

MEETING SUMMARY

County of Monterey Drought Advisory Group

Meeting 2

Wednesday, September 18, 2024; 9:30 AM – 11:45 AM

In-Person: 1270 Natividad Road, Whitney Room B & C, Salinas, CA 93906

On-line: Zoom

Participants

Name	Drought Advisory Group Membership	Organization
In-Person Participation		
Aaron Bierman	Member	Consulting Hydrogeologist
Valerie Brown-Klingelhofer	Member	Arroyo Seco Citizens Association
Ricardo Encarnacion	Member	County of Monterey, Environmental Health Bureau
Marni Flagg	Member	County of Monterey, Environmental Health Bureau
Casey Meusel	Member	Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
Horacio Amezquita	Attendee	San Jerardo Cooperative
Tanya Martinez	Planning Team	County of Monterey, Environmental Health Bureau
Cheryl Sandoval	Planning Team	County of Monterey, Environmental Health Bureau
Wendy Strimling	Planning Team	County of Monterey Counsel
Isaiah Tuazon	Planning Team	County of Monterey, Environmental Health Bureau
Roger VanHorn	Planning Team	County of Monterey, Environmental Health Bureau
Rina Buck-Macleod	Planning Team	Stantec
Online Participation		
Sarah Ko	DWR	California Department of Water Resources
Amanda Peisch-Derby	DWR	California Department of Water Resources
Marla Anderson	Member	State small water system
Christopher Bunn	Member's Representative (for N. Groot)	Monterey County Farm Bureau
Paula Getzelman	Member	Southern Monterey County Rural Coalition Lockwood
Maureen Hamilton	Member	Monterey Peninsula Water Management District
Piret Harmon	Member	Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Jonathan Lear	Member	Monterey Peninsula Water Management District
Brian Lockwood	Member	Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
Monica Martinez	Member	MPWMD
Kjia Rivers	Member	Community Water Center
Craig Spencer	Member	County of Monterey, Housing and Community Development Department

Judy Vazquez-Varela	Member	Pajaro/ Sunny Mesa Community Service District
Curtis Weeks	Member	Arroyo Seco GSA
Amy Woodrow	Member	Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Dawn Carlton	Planning Team	Stantec
Jonathan Weininger	Attendee	State Water Resources Control Board

Meeting Objectives

Convene the County of Monterey Drought Advisory Group for Small Water Systems and Domestic Wells (Drought Advisory Group) to continue to inform the development of the County of Monterey Drought Resilience Plan. During the meeting, participants were informed on the status of Drought Resilience Plan development, including updates on the preliminary risk assessment introduced at the kickoff meeting and the introduction of the short-term actions and long-term strategies.

Summary

- Welcome and Introductions – County of Monterey Environmental Health Bureau Director (Ric Encarnacion) welcomed the group and new participants introduced themselves (those who did not attend the August Drought Advisory Group Kickoff Meeting).
- Recap of the Drought Resilience Plan Process and Preliminary Risk Assessment Updates – Stantec staff (Rina Buck--Macleod) provided a presentation and update on the development of the Drought Resilience Plan and the associated Preliminary Risk Assessment. Feedback is summarized below, grouped by theme and corresponding presentation slide:
 - Working Draft Drought Advisory Group Meeting and Review Schedule (Slide 5) – A member requested that Drought Advisory Group feedback be shared. The group discussed and provided confirmation for posting emailed feedback on the County Drought Advisory Group for Small Water Systems and Domestic Wells website: <https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/government/departments-a-h/health/environmental-health/drinking-water-protection/drought-advisory-group-for-small-water-systems>. Additionally, the Planning Team noted that comments are welcome any time throughout this process; providing comments by the end of the defined comment periods allows time for comments to be integrated into the content to be discussed at following Drought Advisory Group meetings.
 - Updated Regions with Water Shortage Vulnerability (Slide 9) – Participants discussed refinements to the identified preliminary regions, with the Planning Team noting the groupings are a way to help define vulnerabilities and identify appropriate short-term actions and long-term mitigations. Additionally, these are high-level groupings that can continue to be refined as the process moves forward and with the assistance of GIS and member input. Participant feedback and the associated responses include:
 - Suggested refinements to the groupings, including separation of the Granite Ridge area and further division of the Salinas Valley with specific communities identified. It was noted that the Salinas Valley grouping from Drought Advisory Group Meeting 1 has been split into three sub-regions (in consideration of member feedback).
 - Aligning regions with the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) boundaries. The Planning Team provided that the regions generally align with the GSA, as shown in orange on Slides 9 and 10.
 - The Planning Team noted that the map on Slide 10 now reflects local small water systems within the County.
 - Risk Assessment Considerations – Suggestions and questions related to the risk assessment or risk factors are summarized below, grouped by theme and corresponding presentation slide:

- Customized for County of Monterey – A participant provided that a one-size-fits all approach does not apply for the County of Monterey and inquired how this would be addressed in the Drought Resilience Plan. The Planning Team provided the risk assessment uses the proposed regions of water shortage vulnerability to identify these regional differences and to align the appropriate Short-Term Actions and Long-Term Strategies for the region. Additionally, the Drought Resilience Plan will be refined in consideration of the local knowledge, input, and feedback from the Drought Advisory Group.
 - Groundwater Mapping – A member provided that it would be helpful for the risk assessment to provide more detailed maps of groundwater conditions, especially as it relates to overdraft and water quality (noting nitrates and salinity).
 - Aging Infrastructure – A member inquired how vulnerability of aging infrastructure will be incorporated into the plan. DWR staff provided that some counties are considering aging infrastructure and defining thresholds for aging infrastructure (e.g., 50-years) in their Drought Resilience Plan risk assessments.
 - Flooding – A participant noted that flooding can impact access to drinking water wells and this could be considered in the Drought Resilience Plan content.
- Short-Term Action: Water Shortage Emergency Response Process (Slide 19) – A member inquired about the definition of the emergency response stages as defined by drought and water shortage status. These stages will be defined in the Water Shortage Emergency Response Process within the Drought Resilience Plan and Drought Advisory Group members can have the opportunity to review these stages. The member also expressed that water quality concerns should also be considered when considering the drought stages. Additionally, a participant noted that water shortage stages and drought stages should be coordinated with existing GSA efforts. A member noted that communication (including communication with the County and GSAs) will be instrumental for the distribution of emergency supplies.
- Long-Term Mitigation Strategies Overview (Slide 20) – The group reviewed the list of the potential Long-Term Mitigation Strategies defined in the presentation, specific discussions are summarized below, group by topic area as listed on the slide:
 - System consolidation
 - A member noted that when considering consolidation, it could be helpful to evaluate an option for water system re-delineation as a means to provide more efficient consolidation opportunities.
 - Another member noted that it would be helpful to include a community-level evaluation of system consolidation options.
 - Some members noted barriers to system consolidation, including: challenging site conditions for consolidation; difficulties in identifying well owners that would like to consolidate; some well owners may not want to consolidate; in some areas of the county (e.g., Arroyo Seco area) system consolidation likely wouldn't be a viable option due to the diversity of well types and depth; and system consolidation can be very onerous to achieve.
 - Regional water infrastructure
 - Groundwater Recharge – Multiple participants expressed interest in and discussed options for including groundwater recharge as a Long-Term Mitigation Strategy. A member noted that there is a program in Santa Cruz county that incentivizes private landowners to install managed aquifer recharge systems on their land, which can provide benefits to both groundwater supply and water quality (links with more information can be found at the end of this meeting summary). The County of

- Monterey Drought Advisory Group could review and consider components of the ReNeM for applicability to the County of Monterey.
- Replenishment – A member noted that there is a project in the Arroyo Seco area to replenish and restore Abbott Lakes for additional supply. Similar projects could be considered and discussed.
 - Wastewater – A participant noted that wastewater could be used to supplement the water supply.
 - Restoration – A participant noted that projects restoring the Salinas River could provide water supply and water quality benefits.
 - Other Storage – A participant noted that there may be opportunities for reservoirs or storage to capture water.
- Well rehabilitation and deepening
 - Aging Infrastructure – The group discussed addressing aging infrastructure that could be incorporated into the Drought Resilience Plan. Considerations could include: evaluating aging infrastructure risk, elevating the awareness of the infrastructure condition, and identifying resources and funding and partnership opportunities for aging wells and infrastructure.
 - Education and Outreach
 - Need for Education and Outreach – The participants noted the importance of education and outreach for small water systems and domestic wells. A member noted that education is important as these wells are run by homeowners, not necessarily professional water system operators. Education could include outreach about groundwater conditions and identification of funding opportunities available.
 - Water Quality Outreach – A participant noted that it could be helpful for well owners to identify the groups and agencies responsible for the varying aspects of water quality. Additionally, participants raised concerns about water quality, including arsenic, chloride, nitrates, and 1,2,3-TCP. There may be opportunities for outreach to well owners regarding water quality and treatment options.
 - Identified Data Gap – The group identified the opportunity for developing an email database of small water systems and domestic well owners. A participant suggested that a survey about drought and water shortage impacts could be developed and distributed to the well owners.
 - Drinking Water Well Mitigation Programs/Coordination with GSAs
 - Demand Management and Groundwater Pumping – The group discussed various aspects of demand management and groundwater pumping, and members notes that it is important that the Drought Advisory Group work aligns with, instead of duplicating or competing with, existing GSA responsibilities and current efforts.
 - Water Quality – Participants noted that GSA are addressing aspects of water quality.
- Funding – The group discussed that Chapter 6 of the Drought Resilience Plan will cover funding. Participants noted that that there could be a discussion of opportunities to identify grants that benefit drought and water shortage resilience, including infrastructure improvements. The funding plan should reflect both drought and water shortage issues.
- Working Draft Drought Advisory Group Meeting and Review Schedule – Next Steps (Slide 25) – The group discussed next steps and upcoming meetings, including:

- Drought Advisory Group Meeting 2 (Introduce Short-Term Actions and Long-Term Strategies) – The Planning Team is requesting Drought Advisory Group member feedback on the content presented in the meeting via email to swsdroughtadvisorygroup@countyofmonterey.gov. Please note that comments are to be posted on the County website.
- Drought Advisory Group Meeting 3 (Short-Term Actions and Long-Term Strategies), – The third meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 30, 2024 from 9:30 AM – 11:45 AM. The meeting will be a follow-up on the Proposed Short-Term Actions and Long-Term Strategies.
- Meeting 4 (Draft Drought Resilience Plan) and Potential Meeting 5 (Drought Resilience Plan) – Subsequent meetings are yet to be scheduled.
- Additional Resources – The following resources were discussed and/or identified during the meeting for support of and/or consideration in the Drought Resilience Plan process:
 - Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Ag 4.0 Dashboard: [Dashboard for Grower Reporting and Water Quality | Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board \(ca.gov\)](#)
 - Recharge Net Metering (ReNeM) (noted by Casey Meusel, Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, during meeting and links provided following meeting)
 - Program Website: [Managed Aquifer Recharge | RCD Programs \(rcdsantacruz.org\)](#)
 - September of 2021 Board Meeting Materials:
 - [UCSC summary presentation](#) and our [board memo](#) (starting on page 61)
 - Dr. Michael Kiparsky of the University of California, Berkeley articles on the topic:
 - [Recharge Net Metering to Enhance Groundwater Sustainability - Berkeley Law](#)
 - [Recharge net metering \(ReNeM\) is a novel, cost-effective management strategy to incentivize groundwater recharge \(berkeley.edu\)](#)
 - County of Monterey Drought Advisory Group Website: [Drought Advisory Group for Small Water Systems | County of Monterey, CA](#)
 - DWR Risk Assessment Tool: [Water Shortage Vulnerability Scoring and Tool](#)
 - Methodology/data: [Water Shortage Vulnerability Technical Methods - Dataset - California Natural Resources Agency Open Data](#)
 - DWR DRP Guidebook: [DWR County Drought Resilience Plan Guidebook](#)
 - DWR SGMA Groundwater Basin Maps: [SGMA Data Viewer \(ca.gov\)](#)

Action Items

- Drought Advisory Group members to provide feedback on the content presented in the meeting/the Preliminary Risk Assessment Feedback via email to swsdroughtadvisorygroup@countyofmonterey.gov by the end of the day on Friday, October 4, 2024. Please note: per member feedback comments will be made public. Additionally, comments are welcome any time throughout this process; providing comments by the end of the comment period allows time for comments to be integrated into the content to be discussed during Drought Advisory Group Meeting 3.
- County staff to post Drought Advisory Group feedback on the County Drought Advisory Group for Small Water Systems and Domestic Wells website: <https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/government/departments-a-h/health/environmental-health/drinking-water-protection/drought-advisory-group-for-small-water-systems>