DRAFT Memorandum

То:	Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan Planning Group
From:	Consultant Team
CC:	Monterey County Water Resources Agency Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Marina Coast Water District Groundwater Sustainability Agency Arroyo Seco Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Date:	November 7, 2018
Re:	Salinas Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plans: Background and Context for Potential Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan Integration

Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) is leading development of a long-term management plan (LTMP) for the Salinas River. The LTMP will include a comprehensive set of management objectives and actions for the Salinas River system. It is the intent of MCWRA to consider in the LTMP all programs that have a role in how the Salinas River is currently and will be managed in the future, including Groundwater Sustainability Plans for each subbasin to be developed by 2020 or 2022. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a brief overview of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and provide information on how it applies to Salinas River management.

The summary information and potential management objectives and actions in this memorandum are compiled based on review of key documents (see references at end of memorandum) and a Working Group meeting held on October 2, 1018. The key purposes of the Working Group were to:

- Coordinate in development of the Long-Term Management Plan and Groundwater Sustainability
 Plans to maximize the benefit to both planning processes and advance resource management in
 the Salinas Valley;
- Brainstorm opportunities and value created via the two planning processes; and
- Identify and manage any potential overlaps, data coordination, etc.

The Working Group meeting was held on October 2, 2018, and was attended by the following.

- David Chardavoyne, MCWRA
- Howard Franklin, MCWRA



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- Elizabeth Krafft, MCWRA
- Shaunna Murray, MCWRA
- Gary Peterson, General Manager, Salinas Valley Basin GSA
- Steve Macintyre, Board Member, Salinas Valley Basin GSA
- Robin Lee, Advisory Committee member, Salinas Valley Basin GSA
- Derek Williams, Errol Montgomery for Salinas Valley Basin GSA
- Chris Peters, Errol Montgomery for Salinas Valley Basin GSA
- John Gallinatti, Geosyntec for Salinas Valley Basin GSA
- Keith Van Der Maaten, General Manager, Marina Coast Water District GSA
- Curtis Weeks, General Manager, Arroyo Seco GSA
- Kathryn Gaffney, ICF, for LTMP
- Bethany Hackenjos, FlowWest, for LTMP
- Dana Lee, FishBIO, for LTMP
- Gordon Thrupp, Geosyntec, for LTMP
- Les Chau, Wood, for LTMP
- Bill Stevens, National Marine Fisheries Service
- Gina Bartlett, Facilitator for LTMP and Salinas Valley Basin GSA, CBI

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Overview

On September 16, 2014, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law a three-bill legislative package, collectively known as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).¹ Under SGMA (pronounced "sigma"), California established a framework for achieving sustainable groundwater management. The purpose of the legislation is focused on brining groundwater basins into balanced levels of pumping and recharge to reverse aquifer depletion, while supporting and enhancing local management of groundwater basins. As such, SGMA requires local agencies to form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to manage basins sustainably, and requires those GSAs to develop and adopt Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs).

As defined by Bulletin 118 (Department of Water Resources 1980), "A basin is subject to critical overdraft when continuation of present water management practices would probably result in significant adverse overdraft-related environmental, social, or economic impacts." Overdraft occurs where the average annual amount of groundwater extraction exceeds the long-term average annual supply of water to the basin. Effects of overdraft result can include seawater intrusion, land subsidence, groundwater depletion, and/or chronic lowering of groundwater levels. SGMA requires

¹ The three bills were AB 1739 (Dickinson), SB 1168 (Pavley), and SB 1319 (Pavley).

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that all Bulletin 118 basins designated as medium- or high-priority that are subject to critical conditions of overdraft be managed under a GSP, or coordinated GSPs, by January 31, 2020. All other medium- and high-priority basins must be managed under a GSP, or coordinated GSPs, by January 31, 2022 (Department of Water Resources 2016a).

SGMA also included a requirement that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) "publish on its internet Web site best management practices for the sustainable management of groundwater," by January 1, 2017. DWR met this requirement and published two categories of information: Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Guidance Documents. This requirement is further interpreted to mean that GSAs must consider and utilize these documents when developing GSPs. DWR defined five categories of BMPs (Department of Water Resources 2016b):

- BMP 1: Monitoring Protocols, Standards, and Sites;
- BMP 2: Monitoring Networks and Identification of Data Gaps;
- BMP 3: Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model;
- BMP 4: Water Budget; and
- BMP 5: Modeling.

Finally, SGMA authorizes the intervention of the State Water Resources Control Board in the event that a GSA is not formed for a high- or medium-priority basin, or that an inadequate GSP is submitted for those basins.

Groundwater Sustainability Agencies

GSAs are one or more local agencies that implement the requirements of SGMA. GSAs may be established in existing local agencies, or through newly formed Joint Power Authorities or Memorandums of Agreement or other legal instruments for the purpose of implementing SGMA. GSAs are required to consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater, as well as those responsible for implementing GSPs (e.g., landowners; Wat. Code, Div. 6, pt. 2.74, § 10723.2).

GSAs may "perform any act necessary or proper" to carry out SGMA's purposes. GSAs have the authority to undertake certain actions if the GSA adopts and submits to DWR a GSP, although they are not required to exercise all of these authorities (Wat. Code, Div. 6, pt. 2.74, ch. 5; Wat. Code, Div. 6, pt. 2.74, § 10730). These actions include the following:

- Adopt rules, regulations, ordinances, and resolutions (in compliance with existing procedural requirement);
- Conduct an investigation, including investigations of surface waters and surface water rights:
- Inspect the property or facilities of a person or entity to evaluate compliance with SGMA;
- Register groundwater extraction facilities (e.g., wells);
- Require measurement and annual reporting of groundwater extraction at extraction facilities;
- Require reporting of surface water diversions to underground storage;

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- Acquire, hold property (e.g., land, water rights, structures), construct, and/or operate improvements;
- Appropriate and acquire surface or groundwater, or surface or groundwater rights;
- Establish or facilitate existing programs for voluntary land fallowing;
- Purchase, transfer, deliver, or exchange water or water rights;
- Manage and control polluted water, wastewater, or other waters;
- Impose spacing requirements on new groundwater well construction;
- Control groundwater extraction amounts; and
- Impose fees.

Groundwater Sustainability Plans

Under SGMA, GSPs must consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater, including overlying property owners, municipal well owners, public water systems, local land use agencies, environmental users, surface water users, the federal government, Native American tribes in California, disadvantaged communities, and listed monitoring entities.

SGMA requires GSPs to include, among other things, all of the following (Wat. Code, Div. 6, pt. 2.74, § 10727.2):

- A description of the physical setting and characteristics of the aquifer system underlying the basin that includes the following:
 - Historical data, to the extent available.
 - Groundwater levels, groundwater quality, subsidence, and groundwater-surface water interaction.
 - o A general discussion of historical and projected water demands and supplies.
 - A map that details the area of the basin and the boundaries of the groundwater sustainability agencies that overlie the basin that have or are developing GSPs.
 - A map identifying existing and potential recharge areas for the basin. The map or maps shall identify the existing recharge areas that substantially contribute to the replenishment of the groundwater basin. The map or maps shall be provided to the appropriate local planning agencies after adoption of the GSP.
- Measurable objectives, as well as interim milestones in increments of five years, to achieve the sustainability goal in the basin within 20 years of the implementation of the plan.
- A description of how the plan helps meet each objective and how each objective is intended to achieve the sustainability goal for the basin for long-term beneficial uses of groundwater.
- Components relating to the following, as applicable to the basin:
 - The monitoring and management of groundwater levels within the basin.

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- The monitoring and management of groundwater quality, groundwater quality degradation, inelastic land surface subsidence, and changes in surface flow and surface water quality that directly affect groundwater levels or quality or are caused by groundwater extraction in the basin.
- Mitigation of overdraft.
- How recharge areas identified in the plan substantially contribute to the replenishment of the basin.
- A description of surface water supply used or available for use for groundwater recharge or in-lieu use.

SGMA defines six "undesirable results," which in turn establish six metrics by which sustainable management of groundwater is measured. These six metrics include:

- 1. lowering of groundwater levels,
- 2. reduction in groundwater storage,
- 3. seawater intrusion,
- 4. water quality degradation,
- 5. land subsidence, and
- 6. impacts on beneficial uses of interconnected surface waters.

Groundwater Sustainability Plan Emergency Regulations (GSP Regulations; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, sub. art. 3) were adopted in May 2016. These GSP Regulations require that GSPs define sustainable management criteria for each of the above metrics. Sustainable management criteria are composed of three parts:

- Undesirable results,
- Minimum thresholds, and
- Measurable objectives.

Definitions

The following terms are defined in SGMA (Wat. Code, Div. 6, pt. 2.74, § 10721, 10735).

"Condition of long-term overdraft" means the condition of a groundwater basin where the average annual amount of water extracted for a long-term period, generally 10 years or more, exceeds the long-term average annual supply of water to the basin, plus any temporary surplus. Overdraft during a period of drought is not sufficient to establish a condition of long-term overdraft if extractions and recharge are managed as necessary to ensure that reductions in groundwater levels or storage during a period of drought are offset by increases in groundwater levels or storage during other periods.

"Basin" means a groundwater basin or subbasin identified and defined in Bulletin 118 or as modified pursuant to Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 10722).

- "Groundwater" means water beneath the surface of the earth within the zone below the water table in which the soil is completely saturated with water, but does not include water that flows in known and definite channels.
- "Groundwater recharge" or "recharge" means the augmentation of groundwater, by natural or artificial means.
- "Groundwater sustainability agency" means one or more local agencies that implement the provisions of this part. For purposes of imposing fees pursuant to Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 10730) or taking action to enforce a groundwater sustainability plan, "groundwater sustainability agency" also means each local agency comprising the groundwater sustainability agency if the plan authorizes separate agency action.
- "Groundwater sustainability plan" or "plan" means a plan of a groundwater sustainability agency proposed or adopted pursuant to this part.
- "Recharge area" means the area that supplies water to an aquifer in a groundwater basin.
- "Significant depletions of interconnected surface waters" means reductions in flow or levels of surface water that is hydrologically connected to the basin such that the reduced surface water flow or levels have a significant and unreasonable adverse impact on beneficial uses of the surface water.
- "Sustainable groundwater management" means the management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results.
- "Sustainable yield" means the maximum quantity of water, calculated over a base period representative of long-term conditions in the basin and including any temporary surplus, that can be withdrawn annually from a groundwater supply without causing an undesirable result.
- "Undesirable result" means one or more of the following effects caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the basin:
 - 1) Chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating a significant and unreasonable depletion of supply if continued over the planning and implementation horizon. Overdraft during a period of drought is not sufficient to establish a chronic lowering of groundwater levels if extractions and recharge are managed as necessary to ensure that reductions in groundwater levels or storage during a period of drought are offset by increases in groundwater levels or storage during other periods.
 - 2) Significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage.
 - 3) Significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion.
 - 4) Significant and unreasonable degraded water quality, including the migration of contaminant plumes that impair water supplies.
 - 5) Significant and unreasonable land subsidence that substantially interferes with surface land uses.

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6) Depletions of interconnected surface water that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of the surface water.

"Water budget" means an accounting of the total groundwater and surface water entering and leaving a basin including the changes in the amount of water stored.

"Water year" means the period from October 1 through the following September 30, inclusive.

SGMA in the Salinas Valley

Since 1975, DWR Bulletin 118 has defined the groundwater basins in California (Department of Water Resources 1975, 2003). Groundwater basins are primarily identified on the basis of geological and hydrological conditions, but DWR does take into consideration political boundary lines whenever practical (Wat. Code, Div. 6, pt. 2.74, § 12924). The 2003 update of Bulletin 118 defined the Salinas Valley Basin as containing eight subbasins (Figure 1). The following provides a list of basins (Bulletin 118 name and code number), the current prioritization status (Department of Water Resources 2018²), and GSP deadline.

- 1. 180/400 Foot Aquifer (3-004.01; high-priority, critical overdraft; 2020 deadline for GSP)
- 2. East Side Aquifer (3-004.02; high-priority; 2022 deadline for GSP)
- 3. Forebay Aquifer (3-004.04; medium-priority; 2022 deadline for GSP)
- 4. Upper Valley Aquifer (3-004.05; medium-priority; 2022 deadline for GSP)
- 5. Paso Robles Area (3-004.06; high-priority; 2022 deadline for GSP)
- 6. Seaside Area (3-004.08; medium-priority; 2022 deadline for GSP)
- 7. Langley Area (3-004.09; medium-priority; 2022 deadline for GSP)
- 8. Monterey (3-004.10; high-priority; 2022 deadline for GSP; contains the Marina, Ord, and Corral de Tierra Areas)

All of these subbasins overlap at least partially with the LTMP study area.

Within the LTMP study area, four GSAs have formed: the Salinas Valley Basin GSA, the City of Marina GSA, the Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) GSA, and the Arroyo Seco GSA. Because DWR defines groundwater basins primarily on the basis of geological and hydrological conditions, and because SGMA grants authority to local agencies to establish GSPs within their jurisdictional boundaries, there is overlap throughout the state in the groundwater basins requiring management and the agencies with jurisdiction to conduct such management. The Salinas Valley Basin is no different. As such, the GSAs are working to coordinate their efforts, particularly in establishment of a common water budget that will inform the projects proposed by each plan. It is anticipated that a key

² Bulletin 118 defines groundwater basins in California. However, groundwater levels are measured under the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) Program. The subbasin boundaries used for CASGEM are similar, but not identical, to those defined in Bulletin 118.

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component of all GSPs will be a list of proposed projects that will help address one or more of the metrics by which sustainable groundwater management is required to be measured.

Each Salinas Valley GSP is described briefly below.

Salinas Valley Basin GSP

In December 2016, a Joint Powers Agreement formed the Salinas Valley Basin GSA. The Salinas Valley Basin GSA has an 11-member board representing the beneficial users of groundwater in the basin, including county and cities, agriculture, private municipal water suppliers, small water systems, residential well owners, disadvantaged communities, and environmental uses. An Advisory Committee, was formed in 2017 to provide input and recommendations to the Salinas Valley Basin GSA on a range of topics. The consensus-seeking Advisory Committee is comprised of a broad range of interests within the Salinas Valley (Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency 2018).

The Salinas Valley Basin GSA anticipates developing an overarching Salinas Valley Basin GSP to address the management of the Salinas Valley Basin in its entirety. Subbasin-specific plans will be developed addressing each of seven subbasins (all Salinas Valley Basin subbasins excluding the Seaside subbasin). Of the seven subbasins, only the 180/400 Foot Aquifer subbasin has been identified as being in critical overdraft. This status triggers a requirement that the overarching Salinas Valley Basin GSP and the 180/400 Foot Aquifer subbasin GSP be submitted to DWR by January 1, 2020. Subbasin-specific plans for the remaining six subbasins are not due until January 1, 2022. DWR has 2 years to review each submitted GSP.

The first quantitative analysis proposed by the Salinas Valley Basin GSA is to develop a water budget for the Salinas Valley. The Salinas Valley Basin GSA plans to use the forthcoming Salinas Valley Integrated Hydrological Model that is being developed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Geological Society, and MCWRA.

Marina Coast Water District GSP

The MCWD is the GSA for the MCWD GSP. MCWD's Central Marina and Ord Community water service areas overlie portions of the Monterey Subbasin, the 180/400 Foot Aquifer Subbasin, and part of the Seaside Adjudicated Basin. Three of the District wells are located in Central Marina and five wells are in the Ord Community.

The DWR granted MCWD exclusive GSA status within its jurisdictional boundaries within the Monterey subbasin and the 180/400 Foot Aquifer subbasin. Since MCWD has been determined to be an exclusive GSA in both subbasins, the MCWD GSA will be engaged in the development of GSPs for the entirety of these two subbasins, in coordination with other GSA's within these subbasins (Marina Coast Water District and MCWD Groundwater Sustainability Agency 2018).

The 180/400 Foot Aquifer subbasin GSP will be prepared by January 31, 2020 and the Monterey subbasin GSP will be prepared by January 31, 2022.

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City of Marina GSP

The City of Marina is the GSA for the Marina GSP. The boundary of the City of Marina GSA overlies a small portion of the 180/400 Foot Aquifer Subbasin located within city limits but outside of the MCWD service area. The 180/400 Foot Aquifer subbasin GSP will be prepared by January 31, 2020.

Arroyo Seco GSP

The Arroyo Seco GSA was founded in 2017. The Arroyo Seco GSA's mission is to develop a comprehensive groundwater sustainability plan by 2022, and successfully implement the plan over SGMA's planning and implementation horizon of fifty years to demonstrate long-term groundwater basin sustainability. The Arroyo Seco GSA is governed by a five-member Board comprised of diverse interests from the Arroyo Seco region. The ASGSA Board is advised by a nine-member advisory committee comprised of individuals representing a cross section of varied social, environmental and economic interests in the Arroyo Seco region (City of Greenfield 2018).

The Arroyo Seco GSA addresses the area geographically bound by the City of Greenfield. The Arroyo Seco GSA is also seeking approval from DWR to include in its jurisdiction adjacent unincorporated lands that are the lower watershed of the Arroyo Seco. Both the city limits of Greenfield and the requested unincorporated areas overlaps with the Forebay Aquifer subbasin. Because the City of Greenfield has jurisdiction over a portion of the Forebay Aquifer subbasin, and that its interests are primarily tied to the lower Arroyo Seco (an area known as the Arroyo Seco cone), the City is seeking to develop a GSP specific to its jurisdiction and area of interest, the Arroyo Seco cone. The Arroyo Seco GSP, which is currently proposed as a stand-alone GSP from the Forebay Aquifer GSP, will be prepared by January 31, 2022.

MCWRA's Role in GSP Development and Implementation

MCWRA is a member of the Salinas Valley Basin GSP Advisory Committee and have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Salinas Valley Basin GSA to provide technical support for development of the Salinas Valley Basin GSP.

In addition to its role as an Advisory Committee member, MCWRA is the designated Monitoring Entity for three high- and four medium-priority groundwater subbasins in the Salinas Valley Basin (all subbasins except the Seaside Area subbasin). Groundwater elevation data from the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Program (CASGEM) will be an integral part of monitoring under all three GSPs. In addition, MCWRA will monitor three low- or very-low priority groundwater subbasins in Monterey County at a later date: Cholame Valley, Lockwood Valley, and Peach Tree Valley groundwater basins. MCWRA developed a Monitoring Plan to meet the requirements of the CASGEM program. The Monitoring Plan details how participants will collect groundwater elevation data in those groundwater basins for which MCWRA is the designated Monitoring Entity. The monitored areas include 48 wells, some of which are owned by MCWRA and others that are privately owned but whose owners have volunteered the well for inclusion in the CASGEM program (Monterey County Water Resources Agency 2015a).

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Finally, because of MCWRA's mission and existing authorities, it is anticipated that one or more projects proposed to help meet the goal of sustainably managed groundwater basins and subbasins, will be projects that either require MCWRA to be the lead agency or a partner.

Relationship between Salinas River and Groundwater Management

At the most basic level, the relationship between the Salinas River and the Salinas Valley groundwater basins is regulated by annual cycles of precipitation and runoff. Rain falling within the Salinas Valley watershed can enter and recharge underlying aquifers through direct rainfall on the land surface and subsequent infiltration/percolation, or through infiltration once the runoff reaches the Salinas River streambed. When groundwater levels in the aquifers are high enough, groundwater can help contribute to surface streamflow. Groundwater is lost from aquifers when it is pumped for municipal or agricultural uses, particularly during the summer irrigation season.

During years when rain is plentiful, natural runoff is sufficient to both recharge aquifers and help maintain surface flows in the Salinas River channel. During dry years, there is not always sufficient runoff to recharge aquifers and maintain stream flows. San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs store runoff that can be used to both augment flows in the Salinas River and recharge the aquifers. How effective this management approach is at maintaining streamflow depends primarily on how these reservoirs are operated (timing and volume of releases) and the level of depletion in the aquifers (which varies with season and with pumping activity). The greater the depletion of the aquifers, the more flow will be required in the Salinas River to maintain surface flow connectivity to the Monterey Bay. If the reservoirs do not have sufficient storage and/or if the aquifers are depleted such that any surface flows readily percolate into the ground, then stream flows may not be maintained. As such, under existing conditions, the successful management of the Salinas River within the study area is dependent, in part, on how groundwater is managed. Figure 2 provides a conceptual model depicting these interactions.

While the general mechanics of surface and groundwater interaction are known, the details are not fully understood. For example, the level at which aquifers must be maintained in order to also maintain surface flow along the length of the Salinas River is not known. To address this uncertainty, MCWRA is working with the U.S. Geological Service to develop the Salinas Valley Integrated Hydrological Model. This model combines an existing surface water model with a groundwater model to attempt to model the interaction of surface and groundwater along the Salinas River. It is expected that this model will inform development of the GSPs.

Potential Management Objectives and Actions for the LTMP to Address GSP Integration

The following objectives and actions are based primarily on discussions held during the October 2, 2018 Working Group meeting.

Objectives are targets that will be sought to achieve a given goal. Objectives are typically quantitative or at least measurable. Objectives describe a specific desired outcome.

Actions are specific activities that will be carried out to meet the associated objectives. Actions describe how objectives can be achieved.

Objective. Use the GSPs as a mechanism for meeting at least some, if not all, water security needs for all Salinas Valley stakeholders, in a manner that is financially equitable across stakeholders.

Action. Projects developed under the GSPs should utilize information provided in the LTMP to inform and guide the goals and parameters of the project.

Action. Develop the GSPs based on best available data to be consistent and compatible with a future potential habitat conservation plan (HCP). Identify projects in the GSPs that could become covered activities under an HCP.

Objective. Achieve sustainable groundwater management as defined by SGMA in the Salinas Valley Basin.

Action. Model different scenarios for re-operating the river to evaluate how a more natural flow regime can be established, and the associated costs and benefits.

Action. Identify the required flows at key points in the system that, if met, will provide sufficient conservation flows for steelhead.

Action. Develop a portfolio of projects, where the purpose and need, complete cost (design through mitigation and operation), and benefits are clearly described such that one or more projects can be put on the ballot for voter approval as required by Proposition 218. Cost and benefit analysis must, at a minimum, be quantitative.

Action. Identify funding sources—in addition to voter-approved funding—for GSP projects that have multiple benefits including, but not limited to, Proposition 68 (approved in June 2018), the California State Revolving Fund, and California Department of Water Resources.

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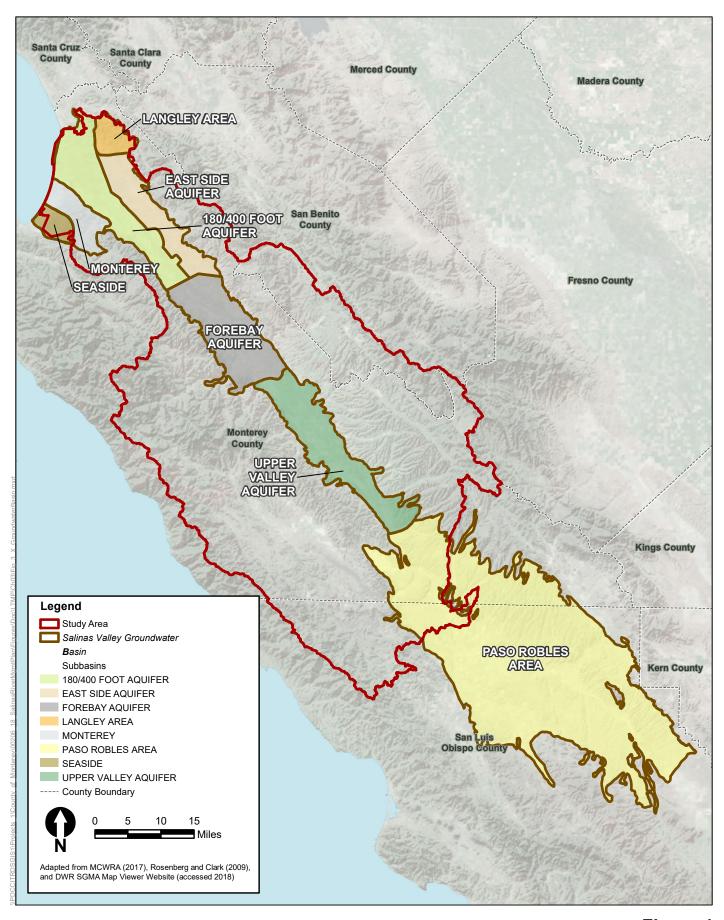


Figure 1 Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan

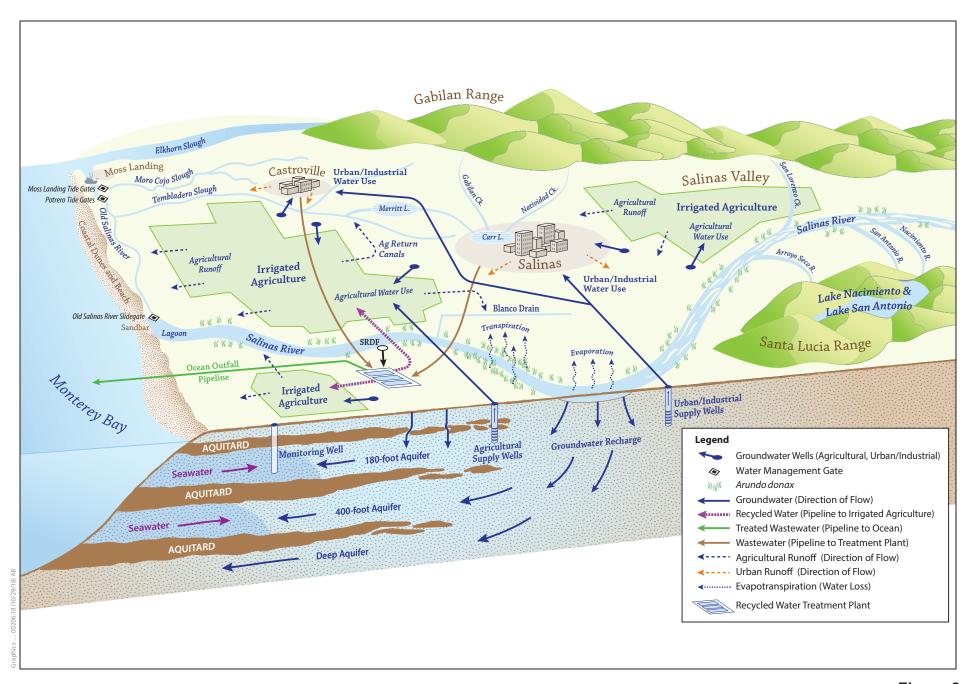


Figure 2
DRAFT Salinas Valley Water Management Conceptual Model
Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan