

Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Cosumnes Subbasin: Implementation and Funding

Whether you have a well on your property or live in a community that pumps groundwater from a well into your home, decisions will be made soon that may impact you. The first draft of the Cosumnes Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) will be released in the coming months. Providing a roadmap for how groundwater will be managed for the next two decades, the plan includes:

- A path toward achieving groundwater sustainability by 2042.
- Projects to pump new sources of water into the ground (recharge).
- A description of how plan implementation, projects, and management actions will be funded.



Why are we talking about groundwater?

Groundwater is an important resource that provides drinking water, allows agriculture to flourish, and supports a healthy environment. But California's frequent droughts and over-reliance on pumping are depleting groundwater. Groundwater in the Cosumnes Subbasin is dropping at an average rate of 1 foot/year. The State's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014 requires local agencies to develop a plan to sustainably manage groundwater over the long term.



How will we pay for implementing the plan?

Year 1 Funding

Due to legal restrictions, only fees to cover administrative costs can be assessed prior to submitting the GSP. For fiscal year 2021-22, a usage fee (~\$10/irrigated acre) will be assessed to cover administrating the early phase of the GSP. This Year 1 Usage Fee will mainly be paid by farmers and ranchers, the main users of groundwater in the basin. Ag-res parcels with irrigated pastures, vineyards, or orchards may also be assessed.

Usage fees will be adopted through legal processes with opportunities for public input. Public notices and public meetings before GSA boards will occur prior to implementing the fee. Please contact your local GSA for more information on this process.



Seven Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) have been working collaboratively to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Cosumnes Subbasin. View the "Interactive Map" online to find out which GSA you belong to! Cosumnes.WaterForum.org

The Year 1 Usage Fee will be used to cover administrative expenses, such as:

- Monitoring and addressing data gaps
- Preparing and submitting reports to the state
- Overseeing & coordinating GSP implementation
- Grant writing and financial audit
- Community outreach

The estimated total budget for administrative expenses is approximately \$400,000/year.



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Long-Term Funding

Years 2022-2042

Once the GSP has been submitted to the State, the work will move into high gear. To fund the administration of the plan and the projects that will help us achieve sustainability over the long haul, two types of fees will be levied.

Project Costs will be paid by a Usage Fee

At this time, the estimated usage fee will be about \$10/irrigated acre. Some of the key projects include:

- Conducting feasibility studies
- Developing a groundwater bank
- Paying farmers to voluntarily fallow land
- Participating in water recharge programs

See our “Projects Factsheet” available on our website for more information about the project and management actions that are being considered.

Administrative Costs will be paid by a Parcel Fee

Starting in Year 2, the administrative costs will be covered by a parcel fee. There will be some new administrative tasks, such as five-year plan updates; however, responsibilities and expenses will remain similar to Year 1. These expenses will be shared by farmers, owners of small acreage (ag-res), and residents of the cities within the basin.

Fiscal Year (FY)	Administrative Costs	Project Costs	Total Annual Costs
FY 21/22	\$405,000	\$330,000	\$735,000
FY 22/23	\$465,000	\$685,000	\$1,150,000
FY 23/24	\$475,000	\$655,000	\$1,130,000
FY 24/25	\$525,000	\$675,000	\$1,200,000
FY 25/26	\$495,000	\$675,000	\$1,170,000

Revenue to pay project costs includes local usage fees and external funding sources. Cost estimations are subject to change.

Amador County GSA and the City of Galt GSA plan to include groundwater management costs in their broader fee program and provide an annual contribution to the subbasin. As a result their final fee structure will be different than other areas in the subbasin.

**What happens if we fail?
State Intervention**

If the local GSAs are unable to implement a plan that meets state requirements, the State Water Resources Control Board will step in to manage the subbasin. If this occurs, the State could charge up to \$300/well/year for all groundwater extractors and up to \$55/acre-foot of water pumped.

The local GSAs are working hard to avoid State Intervention and these high costs.

What’s Next?

At this time, the amount of the Year 2 parcel fee is unclear. A consultant has been hired to develop the fee program and ensure that it is fair, and that the benefits align with the fees. One thing is clear however – in 2022 the GSAs will need undergo another fee adoption process to have the resources needed to implement the GSP. Public meetings will be held to review the specifics.