



Groundwater Recharge: State agency roles and regional perspectives

Introduction

Groundwater recharge is crucial in California for maintaining reliable water supplies, supporting ecosystems, and helping communities endure drought. This agenda item features presentations from staff from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) describing the State's role in groundwater recharge. Following their remarks, practitioners from across the State will share the status of groundwater recharge in their region, opportunities, challenges and next steps.

Background

Groundwater is a critical component of California's water portfolio, accounting for up to 60 percent of the State's total water supply during dry conditions. Extended and extreme periods of heat and drought driven by climate change place a high demand on groundwater resources, leading to declining groundwater levels throughout the state. Groundwater is heavily relied upon by communities, agriculture, and the environment during dry years when there is less precipitation, while during normal and wet years, groundwater basins are replenished through groundwater recharge.

Groundwater recharge supports climate adaptation to both more severe droughts and intense floods and may provide multiple benefits: flood risk reduction, drought preparedness, aquifer replenishment, ecosystem enhancement, and others. Groundwater recharge can occur in two ways – through natural percolation of water into the land surface or by diverting and conveying water to specific areas through managed aquifer recharge projects. Managed aquifer recharge projects can capture high flows in rivers and streams and move that water to various recharge facilities, such as open or agricultural lands to spread out and percolate into the ground, or specially designed infiltration ponds.

This agenda item advances Goal Three of the [Commission's Strategic Plan](#), which calls on the Commission to use its public forum to explore pressing water management issues, and implementation of the Commission's [Water Resilience Portfolio white papers](#), specifically [Potential State Strategies for Protecting Communities and Fish and Wildlife in the Event of Drought](#).

Meeting Overview

At the September meeting, Steven Springhorn, DWR Technical Assistance Section Lead, Amanda Montgomery, SWRCB Permitting Section Manager, and Adam Weinberg, CDFW

Agenda Item: 8

Meeting Date: September 16, 2026

Page 2

Statewide Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Coordinator, will provide an overview of the State's role in groundwater recharge.

Aaron Fukuda, Chief Executive Officer of the Tulare Irrigation District and the Mid-Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency; Stephanie Anagnoson, Director of Water and Natural Resources for Madera County; Brian Lockwood, General Manager of Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency; and Adam Hutchinson, Recharge Planning Manager, Orange County Water District, will share their perspectives on groundwater recharge in their regions.

Following their remarks, the Commission will hear Tribal and public comment on the information presented. Commissioners will then have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

This is an informational item.

Contact

Sarah Lesmeister

Assistant Executive Officer

California Water Commission

(916) 450-8402