

STAFF REPORT

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GREGORY A. RAY, P.E. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/CITY ENGINEER 

SUBJECT: NORTHERN CITIES MANAGEMENT AREA 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

BACKGROUND

The Santa Maria Groundwater Basin is the subject of a Court action which resulted in a settlement of the northern area (including Grover Beach) and a judgment in the overall case which included that settlement. The judgment which incorporated the settlement requires the Cities of Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, Pismo Beach, and the Oceano Community Services District to establish a technical management committee to annually monitor and report on the condition of the Northern Cities portion of the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin. The Northern Cities Management Area (NCMA) technical committee was formed and is comprised of representatives from each jurisdiction that meet on a monthly basis to monitor the condition of the groundwater basin and prepare the annual report for submission to the Court each April.

The 2011 Annual Report was prepared by GEI Consultants, Inc. and was filed with the Court on May 4th under the direction of Henry Weinstock, the City's legal counsel for the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin settlement.

DISCUSSION

The 2011 Annual Report provides results of quarterly groundwater monitoring and analysis performed by the NCMA technical group's consultant GEI Consultants, Inc. The full text of the report has been included in the Council's reading file and a copy of the report is available for public review at the Public Works counter at City Hall. Following is a brief summary of the results:

1. Rainfall in 2011 totaled 12.87". The average is just over 16". Evapotranspiration exceeded rainfall in all months except March. GEI concludes that the groundwater basin was only recharged in March of 2011.
2. Water supply in the NCMA for 2011 which includes groundwater, state water, and Lopez water is estimated to have exceeded demand by approximately 5,495 acre-feet. Applied irrigation and rural water use were estimated to have increased slightly since 2010 while urban use declined slightly.

APPROVED FOR FORWARDING



**ROBERT PERRAULT
CITY MANAGER**

**Please Review for the Possibility of a
Potential Conflict of Interest:**

- None Identified by Staff Bright
 Shoals Molnar
 Nicolls Peterson

*City Council Staff Report:
NCMA 2011 Annual Report.*

3. Results of quarterly monitoring well sampling indicate an overall recovery of groundwater levels to those experienced during the last wet year (2006) and levels are similar to those measured in 2010. Groundwater levels near the shoreline have recovered to about 5 feet above sea level. Groundwater levels in the municipal well fields indicate that the municipal wells are operating at an appropriate level.
4. No evidence of seawater intrusion has been found in any of the monitoring wells in 2010.
5. The NCMA began sampling monitoring wells in the spring (April) this year in order to provide data that would allow the NCMA to compare groundwater contours to those included in the Nipomo Mesa Management Area (NMMA) Annual Report. Spring and fall sampling indicated no change in the elevation of the pumping depression under the Nipomo Mesa even though monitoring wells indicate a general recovery of groundwater levels elsewhere in the basin. Spring monitoring indicated that groundwater levels along the coast were approximately 10 feet above sea level.
6. The NMMA 2010 Annual Report projects increasing water demand, thus extraction from groundwater, in the NMMA. Although the NMMA may receive supplemental sources in the future, ongoing or increasing amounts of groundwater extraction may continue to lower ground water levels along the NMMA and NCMA boundary. Lower groundwater levels in the boundary area will reduce flow to the NCMA or even reverse the flow; either circumstance would further reduce groundwater available to users in the NCMA. This is significant because recently voters in the Nipomo Mesa Area voted down a measure to create an assessment district for construction of a pipeline to import water from the Santa Maria area.
7. Ongoing water supply management activities in the NCMA include investigation of new supply sources and cooperative management of demand and existing supply.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council receive and file the 2011 NCMA Annual Report.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The agenda was posted in accordance with the Brown Act.

ATTACHMENT

None