# Achieving a Sustainable Groundwater Basin

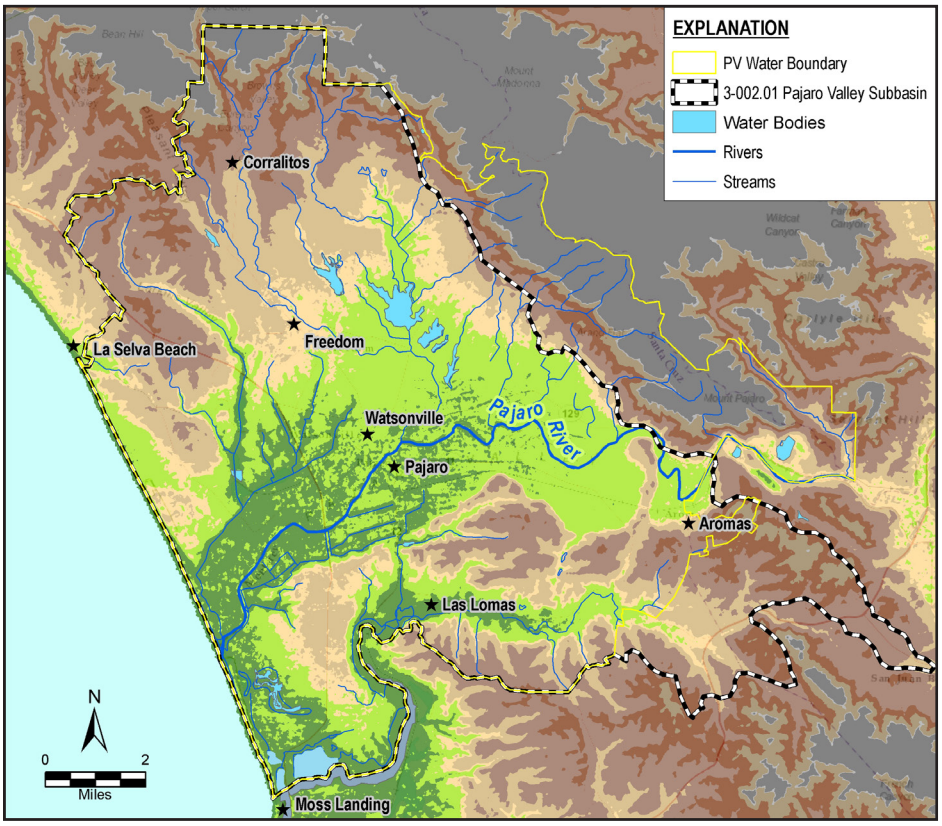
PV Water
FACT SHEET

*For the Beneficial Users of the Pajaro Valley Basin through The Basin Management Plan - Groundwater Sustainability Update 2022 Process*

## Ensuring Sustainability for the Pajaro Valley Basin: **A Central Coast Jewel**

From the redwoods to the sea, the Pajaro Valley is home to approximately 95,000 residents, a billion-dollar agriculture industry that feeds our communities, a rich coastal ecosystem, and more.

The Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin is a critically overdrafted, high priority basin as defined by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). The Pajaro Valley Basin is located at the end of the Pajaro River Watershed which drains approximately 1,300 square miles of Monterey, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Benito Counties. The Pajaro Valley Basin is bordered by the Monterey Bay to the west and the San Andreas Fault to the east. It is adjacent to the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin and Purisima Highlands Subbasin to the northwest, and the Salinas Valley 180/400-Foot Aquifer and Langley Area Subbasins to the south.



**95,000**
residents

**120**
square miles

**$1 billion**
agriculture industry

# Groundwater Sustainability Update 2022: A Collaborative Process

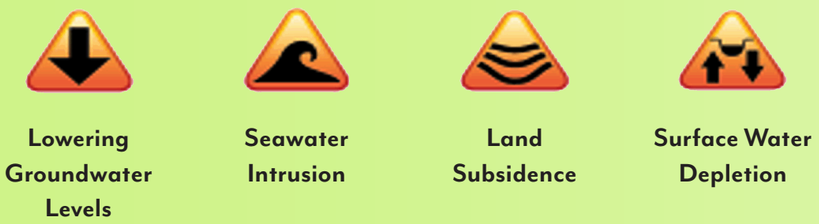
**Groundwater is vital** to the Pajaro Valley and neighboring communities for life, the economy, and the environment. Groundwater provides more than 90 percent of the total water supply for the Pajaro Valley during an average year. Groundwater is the source of most drinking water for municipal and rural residents, and it is utilized for agricultural and commercial purposes.

**Achieving a sustainable groundwater basin** is Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency's (PV Water) primary goal. To achieve this goal, PV Water is partnering with local and regional stakeholders to develop the **Basin Management Plan: Groundwater Sustainability Update 2022**. This process, known as **GSU22**, is a continuation of PV Water's Basin Management Plan Update (BMP, 2014) that was submitted to DWR in 2016 as an Alternative to a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Pajaro Valley Basin. DWR approved PV Water's Alternative in 2019, and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires that approved Alternatives be updated every five years. PV Water's first five-year update is the **GSU22**. PV Water is receiving $500,000 in Proposition 68, Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant funds from DWR to support the development of **GSU22**.

## GSU22 & SGMA

California lawmakers adopted SGMA in 2014. The law seeks to bring the state's medium and high priority groundwater basins into a sustainable condition. SGMA requires that high priority, critically overdrafted basins such as Pajaro Valley achieve sustainability by 2040. SGMA identifies six sustainability indicators to be used to assess basin sustainability. The **GSU22** effort includes analyses for the four sustainability indicators illustrated below, as recommended by DWR. DWR concluded that PV Water's Alternative provides reasonable standards for groundwater storage and water-quality degradation, the other two sustainability indicators.

## Sustainability Indicators to be Addressed with GSU22




*An adopted update is due to DWR by January 1, 2022*

The Collaborative **GSU22** process will be accomplished through broad stakeholder participation. The participating stakeholder groups include:

- PV Water (Board and Staff)
- **GSU22** Ad Hoc Sustainable Groundwater Planning Advisory Committee (**GSU22** Committee)
- Beneficial Users
- Public

**PV Water**, as the sole Groundwater Sustainability Agency, is responsible for achieving sustainable groundwater resources for the Pajaro Valley Basin. The PV Water Board of Directors voted to create the Ad Hoc Sustainable Groundwater Planning Advisory Committee (**GSU22** Committee) to guide development of the **GSU22** as described in the **GSU22** Communication and Engagement Plan. The **GSU22** Committee, with stakeholder input, will submit a recommended **GSU22** Plan to the PV Board for consideration of approval by December 2021.

## What will the GSU22 process accomplish?

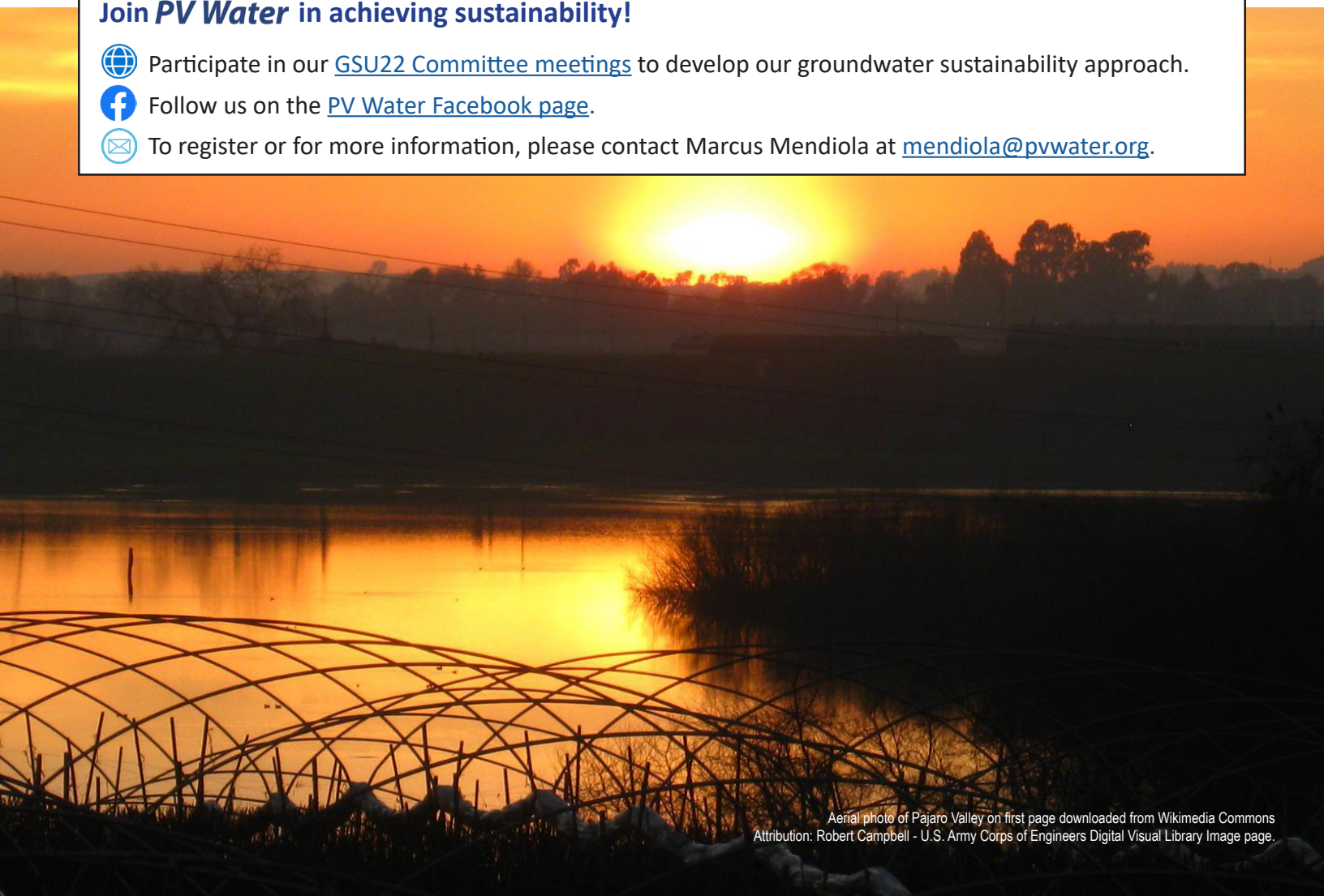
1. A strengthened Plan and Framework (**GSU22**) to achieve a sustainable Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin for beneficial users now and for generations to come
2. Evaluation of whether BMP projects and management actions will achieve sustainability as defined by **GSU22** consistent with SGMA
3. Development of monitoring plans to assess groundwater sustainability and improve knowledge of the Pajaro Valley Basin for enduring solutions

# GSU22 Schedule

| Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Oct-Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Admin | General | Seawater Intrusion | Surface Water Depletion | Seawater Intrusion | Seawater Intrusion | Lowering GW Levels | Surface Water Depletion | Management Actions | Monitoring Plans | Monitoring Plans | Board Meeting |
| General | Intro to Sustainability Criteria | Land Subsidence | Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems | | | Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems | General | General | General | Admin | Admin |
| | Lowering GW Levels | | | | | General | Board Meeting | | Board Meeting | | Submit GSU22 to DWR |
| Stakeholders' Input | | | | | | | | | | | |

## Join *PV Water* in achieving sustainability!

- Participate in our GSU22 Committee meetings to develop our groundwater sustainability approach.
- Follow us on the PV Water Facebook page.
- To register or for more information, please contact Marcus Mendiola at mendiola@pvwater.org.



Aerial photo of Pajaro Valley on first page downloaded from Wikimedia Commons
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