

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO | DROUGHT RESILIENCE PLAN**  
**WATER SHORTAGE TASK FORCE MEETING #1 AGENDA**  
**MAY 19, 2025**

## Meeting Information

**Date and Time:** May 19, 2025, 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM

**Location:** Zoom

## Meeting Attendees

### Local Government Representatives:

- ☒ Bharat Singh, County of San Mateo Planning & Building Department
- ☒ Neli Avramova, County Public Works
- ☒ Sara Bachman, Town of Hillsborough Public Works Department
- ☒ Summer Bundy, OneShoreline
- ☐ Julie Casagrande, County Public Works
- ☒ David Cosgrave, County Department of Emergency Management
- ☒ Heather Eastwood, Healthy San Mateo County
- ☒ Matthew Goldberg, County Office of Sustainability
- ☐ Patrick J. Griffin, San Mateo County Fire and Coastsides Fire
- ☐ Camille Leung, County of San Mateo Planning & Building Department
- ☐ Kacie Patton, San Mateo County Health
- ☐ Ryan Reynolds, County Department of Emergency Management
- ☒ Melissa Ross-Perkins, County Office of Sustainability
- ☒ Stephanie Lau, OneShoreline
- ☒ Len Materman, OneShoreline
- ☐ Justin Watkins, Public Health, Policy, and Planning
- ☒ Jarrad Fisher, Resource Conservation District
- ☒ Joe Issel, Resource Conservation District
- ☐ Kellyx Nelson, Resource Conservation District

### Community Members:

- ☒ Ryan Augustine, Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council
- ☒ Irma Rodriguez Mitton, Arriba South Coast

### State and Regional Partners:

- ☒ Reid Bogert, C/CAG and Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program
- ☒ Sarah Ko, CA Dept of Water Resources Division of Regional Assistance

### Water System Representatives:

- ☒ Cathleen Brennan, Coastsides County Water District
- ☐ Stephanie Dalton, North Coast County Water District
- ☒ Clemens Heldmaier, Montara Water and Sanitary District
- ☒ Niambi K.V. Lincoln, Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company
- ☒ Mary Rogren, Coastsides County Water District

### Consultant to County of San Mateo:

- ☒ Jacqueline Protsman Rohr, PlaceWorks
- ☒ Eli Krispi, PlaceWorks
- ☒ Autumn Paynton, PlaceWorks

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## Meeting Notes

### 1. Introductions

- Bharat Singh, County of San Mateo Planning & Building Department
- Irma Rodriguez Mitton, Arriba South Coast
- Clemens Heldmaier - Montara Water and Sanitary District
  - 100% water from local sources, ongoing monitoring program (groundwater & surface water levels).
  - Mini LCP with CA Coastal Commission for local projects.
- Reid Bogert - Program Director – Countywide stormwater programs (City/County Association of Governments)
  - Supports state-mandated requirements for stormwater.
  - Countywide planning to support green stormwater infrastructure (resilience projects county-wide).
- Stephanie Lau - OneShoreline
- Summer Bundy - Director of Projects - OneShoreline
- Jarrad Fisher - Director of Water Resource Programs – Resource Conservation District
  - Focus on helping domestic and ag water producers have water security on the coast.
  - Projects addressing water efficiency (irrigation efficiency upgrades, installing reservoirs, examining local plans).
  - Water quality side as well – sediment.
- Joe Issel - Director of Stewardship - Resource Conservation District
  - Works with County parks, State parks, individuals, and farmers to address water efficiency.
  - Small community water systems.
  - Water storage, updating water rights, building water lines.
- Ryan Augustine - Chair of Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council
  - Represents Pescadero, Loma Mar, down to Santa Cruz County line.
  - Small water district.
  - Ensure all have access to clean water.
- Neli Avramova - Principal Engineer – County Public Works
  - Manages La Honda and Pescadero small water systems.
- Heather Eastwood - Supervising Epidemiologist – County Health
  - Building out climate and health program.
- David Cosgrave – Emergency Management
  - Only involved when there is too much (flooding) or too little water.
  - Boil water alerts.
  - Grant opportunities.
- Mary Rogen - General Manager - Coastside County Water District
  - 7,800 connections – HMB and unincorporated Coastside.
  - Limitations during drought.
  - Gets 70% of water from San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

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- Cathleen Brennan, Coastside County Water District
    - Water Shortage Contingency Plan.
      - Implemented multiple times during water shortages due to drought.
    - >3,000 connections, which triggers Water Shortage Contingency Plan and Urban Water Management Plan requirement.
  - Sarah Ko – CA Dept. of Water Resources - Water Justice Team
    - SB 552, lead coordinator for grant and outreach program.
    - Also working with Stantec for direct technical assistance.
  - Niambi Lincoln – General Manager at Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company
    - Small groundwater system in East Palo Alto – 1 of 3 in service area.
    - 692 connections.
  - Matthew Goldberg – San Mateo County Sustainability Dept.
    - Safety Element and Environmental Justice element planning support.
  - Melissa Ross-Perkins - Program Manager for Climate Resilience Team
    - Coordinate with the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) to provide green stormwater infrastructure.
    - Partners with Resource Conservation District (RCD) for creek elevation monitoring.
    - Active groundwater monitoring.
    - County coordination for water, stormwater, and some drought.
  - Len Materman – Executive Director – OneShoreline
  - Autumn Paynton – Key Staff – PlaceWorks
  - Jacqueline Protsman Rohr – Project Manager – PlaceWorks
  - Eli Krispi – PREP Project Manager – PlaceWorks
2. **Project Overview** (presentation led by Jacqueline Protsman Rohr, PlaceWorks)
3. **Drought Discussion**
- a) **Drought and Water Supply Challenges**
- **What water supply challenges have you observed during previous drought periods?**
    - Multiple year droughts cause private property owners' domestic (wells) to fail and request to connect to Coastside CWD.
      - Property must be within Coastside CWD's service area.
      - No guarantee they can connect to Coastside CWD's water system.
        - Must purchase a water connection.
        - Must Install the water connection.
        - Might need a pipeline extension.
      - To be eligible for priority water connection as a failed well Coastside CWD needs letter from SMC Environmental Health confirming the determination that the well has failed. City of Half Moon Bay and County of San Mateo have reserved priority connections as for failed domestic wells within Coastside CWD's service area. Not enough connections reserved to cover all the private domestic wells within Coastside CWD's service area.
    - In the southern portion of the county, all domestic/agriculture users are pulling water from local creeks.

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- Important to consider stream flow as a whole ecosystem, as every drop counts.
  - Much of the infrastructure is aging, making upgrades challenging due to lack of plans and redundancy.
  - Some communities have run out of water and require trucking in supplies.
- Montara Water District relies on groundwater sources that keep them going through drought conditions.
  - Individuals relying on local water supply and domestic wells (mainly surface water) are more affected.
- East Palo Alto Municipal Water District has 5 wells within its jurisdiction.
  - Two wells are currently non-operational (one collapsed, one has high manganese levels).
  - One standby well is reserved for emergency use only.
  - Funding was obtained for a replacement, but bureaucratic processes have delayed implementation.
  - Concerns exist about adequate summer water supply.
  - Outdoor water use is a significant portion of consumption.
- **How have these challenges changed over time?**
  - Climate change necessitates working across water users and property boundaries to address various needs, including ecosystem preservation.
  - The 2014-2015 drought period resulted in dried fields, job losses, and economic hardships.
  - Concerns about shifts at the State level from a unified message to more localized approaches, creating confusion.
    - Belief that during drought scenarios, conservation should be universal rather than based solely on local conditions.
  - Water storage projects have become increasingly important, with domestic users storing winter water and ceasing diversions during dry periods.
- **Which areas of the county or populations groups are most vulnerable to water supply challenges?**
  - Small community water systems in more rural areas.
  - Farm labor housing.
  - Individual water users.
  - South Coast - where groundwater is not an option or of poor quality, so surface water is the most abundant source.
  - East Palo Alto - City's infrastructure is old.
    - Collaborative effort needed with cross connections.
    - Surrounded by other cities/water districts.
  - Pescadero High School has been struggling to get water for years, importing via truck.
    - Working on getting attached to CSA 11 (public connection). Data from wells shows concern over recharge rate (ability to support a growing

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system). Many residents on private systems would also like to be attached to public supply.

- CSA 7 (La Honda area - about 107 connections) currently on surface water, which is a limited source.
  - Unsuccessful in getting a secondary source.

**b) Existing Programs**

- **What drought and water conservation programs/projects currently exist in your area or does your agency provide?**
  - Resource Conservation District - Water for Farms, Fish, and People Program
    - Start with efficiency, then focus on increasing supply.
    - Brought in about \$45M to Coastsides through programs.
    - Work with local partners and state to enact programs on the ground, working across boundaries.
  - Resource Conservation District Doesn't own property, but partners with many local agencies.
    - Able to respond to working issues. Difficulty in scaling programs.
  - City/County Association of Governments - Rain barrel rebate program
    - Experiences increased demand during multi-year droughts.
    - South San Francisco - Diversion out of Colma Creek Channel stored at park for infiltration.
    - Wastewater treatment project in Menlo Park (Sharon Heights golf course) for irrigation.
  - Coastsides County Water District – Invested in advanced metering infrastructure (Smart Meters).
    - Online program for customers to view hourly water usage.
    - Monthly billing provides faster feedback and identifies leaks or usage patterns faster.
  - Resource Conservation District - Successful implementation of surface water capture during wet months in "stocking ponds" for dry period use.
    - Facilitates water percolation and retention rather than ocean discharge.
    - Nearly 100-acre feet of water storage ponds, primarily in parks.
    - Creates additional funding opportunities.
    - Opens some funding opportunities as well.
  - BAWSCA (Bay Area Water Supply Agency) – San Mateo County membership
    - One-stop shop for water conservation rebates & educational programs.
    - Turf replacement (landscaping) rebates.
    - Rain garden component.
    - "Check It Out" water and energy saving tool kit (through County Public Libraries).
    - Provide water pick up stations during power outages.
- **How effective are these programs at reducing water demand or increasing water supply?**
  - Smart meters have been very successful in water savings.
    - Helpful during drought if under mandatory water usage restrictions.
  - Effective with more projects at scale.

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- Still working on recent long drought issues, and taking a while to see impacts of response

**c) Implementation Barriers**

- **What barriers have you experienced in implementing drought and water conservation programs?**
  - Water rights limitations
    - Complexities of water rights and moving water across properties.
    - Consideration of availability to downstream users.
    - Limited amount of water you can take during winter months.
  - Barriers on the permitting side
    - Challenging to keep up with how quickly programs need to be implemented.
  - Funding - Resource Conservation District
  - South Coast challenges
    - Majority individual domestic wells lack centralized infrastructure.
    - Difficulty with outreach and eligibility issues for rebates and programs due to small water systems and well users.
    - Many do not pay for water - different messaging needed about the value of saving water.
  - Coordination difficulties
    - Siloed departments and agencies.
    - Support needed and creation of space to make this coordination happen.

**4. Next steps**

- OneWater Groups - good contact to start outreach to small state water systems.
  - Coastside, Mid-Coast, South Coast
- Next meeting at end of July - will send out Doodle poll in mid-June.
  - Focus on reviewing and providing feedback on vulnerability results.
- Questions:
  - Are there any actions to be taken between now and the next meeting?
    - A: Will have a couple follow-up emails to collect contacts and data - all that's needed at this point until draft vulnerability assessment is available to review.
- Virtual workshop for PREP project on May 21<sup>st</sup>.