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Dry Wells in the Salinas Valley being mapped for first time

Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency helping to fill 'data gap'

SALINAS, Calif. — The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) is partnering with the State Department of Water Resources to collect information about domestic wells that have failed during California's prolonged drought.

The Dry Well Reporting System (<https://mydrywell.water.ca.gov/report>) is a free, easy-to-use online tool that tracks wells that have gone dry across California. The data is used to inform state and local agencies about drought impacts on residential water supplies and helps to develop strategies that support long-term sustainability for groundwater sources.

Recently, one well was reported as dry in Monterey County, just outside of SVBGSA's jurisdiction in the area of Royal Oaks. However, one data point doesn't begin to describe the conditions in the County. It is an underutilized reporting tool.

"These are data points we don't have," said Donna Meyers, general manager for the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency. "Monterey County is a black hole on this."

Residential wells typically go dry before wells that serve agriculture or municipal users because the residential wells are shallower. Often in the Salinas Valley Basin, these shallow, residential wells are located in disadvantaged communities (DACs) where poverty, unemployment, pollution and other economic, emotional and environmental burdens are present. Many people whose wells are going dry are unable to replace the wells and instead purchase bottled drinking water. The loss of clean, reliable drinking water adds to the challenges these DACs already face.

"We don't have the data on how many wells have gone dry through this entire 10-year drought," Meyers said. "This is a big missing link around the human right to water."

Despite the rainy winter weather, it is not an immediate fix to replenish overdrafted groundwater basins. Rainfall can take years to percolate into an aquifer.

By utilizing the [Dry Well Reporting System](#), impacted residents also can discover helpful resources. Information submitted through the site, including well owner name, contact information and personal address, will not be visible to the public.

Collecting and analyzing data on dry wells will help SVBGSA observe local occurrences in SVBGSA's six subbasins. While the agency has a network of monitoring wells to detect trends in groundwater levels, awareness of specific dry wells will provide more detailed data to the agency. All six subbasins have dry well notification as an implementation action in their Groundwater Sustainability Plans.



California State Legislature passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in 2014 in response to a scientific understanding that groundwater in California is being used faster than it's being replenished. The act requires designated groundwater basins to form a public agency to develop a groundwater management plan and implement actions that will help local subbasins reach groundwater sustainability. In response to SGMA, the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency was created in 2017.

About the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

The SVBGSA was formed to develop comprehensive groundwater sustainability plans and implement the plans to achieve groundwater sustainability by 2042. The Agency's 11-member Board is comprised of stakeholders who represent diverse interests from across the Salinas Valley. Learn more at www.svbgsa.org and on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

For more information, visit the California Department of Water Resources [SGMA website](#), interactive groundwater [StoryMap](#), and view this [educational groundwater video](#).

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