

OVERVIEW

of WATER IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



Welcome to the Water Conservation Guidebook for Santa Cruz County.

This book was created by the Water Conservation Coalition, a partnership between all of the local Water Districts in Santa Cruz County, the County Water Resources Division, and Ecology Action. Santa Cruz County surface water and groundwater provide drinking water for residents and visitors, critical habitat to numerous threatened and

endangered species, and opportunities for recreational and commercial activities. Like many other areas of California, the County faces water resource challenges including impaired water quality, inadequate water supply, overdrafted groundwater basins, depleted streams, and degraded riparian habitat.

The overwhelming majority of Santa Cruz's water supply is locally derived – a unique situation in a state supported by large federal and state water projects. Domestic supply within the Region is provided by eight public agencies, mutual water companies, and individual and shared wells and springs. The City of Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and parts of the North Coast rely on surface water from streams and reservoirs. The San Lorenzo Valley uses both surface and groundwater. From Capitola/Soquel South to Watsonville as well as Scotts Valley, water supply is almost entirely reliant on groundwater resources. Approximately 55% of the human water use in the County is for residential uses, about 45% goes to agriculture which is concentrated in the South.

Even before the current drought began, surface water supply was barely sufficient to meet demand and many of our groundwater basins were in overdraft and at risk of saltwater intrusion. Ongoing water supply problems are aggravated by drought, and will not be resolved by a single storm or wet year. Changes in weather patterns threaten water resources into the future. Balancing water supply with environmental needs and other uses is a challenge that requires a collaborative effort. Since our domestic supply is local, we have both the opportunity and responsibility to find solutions to these challenges ourselves. Local water agencies are working toward long term solutions to ensure our water security, but using less water is one critical piece of the water supply puzzle.



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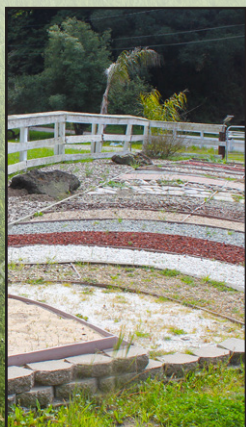


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