



Contact: Mary Bannister
Direct Line 831 254-2015
PVWMA Office 831-722-9292
bannister@pvwater.org

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It's Official – 2015 is Water Awareness Year

Watsonville, CA – Motivated by a fourth year of extreme drought conditions that are adding additional stress to an already over-pumped groundwater basin, the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water) Board of Directors declared 2015 “Water Awareness Year.” And more importantly, the board went on to reallocate resources to help the Pajaro Valley be part of the solution.

The Board authorized \$50,000 to be directed towards funding work specifically to address the current, unprecedented drought. \$65 million in Basin Management Plan projects will be funded under a new rate structure that is anticipated to go into effect July 1 is to address the overdraft conditions that result from historic “normal” climate patterns. “Should drought conditions persist, we need an “off the shelf” program to address the increased stresses on the basin when pumping continues and no recharge is occurring from rainfall or stream flows” said General Manager Mary Bannister.

This funding will be used to design a plan that may include additional groundwater modelling to identify the impacts the drought has to the aquifers, and support of a study to evaluate a land fallowing program where landowners may opt to fallow marginal, unprofitable or transitional (to organic for instance) properties in exchange for compensation derived from increased ag water use during the drought.

The Agency also currently supports a conservation program already funded at nearly \$200,000 to communicate the increasingly dire position the state’s water supply is in, help growers become more water efficient, and help guide local residents to be part of the answer. “We wanted to do more than just add our voice to the call to conserve; we wanted to maintain our position as leaders in advancing wise water policy” explained Bannister.

In addition to proclamations and education, the agency is moving forward with new projects designed to increase water supplies locally in keeping with their mission of eliminating groundwater overdraft. Additional information is available on the Agency’s website – pvwater.org.

PV Water is a public agency whose mission is to protect and preserve the water resources within the agency’s jurisdiction, generally the greater coastal Pajaro Valley.

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