

Salinas Valley Basin Problem Statement

Valleywide

- Groundwater is the primary source of water for all users in the Salinas Valley Basin.
- Supply and demand for groundwater is out of balance in parts of the valley.
- Groundwater levels over time have continued to decline.
- Future drought conditions present uncertainties from year to year, as does potential for flooding in extreme wet years.
- Existing infrastructure is aging and needs maintenance and improvements, some with significant costs.
- Potential supplemental supply projects come with significant costs and take time to implement.
- Lack of cohesive regional water management has led to unsustainable groundwater conditions that pose a serious risk to current and future economic vitality of the Salinas Valley and Monterey County.

Eastside Aquifer Subbasin

- Subbasin is defined by DWR as high priority.
- On average, groundwater levels are declining with the steepest declines during periods of drought.
- Groundwater elevations east of the seawater intrusion front are below sea level and have continued to decline.
- Seawater continues to move inland towards the Subbasin.
- Pumping exceeds recharge by approximately 10,000 acre-feet per year.
- Subbasin has limited surface water that could recharge groundwater.
- Complex geology limits recharge to the depths that support many production wells.
- Decades of declining groundwater levels and loss of storage are challenging to recover.
- Water quality degradation is a persistent issue.