



PVWATERCOMMITMENT@YAHOO.COM

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COMMUNITY WATER DIALOGUE

Founded in July 2010, the Community Water Dialogue is a group of local stakeholders who have gathered to address the issue of groundwater overdraft through local solutions. This group believes that we must simplify the issues first in order to make progress and are seeking concerned stakeholders who share the following:

1. A commitment to protect the Pajaro Valley as an important agriculture resource
2. A recognition that the solution will not be an importation pipeline
3. A willingness to pursue diverse strategies which entail costs and sacrifices in order to bring our aquifer into balance

The CWD holds quarterly discussion meetings and incorporates the efforts from multiple working groups, including: land management and irrigation, recharge, communications, money and metrics and big projects.

WIN PROJECT

Communication towers creating a network for wireless irrigation monitoring have been created through the investment of community members and the Community Water Dialogue.

This network minimizes the cost to growers to get technology to receive real time irrigation information, potentially reducing their water use by 30%.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

November 30 from 9-11 at the Agricultural History Project located at 2601 East Lake Avenue, Watsonville

Jan - vegetable irrigators and growers

Feb - berry irrigators and growers

DIALOGUE TO ACTION

To utilize the WIN network and get more information on irrigation monitoring technology, contact Jeremy Otto with Hortau at 805-748-5505 or by email jotto@hortau.com.

LAND MANAGEMENT AND IRRIGATION GROUP

Thanks to 11 landowners in the valley who are hosting towers on their properties, the Wireless Irrigation Network (WIN) project coverage is almost complete. Hortau is currently testing the on-the-ground coverage of the network to identify any gaps in coverage and will work with the RCD to get additional towers installed to complete the network.

The first of a series of an outreach and training opportunities offered with the WIN Project will be held on November 30 from 9-11 at the Agricultural History Project located at 2601 East Lake Avenue, Watsonville. This first meeting will focus on introducing new growers to the WIN project and the technology associated with the Hortau system the WIN project uses. Additional meetings in January and February will focus in on commodity specific training for irrigators and ranch managers.

RECHARGE

Hydrologic instruments have been installed at the Bokariza site to measure the benefits of routing storm water into an infiltration (recharge) basin. Instruments include water level gauges, thermal probes, a rain gauge, sediment collection devices, and a time-lapse camera. Data and samples collected with these instruments will help to assess the performance of this system, and to determine what maintenance might be needed going forward to keep it working. Data will be collected throughout the coming winter, then analyzed after the equipment is recovered in the spring.

The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is working with the NRCS, RCD, UCSC, and CSUMB to explore potential recharge opportunities near Watsonville Slough. The NRCS and RCD will work on an auger survey to get better information on shallow soils at potential field sites. Assuming that soil conditions look promising, UCSC and CSUMB personnel will run percolation tests in the spring.

Multiple locations on the Cooley Ranch were evaluated in summer 2012 for storm water capture and infiltration, with percolation tests completed at one site. Instruments were deployed in the fall to assess storm flows along the drainage adjacent to the potential site during the coming winter, to determine if an infiltration project may be justified.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Plan has been completed for the CWD. This plan identifies key messages supported by the CWD and action items to outreach to groups in the community. One of the priorities of this plan is outreaching to growers and landowners about the CWD and WIN project. Thanks to Action Pajaro Valley for hosting the CWD webpage. The communications group is looking at options to increase the visibility of the webpage.

MONEY AND METRICS

Money and Metrics is a new working group of the CWD, whose goal is to measure the progress made toward balancing the aquifer in the Pajaro Valley and assess the economic drivers of both the problem and the solution. This group seeks to answer the questions: How do we measure progress toward the 12,000AF goal set by PVWMA? How do we quantify each conservation projects' savings toward this goal? What are the economic constraints for growers in meeting this target? What are potential economic incentives to help meet the target?

BIG PROJECT INVOLVEMENT

The College Lake Improvement and Watershed Management Study is underway. Recently there has been focus around the opportunities to use College Lake to maximize the benefits of water supply and flood management, while supporting other environmental and community benefits. The RCD is leading a collaborative effort and is working with local and federal agencies to find common ground among the proposed projects for College Lake to develop a set of management measures to balance the needs of water supply, flood management, agricultural production, the environment and other community visions.

BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN INVOLVEMENT

The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency's Board of Directors recently voted to approve the draft version of a new Basin Management Plan. This plan contained ample input from members of the CWD, including a renewed focus on conservation. The plan outlines a sustainable yield target of 12,000AF to bring the aquifer into balance, and plans to meet this through the following:

1. Use water more efficiently: 5,000 AFY
2. Optimize the use of existing supplies: 3,000 AFY
3. Develop new supplies: 4,100 AFY