



WATER IS LIFE

Water Awareness Committee
of Monterey County, Inc.

Monterey County Depends on Local Water: Use It Wisely to Help Maintain a Sustainable Supply

Monterey County is renowned for its natural resources, especially its stunning coastline and the fertile Salinas Valley.

Unlike much of California, Monterey County is isolated from state and federal water supply systems. We must rely solely on local water resources, primarily groundwater as well as river water and recycled water.

Local water managers and suppliers are working hard to protect existing supplies and develop new ones. Learn more about where our water comes from, how we keep it safe, and how you can help.

Ensuring a Safe, High-Quality Water Supply

Water quality standards are more demanding than for any other food or drink. State and federal health officials set and enforce strict requirements for drinking water quality.

Standards and monitoring are constantly evolving to address new information. Water regulators and water suppliers track and evaluate existing and emerging substances that may be harmful in water and take action to keep your water safe.

For well owners and small water systems: the California Department of Water Resources provides valuable information and resources to help you maintain a safe and reliable household water supply. Check out the Be Well Prepared program: water.ca.gov/bewellprepared

Water Is Limited and Valuable

We all depend on water daily, whether it's for growing crops on a farm, nurturing a cactus in a pot, taking a refreshing shower, cleaning dishes, preparing for surgery, or cooling off in a pool.

Every one of us depends on water all day and every day; water is precious, limited, and invaluable.



The Water Awareness Committee of Monterey County, Inc. (WAC) is a group of public water agencies, private water companies, and interested citizens who work together to promote personal responsibility through education about water conservation and beneficial uses to protect our environment.

For more information about water in Monterey County, visit our website at www.waterawareness.org

California-American Water Company
California Water Service Company
Carmel Area Wastewater District
Castroville Community Service District
City of Gonzales

City of Greenfield
City of Soledad
Marina Coast Water District
MCSI Water Systems Management
Monterey County Water Resources Agency

Monterey One Water
Monterey Peninsula Water Management District
Pebble Beach Community Services District
Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Developing Sustainable Water Supplies for the Long Term

Water suppliers around Monterey County are developing new sources of water to ensure our communities' long-term needs are met and our environment is protected.

DIFFERENT AREAS RELY ON DIFFERENT SOURCES

Monterey Peninsula relies on groundwater but also uses water from the Carmel River and its aquifer, the Seaside Groundwater Basin, groundwater replenishment with advanced treated recycled water, and desalinated water.

The Salinas Valley depends on groundwater supplemented by water from the Salinas River.

North County depends on groundwater provided primarily from smaller water systems and private wells.

Local habitats such as our coastal wetlands depend on healthy groundwater supplies, as do native plants and the animals.

GROUNDWATER—Our Primary Supply

Provides up to 95% of water for agriculture, residents, and businesses across Monterey County.

SURFACE WATER—Provides Most of the Remaining Supply

Salinas River water is stored in Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs for agriculture and urban uses, recreation, flood control, and wildlife.

Arroyo Seco River is important to local ecosystems and Salinas Valley agriculture.

Carmel River provides water to the Peninsula and Carmel Valley.

Big Sur coastal rivers and streams serve a small number of residents.

RECYCLED WATER—An Important Supplemental Supply

Advanced treated recycled water for groundwater replenishment and potable reuse on the Monterey Peninsula is pumped into the groundwater basin for storage and use when needed.

Recycled water is used for parks, schools, other large landscapes and golf courses.

Recycled water is used for agricultural crops. Over 12,000 acres in the northern coastal areas use recycled water to protect against seawater intrusion.

Greywater is used for landscapes by individual property owners.



Point Pinos



Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area



Carmel Valley Village



Jamesburg



Point Sur

Big Sur

Del Monte Forest

Carmel

Point Lobos

Carmel Highlands

Monterey

Seaside

Marina

Salinas

Moss Landing

Castroville

Prunedale

Santa Rita

Aromas

Hollister

DESALINATED WATER—New Projects Planned

There are several existing small desalination facilities in the County.

STORMWATER/RAINWATER—

Can Help Meet Needs

Stormwater is captured and recycled in small quantities.



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King City

Pinnacles National Park

Greenfield

Soledad

Chualar

Gonzales

916

68

Fort Ord National Monument

Toro County Park

183

25

196

Monterey Bay

Water Supply Challenges and Solutions

Long-Term Challenges Facing Our Shared Water Supplies

Climate change brings unstable weather patterns that threaten the water supply. Periods of intense rainfall can lead to flooding. Extended droughts and hotter temperatures dry up vegetation and surface water supplies. Additionally, flooding, sea level rise, fires, and other climate-related hazards threaten critical water infrastructure.

Overdraft and falling groundwater levels. When groundwater pumping exceeds the long-term inflow to the basin, the supply is “overdrafted.” The consequences include seawater intrusion, loss of water storage, land subsidence, and lower groundwater levels.

Seawater intrusion. When groundwater levels are too low, saltwater can flow into the aquifers along the coast and contaminate the inland freshwater supply.

Aging facilities. Monterey County has many aging water supply facilities. Water wells, pumps, pipelines, reservoirs, and other facilities require hundreds of millions of dollars in upgrades.



How You Can Help

Individuals, businesses, and agriculture generally use less water than in years past. Thank you for using water wisely, avoiding waste, and stretching the water supply. Keep it up!

Use water wisely and efficiently. Reducing water waste helps maintain sustainable water supplies.

Visit the Water Awareness Committee website. For conservation ideas and resources, [visit waterawareness.org](http://waterawareness.org).

Reach out to your water supplier. Many water providers offer conservation help, ideas, rebates, and more.



What Your Water Suppliers and Managers Are Doing About Water Supply Challenges

Individual agencies and partnerships of multiple agencies are developing new sources of water to address the region’s water supply challenges.

Stewardship and wise water use. Public and private water agencies provide information, rebates, and incentives.

Local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) collaborate to sustainably manage groundwater supplies and water resources throughout the County.

Supplemental water supplies. Local agencies are working together to enhance water supplies by:

- Expanding the use of recycled water.
- Pumping highly treated recycled water and Carmel River water into the groundwater basin through Aquifer Storage and Recovery and saving it for dry periods.
- New desalination projects are proposed to meet future water supply needs.