

Editor's Note: Our *Living with Drought* presentation on Thursday, May 26 was attended by a packed house. Stay tuned for a YouTube version coming soon.

Save Our Water, Ojai! Upcoming Workshops:

- ***Water-Saving Landscapes: Rainwater Harvesting and Turf Reduction Workshop***

When: Saturday, June 4 in Ojai.

This workshop will explain the process of converting water thirsty lawns into landscapes that slow, spread, and sink rainwater. Join us to learn the basics of turf removal, ways to capture and store rainwater, native plant selection and care, plus the importance of mulch. Participants will receive a workbook explaining what is appropriate for their landscape and plant list resources, along with a tour of a front yard redesigned to capture rainwater.

- ***Water Saving Landscapes: Greywater Laundry-to-Landscape Workshop***

When: Saturday, June 18 in Ojai.

Greywater systems are especially important in times of drought and can greatly reduce your outdoor water use. Come learn how to reuse laundry water, including design considerations, water saving potential, costs, regulations, health and safety, soaps and products, and plants that are a good match for your home and landscape. A guided tour of an existing installation and a workbook with helpful resources is included to help you start a sustainable water saving landscape transformation.

Cost per workshop: \$10 for OVGC members & city residents, \$20 for non-members.

Complete details and payment options here.

On the horizon and looking at the big picture is the 2014 California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, which aims to strengthen local control and management of groundwater basins, and requires local agencies to form groundwater sustainability agencies (GSA) by June of 2017.

With this new legislation the hope is to avoid undesirable outcomes such as:

-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.)

-Significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage;

-Seawater intrusion;

-Degraded water quality including the migration of contaminant plumes that impair water supplies;

-Land subsidence;

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

These GSAs must be formed to address groundwater basins determined by the state to be of high or medium priority. Two of the Ventura River watershed's four groundwater basins are ranked medium priority: Ojai Basin and Upper Ventura River Basin.

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The forming Upper Ventura River Groundwater Sustainability Agency (UVRGSA) is comprised of four regional water suppliers (Ventura River Water District, Meiners Oaks Water District, City of Ventura (Ventura Water), and Casitas Municipal Water District) and the County of Ventura. The current Formation Committee has twelve members and hopes to have the UVRGS Agency established by the end of 2016. Once in place, the Agency will develop the required groundwater sustainability plan for the basin.

In January of 2016, the Formation Committee began the process by preparing a request to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to modify the existing state-designated boundaries of Upper Ventura River Groundwater Basin. The Formation Committee wanted the basin boundary to be as accurate as possible based on the best current geologic knowledge before starting on the groundwater sustainability plan - and this option to modify basin boundaries was included as part of the state's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

The committee used a certified hydrogeologist who suggested corrections to the current boundary based upon his extensive local knowledge and experience, updated published geologic maps, local faults, locations of current and possible future stream gauges, areas of known alluvial thicknesses, and well extraction amounts. The request for a scientific modification was given to DWR on March 28 and the application was accepted as complete on April 7. A 30-day period to make comments to DWR began April 12. Results from DWR's evaluation of the request are expected in August.

The Committee's new website (www.uvrgroundwater.org) explains

- how the Upper Ventura River GSA is being formed;
- describes the five organizations leading the process;
- provides information on the meetings that are being held, including meeting materials and presentations;
- gives an overview of the Upper Ventura River Groundwater Basin;
- includes a library of maps and relevant documents;
- offers a form for submitting questions and comments to the committee.

According to Ventura River Water District director Bruce Kuebler, the committee intends to have a 7-member Board of Directors consisting of a representative from each of 5 public agencies and one each representing agriculture and environmental organizations.

The Committee will hold its third public meeting on Tuesday, June 14, from 6:00 to 8:30 pm, at the Oak View Community Center, 18 Valley Road, Oak View. This meeting will offer members of the public the opportunity to review the draft Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), which is a legal agreement between the five public agencies that outlines the manner in which they will operate together as the GSA. The FC began working on the language in the draft JPA in the Fall of 2015, and the goal is to have the JPA approved by all five agencies in July, 2016.

Long-term goals for SGMA:

- June 30, 2017: Local groundwater sustainability agencies formed;
- January 31, 2020: Groundwater sustainability plans adopted for critically over-drafted basins;
- January 31, 2022: Groundwater sustainability plan adopted for the Upper Ventura River Basin;
- 20 years after adoption: The Ventura River Basin must have fully implemented their sustainability plan and achieved the sustainability goal;

SGMA provides local GSAs with the tools and authority to,

- Require registration of groundwater wells;
- Manage extractions;
- Assess fees to implement groundwater management plans;
- Request revisions of basin boundaries.

The Ojai Basin on the other hand, is one of a handful of special cases in California because it already has a state-created agency, the Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency (OBGMA), to oversee its management. Although OBGMA will need to make some changes in response to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, the agency is well ahead of UVRGSA because it has an established governing structure in place.

In response to the legislation, OBGMA submitted a resolution to the California Department of Water Resources in January 2015 requesting that OBGMA become the Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Ojai Basin.

The OBGMA is now moving forward with development of the sustainable groundwater management plan mandated by the legislation. Because of basin monitoring, modeling studies, and other research already conducted on the basin, the agency has considerable data and information with which to develop the plan.