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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PAJARO VALLEY WATER BOARD TO SET FUTURE COURSE**

Watsonville, CA – With continuing concerns about overdraft and seawater intrusion, the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PVWMA) Board of Directors and members of its Ad Hoc Basin Management Plan (BMP) Committee will meet at 4 p.m., Wednesday, August 15, 2012. The need to determine a course for the future begins with a workshop for members of the Board and public to ask questions about the recommendations that the Committee presented at the July 18 Board meeting. Following the workshop, the Board will meet to consider the staff's recommendation to begin the development of specific plans and policies to pursue the Committee's recommendations.

“We've made a lot of progress through the agency on the 2002 Basin Management Plan. Now we need a plan to make further progress to ensure reliable and cost-effective water supplies,” commented Dave Cavanaugh, PVWMA Board member and chair of the 21-member Ad Hoc Committee representing a broad cross section of the community. “We had 23 meetings over 18 months to pour over the details of progress made, current and future challenges, and proposed solutions. The committee's recommendations provide a path to use and develop water supplies responsibly.”

Board action at this time will set an overall direction. Development of further details and opportunities for public information and input will occur along the way. “The staff report seeks Board concurrence with the Committee recommendations to use water more efficiently, optimize the use of existing water deliveries, and develop the most cost-effective new water supplies,” stated Mary Bannister, General Manager for PVWMA. She added “Through energetic efforts of Board and staff, PVWMA has secured over \$47 million in grants from outside sources to implement the projects outlined in the 2002 BMP. But, as the Committee recommended, more steps are needed with both policies and funding to deliver results.”

- 4:00 PM Board Workshop with Ad-Hoc Basin Management Plan Committee
- 7:00 PM Board Deliberations and Action
- Wednesday, August 15, 2012
- City of Watsonville, 275 Main St, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Community Room

## ***The Challenges: Overdraft and Seawater Intrusion***

Analysis shows that the combination of all users (PVWMA, City of Watsonville, and municipal and private wells) draws 1500 acre-feet more per year from the groundwater than precipitation and other sources generate. This adds to the area's long-standing overdraft problems. Seawater intrusion impacts another 2500 acre feet per year. "These stark realities that both near and long-term water supplies are at risk drove the Committee's sense of urgency to find more solutions," Cavanaugh noted. "The target amount that the Committee used for solutions to stem these problems and sustain current water deliveries was approximately 12,000 acre-feet per year. If PVWMA and the community can't implement the necessary solutions, we worried that water resources for everyone will be at risk and the courts could come in and take over. We wanted to find solutions that will retain local control."

## ***The Solutions: Three Key Initiatives***

### *Use Water More Efficiently*

The first and most cost-effective solution is to use water more efficiently. Statistics indicate that PVWMA customers have made significant progress. The Committee recommends that PVWMA pursue additional policies to encourage water conservation. "Every gallon we save becomes one less that we need to find," Cavanaugh explained. The Committee recommended a target of 5000 acre-feet per year for this initiative, based on technical studies by experts from UC Davis and the UC Ag Extension.

### *Optimize Use of Delivered Water*

A key strategy to hold back seawater intrusion is for farmers and others to use delivered water in the coastal area. A combination of increased recycled water demand, Harkins Slough recharge project upgrades, and increased recycled water storage would contribute approximately 3000 acre feet per year toward the needed solutions.

### *Develop Cost-Effective New Supplies*

Since new supplies require extensive planning, permitting and expense, the Committee gave particular attention to the details of potential options. It concluded the College Lake project with an inland pipeline to the Coastal Distribution System, the Watsonville Slough and North Dunes recharge project, and the Murphy Crossing recharge project would be the best choices. This would yield approximately 4100 acre feet per year to the set of solutions.

The Committee considered alternatives based on their degree of benefit as compared to their overall cost. The recommended alternative would initially solve 80% of the basin overdraft problem and 90% of the seawater intrusion problem and would increase the agency's current budget by approximately 30%. Later construction of the Murphy Crossing recharge project would solve 100% of the basin overdraft problem. This compares with simply maximizing the use of existing facilities, which would address only 50% of the overdraft problem, 40% of the salt-water intrusion problem, and increase the current agency budget by 15%. Any impact of the plans on user fees will follow a detailed rate study and will require a Proposition 218 vote by the users before implementation.

### *Opportunities for Public Information and Input*

The staff recommends multiple opportunities for public information and input as development of these plans occur. They include opportunities to comment via the PVWMA web site, mail, question cards at the workshop, public comment at the workshop and Board meetings, and multiple public meetings that will occur during the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report for the plans. Any civic groups or members of the public that would like a speaker or further information about this topic should contact the PVWMA office at (831) 722-9292 or visit [www.pvwater.org](http://www.pvwater.org).

For further information please call Mary Bannister at 831.722.9292

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