

Atascadero Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Draft Chapter for Public Comment

Section 1

Introduction to Salinas Valley Subbasin Atascadero Area GSP

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Comments for this draft document are being collected via an electronic form available online at www.atascaderobasin.com. If you require a paper form to submit by postal mail, please contact Atascadero Mutual Water Company at 5005 El Camino Real, Atascadero, CA 93422.

Thank you for your interest in sustainable groundwater management.





Consulting
Engineers and
Scientists

Draft Atascadero Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Atascadero Groundwater Basin

DRAFT

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Prepared for: Atascadero Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AB	Assembly Bill
ac	Acres
Act (or SGMA)	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
AF	acre-feet
AFY	acre-feet per year
AMWC	Atascadero Mutual Water Company
ASH	Atascadero State Hospital
Basin Plan	Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin
CASGEM	California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring
CCGC	Central Coast Groundwater Coalition
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CCRWQCB	Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CIMIS	California Irrigation Management Information System
County	San Luis Obispo County
CSD	Community Services District
CWWCP	Countywide Water Conservation Program
DBCP	Dibromochloropropane
DDW	Division of Drinking Water
du	Dwelling Unit
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EC	Executive Committee
ETo	Evapotranspiration
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
GAMA	Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment
GMP	Groundwater Management Plan
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
IRWMP	Integrated Regional Water Management Program
JPA	Joint Powers Authority
LOS	Level of Severity
LUCE	Land Use and Circulation Element
LUFTs	Leaky Underground Fuel Tanks
MCL	Maximum Contaminant Level
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWC	Mutual Water Company
MWR	Master Water Report
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NCDC	National Climatic Data Center
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NWIS	National Water Information System
pp	Projected Population
RMC	Recycled Water Policy
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SGMA	State Groundwater Management Act
SGMP	Sustainable Groundwater Management Planning
SGWP	Sustainable Groundwater Planning
SLOFCWCD	San Luis Obispo Flood Control and Water Conservation District
SMCL	Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level
SMR	Santa Margarita Ranch
SNMP	Salt and Nutrient Management Plan
Subbasin	Atascadero Subbasin
SWRCB	California State Water Resources Control Board
TDS	Total Dissolved Solids
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
US	United States
USGS	United States Geologic Survey
USFW	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USTs	Underground Storage Tanks
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
Water Board	State Water Resources Control Board
WPA	Water Planning Area

1. Introduction to Salinas Valley Subbasin Atascadero Area GSP

1.1 Purpose of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan

In 2014, the State of California enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), Section 10720, et. al., of the State Water Code. This law requires groundwater basins in California that are designated as medium- or high-priority to be managed sustainably. Satisfying the requirements of SGMA generally requires four basic activities:

1. Forming one or multiple Groundwater Sustainability Agency(s) (GSAs) to fully cover a basin
2. Developing one or multiple Groundwater Sustainability Plan(s) (GSPs) that fully cover the basin
3. Implementing the GSP and managing to achieve quantifiable objectives
4. Regular reporting to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

The Atascadero Area Subbasin (Atascadero Subbasin or Subbasin) was reprioritized as very low priority and is not required to mandatorily comply with SGMA, however, the stakeholders within the Subbasin formed a GSA and the governing body decided it would proactively manage the groundwater resources and move forward with the development and adoption of a GSP. This document fulfills the GSP sustainability goal for the Atascadero Area Subbasin of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, Basin No. 3-004.11. This GSP describes the Atascadero Subbasin, develops quantifiable management objectives that account for the interests of the Subbasin's beneficial groundwater uses and users, and identifies a group of projects and management actions that will allow the Subbasin to maintain sustainability in the future.

1.2 Description of Atascadero Subbasin

The Atascadero Subbasin is identified by DWR in Bulletin 118 as Subbasin No. 3-004.11 (DWR, 2016). The Subbasin is part of the greater Salinas Valley Basin in the Central Coast region of California. It was subdivided from the Paso Robles Area Subbasin in 2016 based on information that showed the Rinconada Fault is a significant barrier to groundwater flow. The Paso Robles Formation makes up most of the water bearing sediments for both subbasins and the lateral (outer) extents are primarily defined by the contact with the Monterey Shale (bedrock). The southern basin boundary shows the presence of the Santa Margarita Formation, which impedes groundwater flow.¹ The boundary between the Paso Robles Subbasin and the

¹ Page 15 of the Atascadero Basin Boundary Modification Technical Report

Atascadero Subbasin is defined by the Rinconada Fault.² The northwestern, western, and southern boundaries are primarily defined by the contact of the Paso Robles Formation sediments with older, relatively impermeable geologic units, including Tertiary-age consolidated sedimentary beds, Cretaceous-age metamorphic rocks, and granitic rock.³ The Subbasin encompasses an area of approximately 19,735 acres, or 31 square miles.

The Subbasin is bounded by the Paso Robles Subbasin, as shown on Figure 1-1. The Paso Robles Subbasin is located northeast of the Atascadero Subbasin. The shared boundary between the subbasins is the Rinconada Fault zone. The Rinconada Fault zone contains areas that are impervious and other areas that are considered to be a leaky barrier to groundwater flow.

The Paso Robles Subbasin is considered a high-priority basin and critically over drafted. It is subject to SGMA and is required to develop a GSP.

The Atascadero Subbasin includes the incorporated cities of Paso Robles and Atascadero. As well as the unincorporated census-designated places of Santa Margarita, and Templeton (Figure 1-1).

1.3 Basin Prioritization

Bulletin 118 – Interim Update 2016 defines 517 groundwater basins and subbasins in California. DWR was required to prioritize these basins and subbasins as either High, Medium, Low, or Very Low.

The 2018 SGMA Basin Prioritization process was conducted to reassess the priority of the groundwater basins following the 2016 basin boundary modifications as required by the Water Code. For the 2018 SGMA Basin Prioritization, DWR followed the process and methodology developed for the 2014 CASGEM prioritization, adjusted as required by SGMA and related legislation. DWR is required to prioritize basins for the purposes of SGMA, which was enacted to provide for the sustainable management of groundwater basins, among other things. This entailed a reassessment of factors that were utilized in the CASGEM program to prioritize basins based on groundwater elevation monitoring. SGMA also required DWR to continue to prioritize basins based on a consideration of the components specified in Water Code Section 10933(b), but the list of components was amended to include the italicized language in component 8:

1. The population overlying the basin or subbasin.
2. The rate of current and projected growth of the population overlying the basin or subbasin.
3. The number of public supply wells that draw from the basin or subbasin.
4. The total number of wells that draw from the basin or subbasin.

² [https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Committees-Programs/Sustainable-Groundwater-Management-Act-\(SGMA\)/Atascadero-Groundwater-Basin.aspx](https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Committees-Programs/Sustainable-Groundwater-Management-Act-(SGMA)/Atascadero-Groundwater-Basin.aspx)

³ <http://sgma.water.ca.gov/basinmod/docs/download/1374>

5. The irrigated acreage overlying the basin or subbasin.
6. The degree to which persons overlying the basin or subbasin rely on groundwater as their primary source of water.
7. Any documented impacts on the groundwater within the basin or subbasin, including overdraft, subsidence, saline intrusion, and other water quality degradation.
8. Any other information determined to be relevant by the department, including adverse impacts on local habitat and local streamflows.

DWR incorporated new data, to the extent data are available, and the amended language of Water Code Section 10933(b)(8) (component 8) to include an analysis of adverse impacts on local habitat and local streamflows as part of the prioritization. Evaluation of groundwater basins at a statewide scale does not necessarily capture the local importance of groundwater resources within the smaller-size or lower-use groundwater basins. For many of California's low-use basins, groundwater provides close to 100 percent of the local beneficial uses. Thus, when reviewing the 2018 SGMA Basin Prioritization results, it is important to recognize that the findings are not intended to characterize groundwater management practices or diminish the local importance of the smaller-size or lower-use groundwater basins; rather, the results are presented as a statewide assessment of the overall importance of groundwater resources in meeting beneficial uses.

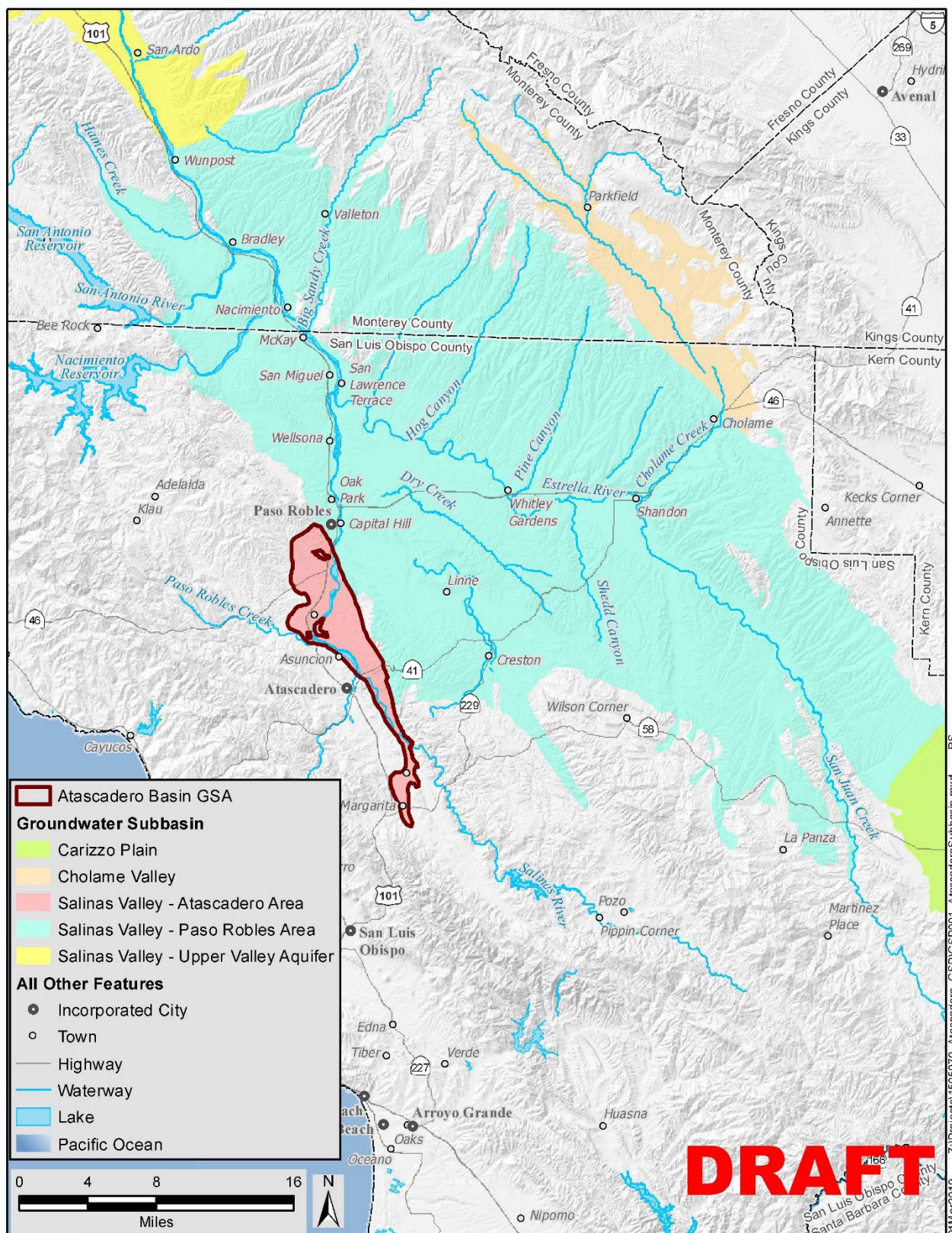
The following information was deemed relevant and considered as part of component 8 for the 2018 SGMA Basin Prioritization based on SGMA:

- Adverse impacts on local habitat and local streamflows
- Adjudicated areas
- Critically overdrafted basins
- Groundwater-related transfers

Additional information about how each of these components were analyzed can be found in the process section of the 2018 SGMA Basin Prioritization Process and Results document.⁴

In 2018, DWR designated the Atascadero Subbasin as a very low priority basin with no critical overdraft.

⁴ <https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Basin-Prioritization/Files/2018-Sustainable-Groundwater-Management-Act-Basin-Prioritization.pdf?la=en&hash=B9F946563AA3E6B338674951A7FFB0D80B037530>



Atascadero Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan San Luis Obispo County, California	GEI Consultants	Atascadero Subbasin and Surrounding Subbasins
Atascadero Basin GSA	MARCH 2019	FIGURE 1-1