

Sustainability Goal

Draft goal for Chapter 1.

As required by SGMA, the sustainability goal for the Basin was created through input from all the stakeholders who participated in the GSP planning effort. The goal fulfills the regulations put forward by the DWR to develop a sustainability goal that “...culminates in the absence of undesirable results within 20 years...” (23 CCR § 354.24). The GSAs strive for equal access to groundwater for all current and future members of the Basin and that the water will be put to beneficial uses while being able to sustainably meet demand and avoid any undesirable results.

The overarching sustainability goal for groundwater management in the Sierra Valley Subbasin is:

To manage groundwater resources in a manner that best supports the long-term health of the people, the environment, and the economy of Sierra Valley into the future by maintaining groundwater levels at or above January 2015 levels.

The object of this goal is to avoid significant and unreasonable impacts to the environmental, agricultural, domestic, industrial, and community beneficial uses and users of groundwater in Sierra Valley. Progress toward the goal will be cumulatively quantified by the Sustainable Management Criteria discussed in Chapter 3.

Community input from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) indicated that priorities for Sierra Valley include:

- Maintaining viable agriculture and the quiet, rural nature of the valley
- Maintaining and enhancing the habitat for wildlife, including migratory and local bird populations
- Preventing drying out of wetlands, streams and braided channels
- Preventing water quality degradation
- Preventing impacts to domestic well users that would require drilling deeper wells
- Reducing or preventing new development, including industrial farming, airport expansion and housing developments

To address these priorities, the sustainability goal incorporates managing groundwater conditions for each of the applicable sustainability indicators in the Subbasin so that:

- Groundwater elevations and groundwater storage do not significantly decline below their historically measured range (i.e., January 2015 levels), thereby protecting the existing well infrastructure from impacts, protecting groundwater-dependent ecosystems, and avoiding significant streamflow depletion due to groundwater pumping.
- Groundwater quality is suitable for the beneficial uses in the SV Subbasin and is not significantly or unreasonably degraded.

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- Significant and unreasonable land subsidence is prevented in the SV Subbasin. Infrastructure (e.g., roads, foundations, water conveyances, and well casings) and agriculture production in the SV Subbasin remain safe from land subsidence.
- Significant and undesirable depletions of interconnected surface water (ISW) due to groundwater pumping are avoided by arresting hydraulic gradients near ISW and through projects and management actions that bolster groundwater levels.
- The GSA groundwater management is effectively integrated with other watershed and land use planning activities through collaborations and partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies, private landowners, and other organizations, to achieve the broader “watershed goal” of adequate groundwater recharge and sufficient surface water flows to sustain healthy ecosystem functions.

The Sustainability Goal will be achieved by quantifying and minimizing potential impacts to domestic, residential, agricultural, industrial, and environmental beneficial users. Scientifically informed Sustainable Management Criteria will be developed around these assessments that avoid significant and unreasonable impacts to beneficial uses and users of groundwater. Finally, the GSAs will implement projects and management actions, monitor Sustainable Management Criteria, and iteratively refine the GSP so that the Sustainability Goal is achieved during Plan implementation and is maintained afterward.