-owner privacy. Zoe Kanavas, a team leader from DWR's Water Justice Office, explained the type of information that would be available to the public as:

- General well location & construction details
- Depth to water measurements
- Monitoring measurement date and time

Information that would remain private includes well owner names, contact details and resident addresses

Coordination with Existing Efforts

Another area of interest was how the effort might coordinate with existing community member monitoring efforts already under way. The state DWR team indicated that coordination would require some additional investigation to make sure that the collection methods and the equipment being used by the community now would allow for a seamless merging of data. Overall, DWR was open to pursuing the idea.

Volunteering and Next Steps

Participants were invited to sign up during the session and many did. DWR has already started site visits and initiated the next steps to implement monitoring.

Some additional slots may still be available. For more information about volunteering or the program in general, you may contact the DWR representatives directly at: Zoe Kanavas, 916-606-2134, at Zoe.Kanavas@water.ca.gov or Bryce Russell, 916-291-2999 at Bryce.Russell@water.ca.gov .

SASb GSP 5-Year Periodic Evaluation

Join us for a10 a.m. Briefing on December 18, 2025

Register Here: https://stantec.zoom.us/meeting/register/Kr_MoJC7Q2-DWAWCDUKnqQ

Subbasin interested parties are invited to attend a **Dec. 18, 2025, briefing on the launch of the subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) 5-Year Periodic Evaluation.**

SGMA requires a periodic evaluation of GSPs every five years after the initial plan is submitted. This evaluation is a thorough assessment of the GSP's implementation and performance, and it is submitted to DWR for review.

The purpose of the review is to assess the GSP's progress, identify any challenges, and determine if modifications are necessary to achieve sustainability goals.

Briefing topics will include a review of the Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs). subbasin groundwater conditions, status of projects and management actions, and the subbasin approach to addressing state recommended corrective actions in the current GSP. Participants will also learn more about the review schedule and opportunities for public engagement.

If you can't make the briefing, the session will also be recorded and available at the SASb website in January 2026.

MEET THE NEW SASB GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN MANAGER

Piret Harmon joined the SCGA (Sacramento Central Groundwater Authority) as its Executive Director in July. SCGA, serves as the administrator for the joint efforts of all the subbasin GSAs in implementation of the SASb Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Through this arrangement the SCGA Executive Director, Piret, serves as the GSP Plan Manager.

Piret brings a deep commitment to public service, a sharp systems mindset, and years of experience navigating California's evolving water management landscape to her role. Adding to a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in business administration, her substantial experience in the water sector includes leading the Salinas Valley Basin GSA and nearly 20 years working at Santa Cruz County public water systems, including the Scotts Valley Water District where she was General Manager.

For Piret, public service and efficiency have been the foundation of her journey through the water sector. Born and raised in Estonia, she witnessed a newly independent nation rebuild its public sector from the ground up. She explains, "Everything had to be intentional, efficient, and transparent," and those principles stuck with her and still define her leadership style today.

Joining the South American Subbasin GSA is both a homecoming and an exciting opportunity for Piret. Already living near the subbasin and having worked across California, she's excited to bring lessons learned from her work in other basins to a region she sees as sustainable and full of potential.

As she explains, "This is a chance to scale what I know works well and try it in a new context. The beauty of California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), is that it allows for flexibility, different governance structures, different paths, and different opportunities."

Piret shares her excitement about this new role, noting that the subbasin is already demonstrating signs of sustainability, benefiting from a mature groundwater agency that predates SGMA.

It also brings a diversity of stakeholders, from urban and rural communities to legacy infrastructure and innovative policy work.

Piret is focused on laying the groundwork during her first year, learning the community, understanding what's working, and identifying areas for improvement. She's big on processes and believes a solid foundation is key before diving into amendments or new initiatives.

Her long-term vision for the SASb GSAs' involves developing its potential to become a kind of regional clearinghouse, a place where agencies feel safe sharing ideas, aligning efforts, and avoiding duplication. "Water management still exists in silos, but we don't have to work that way." Piret affirms.

Piret also intends to place an emphasis on collaboration and community engagement. She believes in meeting with as many people as possible and asking, "How can I make their work easier?" Only then does she think about what she needs from them. She's cautious of overlapping roles and duplication and is looking to streamline wherever possible. This aligns with one of her core principles: efficiency.

When it comes to community involvement, she wants residents to know their voices matter. As she puts it, "SGMA compliance isn't just a checkbox. It's about ensuring that every user has clean, affordable, and accessible water in the future."

When asked what gives her hope, Piret doesn't hesitate: "Water is life. In California, groundwater is our secret sauce. We know we must work to preserve our water resources, especially the water beneath us, and we will.".

ABREVIATIONS AND ACRONYM CHEAT SHEET

Anyone that has spent time around water topics has probably noticed it is full of acronyms and abbreviations. Following is a list of those used in this newsletter.

DWAG	Domestic Well Advisory Group
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
GSAs	Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
SASb	South American Subbasin
SCGA	Sacramento Central Groundwater Authority
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

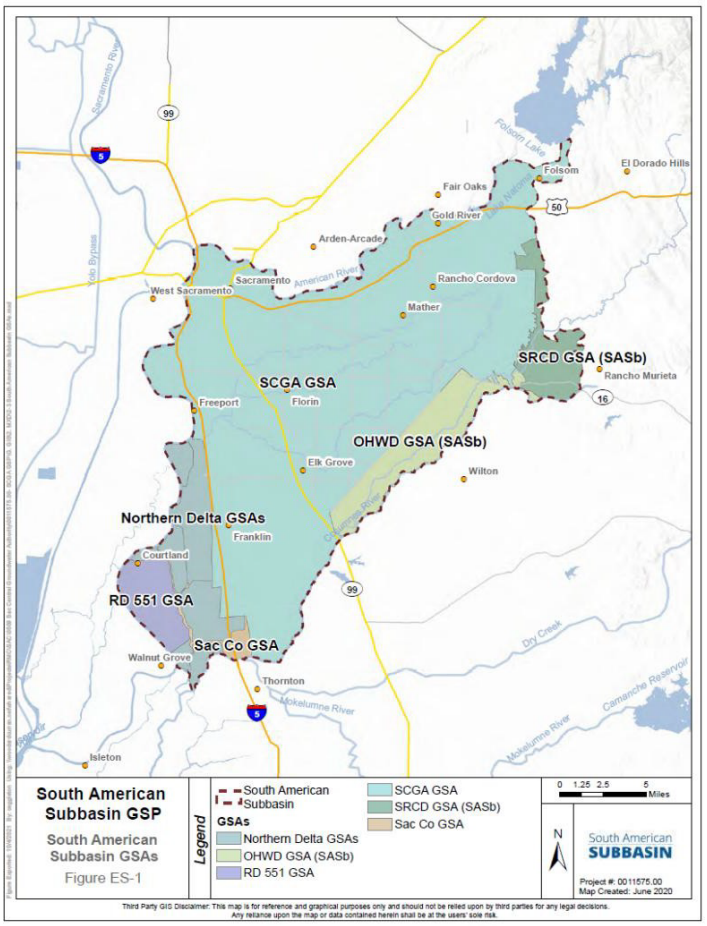
MORE ABOUT THE SOUTH AMERICAN SUBBASIN

The SASb is a high priority subbasin within the larger Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin, managed by six GSAs (listed below).

Under SGMA, the GSAs are charged with ensuring sustainable management of the South American Subbasin groundwater resources consistent with their GSP.

How to find your GSA

Visit the California Department of Water Resources GSA Map Viewer to view GSAs across the state. Once there, enter your address or place in the upper left corner and click on the magnifying glass icon. You can click on the map in any area to reveal the agency name and other important information.



Contact Your GSA:

Sacramento Central Groundwater Authority www.scgah2o.saccounty.gov	Contact: Piret Harom Email: executivedirector@scgah2o.com Domestic Well Representative: David Trask Email: dmtrask@gmail.com
Omochumne-Hartnell Water District www.ohwd.org	Contact: Mike Wackman Email: info@ohwd.org
Northern Delta and Reclamation District No. 551 www.ndgsa.org	Manager: Erik Ringelberg Email: NorthernDeltaGSA@gmail.com
Reclamation District No. 551 **(Represented by Northern Delta GSA)** www.ndgsa.org	Carel Van Loben Sels, President c/o lindatoppervls@gmail.com Or NorthernDeltaGSA@gmail.com
Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District www.sloughhousercd.org	Contact: Lindsey Carter Email: info@SloughhouseRCD.org
County of Sacramento - (Represented by SCGA) - https://waterresources.saccounty.gov/Pages/Ground-Water-Management.aspx	Contact: Chris Hunley Email: hunleyc@saccounty.gov