

Working Draft
 Final technical and drafting review pending.
 Provided to facilitate community review and
 substantive comment.
 Administrative draft with overall summary to
 be released Spring 2023.

DRAFT **CHAPTER 1** **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The Montecito Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MBGSA), which consists exclusively of the Montecito Water District (MWD), has prepared this Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Montecito Groundwater Basin (DWR Basin No. 3049). Upon formation, the MBGSA developed its Mission Statement, which is to, *ensure a reliable and sustainable groundwater supply for the community through effective basin management pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act*. This GSP was prepared in compliance with the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which is codified in California Water Code (CWC), Part 2.75 (Sustainable Groundwater Management), Section 10720 et seq.¹ This GSP has been developed in accordance with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) GSP Regulations² to apply to the entirety of the Montecito Groundwater Basin (MGB).

Under SGMA, a condition of groundwater sustainability within the basin must be reached and sustained for the 50-year planning and implementation horizon. Sustainability is defined as the absence of significant and unreasonable results as related to the six sustainability indicators: chronic lowering of groundwater levels, loss of groundwater storage, sea water intrusion, degraded water quality, land subsidence, and disconnection of interconnected surface and groundwater. Although SGMA specifies the undesirable results to be addressed, the definition of significant and unreasonable is to be determined by the GSA in consideration of the beneficial uses and users of groundwater, land use, and basin interests³.

As described in Chapter 3, Sustainable Management Criteria, of this GSP, undesirable results are not currently occurring, nor have they occurred previously within the MGB. However, geographical and/or temporal data gaps exist with respect to some sustainability indicators (Chapter 3, Section 3.5.7.2). The MBGSA has begun filling the data gaps with the implementation of several projects (Chapter 2, Section 2.1.2.5) and will continue and supplement these projects with the execution of the Baseline Projects and Management Actions described in Chapter 4 of this GSP. Section 3.6, Monitoring Network describes the data collection program for evaluation and adjustment of the sustainability criteria over the 20-year implementation period to ensure that the Sustainability Goal described in Section 1.2 is achieved.

¹ Specific Sections of the CWC are cited in this GSP as “CWC Section [...]”

² GSP Regulations refers to the emergency regulations adopted by DWR as California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 23 (Waters), Division 2 (Department of Water Resources), Chapter 1.5 (Groundwater Management), Section 350 et seq. Specific Sections of the CCR are cited in the GSP as “CCR Section [...]”

This GSP evaluates the historical and current conditions of the MGB as they relate to sustainable management, as well as future conditions that may occur, and defines the conditions under which the groundwater resources will be sustainably managed in the future to support the diverse Basin interests. Available data and information has been gathered, and additional data will continue to be collected, to specifically target indicators of sustainability over the next 20 years. This GSP documents a practical approach, determined by the MBGSA in collaboration with stakeholders and informed by the best available information, to achieving the Sustainability Goal and maintaining the long-term sustainability of the groundwater resources within the MGB.

1.2 SUSTAINABILITY GOAL

This GSP is intended to meet the overarching Sustainability Goal developed by the MBGSA to operate the MGB within the sustainable yield without causing undesirable results. The MBGSA's Sustainability Goal is:

The Montecito GSA's sustainability goal is to prevent undesirable results and optimize long-term use of the groundwater basin for the benefit of all stakeholders. This will be achieved through a collaborative, knowledge-based process informed by locally-defined quantitative criteria, ongoing monitoring and modeling, and incremental, data-supported management actions as needed to prevent seawater intrusion and ensure sustainable groundwater levels, storage, and quality.

1.3 AGENCY INFORMATION

The Montecito Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency is the single-agency GSA responsible for implementing the SGMA requirements within the MGB. The MBGSA contacts for matters related to this GSP are:

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1.3.1 Organization and Management Structure of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency

The MBGSA Board of Directors (Board) consists of the five members elected to the Montecito Water District Board of Directors and includes a Board elected President and Vice President. As established in the bylaws, the MBGSA staff is appointed by the Board and includes the General Manager, Board Secretary, General Counsel, and Fiscal Agent and Treasurer (MBGSA 2019). All Board meetings are open to the public and conducted in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code Section 54950 et seq.). Board meetings are held quarterly and as needed at a location within the MBGSA jurisdictional limits. Agenda preparation and posting, voting, public comment, and the recording of meeting minutes is conducted in accordance with the applicable Government Code requirements. The Board has established standing and/or ad hoc committees with committee members appointed by the Board President. Committees also operate in compliance with the Brown Act, with the exception of ad hoc committees which are not subject to the Brown Act.

Advisory Committees

The MBGSA Board appointed a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the purposes of soliciting public involvement and utilizing local knowledge, insight, and technical expertise in GSP planning and preparation. Both committees meet on an approximately quarterly basis and both are open to the public with public participation encouraged (See Section 2.1.7, Notice and Communication). The input from both committees has greatly contributed to the development of this GSP and the MBGSA is grateful for the public service performed by the committee members. Both committees operate according to Charters adopted by the MBGSA.

The SAC consists of seven members representing the major segments of the Basin interests including environmental, land use and planning, private basin users, well owners, residential (non-well owners), urban and agricultural, and the general public. SAC members must either own property overlying the Basin or be the authorized representative of the owner of a property overlying the Basin. The TAC consists of three members, all of whom have technical knowledge and experience working in a technical capacity within the Basin. TAC members are required to have a substantial background in hydrology, hydrogeology, geology, engineering or a related discipline. Nearly all SAC and TAC members have participated in this capacity since committee formation and have informed GSP development throughout the process.

1.3.2 Legal Authority of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Montecito Water District, as a County Water District, is a local agency with water supply and management responsibilities overlying the Montecito Groundwater Basin [Water Code §§30000 et seq and Water Code §10721(n)]. Under SGMA any local public agency having water supply or water management responsibilities within a groundwater basin may elect to become a GSA for that basin. [Water Code §10723(a)]. Montecito Water District provided notice of its intent to become the GSA for the Montecito Groundwater Basin and subsequently passed Resolution 2169 declaring the intent to become the GSA for the Basin after a public hearing [Water Code §10723(b)]. The Department of Water Resources declared Montecito Water District as the GSA for the Montecito Groundwater Basin on November 28, 2018. [Water Code §10723.8].

On April 19, 2019, the founding resolution of the Montecito Groundwater Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency was passed in accordance with SGMA [MGBGSA Resolution No. 1]. The intent of SGMA, includes: providing for the sustainable management of groundwater basins, enhancing local management of groundwater, establishing minimum standards for sustainable groundwater management, providing local agencies with the authority and assistance necessary to sustainably manage groundwater, improving data collection and understanding about groundwater, and managing groundwater basins through the actions of local government agencies to the greatest extent feasible while minimizing state intervention. [Water Code §10720.1]

To achieve the goals of SGMA, GSAs in medium and high priority basins are provided with the authority and responsibility to sustainably manage groundwater through the adoption of a GSP. [Water Code §10720.7] GSAs are granted broad powers to perform any act necessary or proper to carry out the purposes of SGMA. [Water Code §10725.2]. GSA are also granted specific authority, including the authority to:

- Require registration of groundwater extraction facilities [Water Code §10725.6];
- Acquire real property, personal property and water rights [Water Code §10726.2];
- Construct, operate and maintain works or improvements [Water Code §10726.2];
- Impose spacing requirements on new wells and operating regulations on existing wells [Water Code §10726.4]
- Control groundwater extractions by regulating, limiting or suspending extractions from individual wells or in the aggregate [Water Code §10726.4];
- Conduct investigations and inspections [Water Code §10725.4];
- Impose penalties for violations of GSA rules and regulations [Water Code §10732];

- Impose fees to fund the costs of groundwater management [Water Code §10730.2]

The Montecito Groundwater Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency will manage the Basin in accordance with the authority granted under California law and the Bylaws, Resolutions, Ordinances and Regulations adopted by the Agency.

1.3.3 Estimated Cost of Implementing the GSP and the MBGSA's Approach to Meeting Costs

Costs associated with implementation of the GSP are anticipated to vary depending on the acquisition of new data, the selection/implementation of projects and management actions, changes to MGB sustainability conditions, and other factors. Chapter 5, Plan Implementation of this GSP includes estimated costs and expected funding sources for GSP implementation including monitoring activities, projects and management actions, annual reports, and periodic evaluations. The total cost to implement the GSP through the first periodic evaluation (2028) is estimated to be \$6,435,000. Projecting costs beyond this period introduces increasing uncertainty because the implementation of specific projects and management actions will depend on future groundwater conditions and sustainability. The implementation of the GSP will be funded by MBGSA funding sources which currently include a property fee developed each year for all parcels that overlie the MGB. The MBGSA has successfully attained, and will continue to pursue, available grant funding through DWR's Proposition 68 and other grant programs. The MBGSA regularly evaluates the adequacy of funding and will update its Cost of Service Analysis and associated Fee determination as needed.

1.4 GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN ORGANIZATION

This GSP is organized according to the DWR guidance document, Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Annotated Outline (2016). The executive Summary presents an overview of the GSP, groundwater conditions, and outcomes of the GSP. Chapter 1 introduces the MGB Sustainability Goal and provides information on the MBGSA and purpose of the GSP. Chapter 2 presents the MGB and basin setting including the planning environment, geology and aquifer characteristics of the Basin. Chapter 3 presents the sustainable management criteria and monitoring program. Chapter 4 provides information on the projects and management actions to achieve the Sustainability Goal. Chapter 5 provides information on the implementation of the GSP including cost and schedule.

Appendix X includes the *Preparation Checklist for GSP Submittal*, which identifies where in this GSP each of the statutory requirements under SGMA are addressed.

1.5 REFERENCES CITED

- DWR (Department of Water Resources). 2019. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act 2019 Basin Prioritization: Process and Results (excel spreadsheet). Downloaded from: <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Basin-Prioritization>. Accessed September 2020.
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- MBGSA (C) Montecito Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency. 2020. Adopted January 14, 2020. Montecito GSA Technical Advisory Committee Charter. <https://montecitogsa.com/doc/6253/>. Accessed September 8, 2020

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