



SANTA ROSA PLAIN • PETALUMA VALLEY • SONOMA VALLEY

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCIES

PRESS RELEASE

Andrea Rodriguez

707.331.2040

Andrea.Rodriguez@scwa.ca.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Groundwater Users Can Now Review Fee Information Online

Santa Rosa, CA— Groundwater users in the Petaluma Valley, Santa Rosa Plain and Sonoma Valley basins can now review annual fee information online through the Groundwater User Information Data Exchange (GUIDE) program.

GUIDE is a service of Sonoma County's groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs). The program allows groundwater users to review estimated or actual water use for parcels in the three basins, which are managed by the Sonoma Valley, Santa Rosa Plain and Petaluma Valley GSAs. Fees approved in July by the GSAs' boards of directors are based on annual water use and will help pay for programs, projects and policy actions to implement recently adopted Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

"The GUIDE program provides transparency to groundwater users, who can review the information that was used to calculate their annual fee," said Cotati Vice-Mayor Susan Harvey, who chairs the Santa Rosa Plain GSA.

The GUIDE program was rolled-out in Santa Rosa Plain in 2021 and has been updated and expanded into Petaluma Valley and Sonoma Valley. Groundwater users will be receiving letters in mid-September that explain the program and that include the annual fee amount specific to their property. For most groundwater users, the fees will be included on their annual property tax bill.

"While no one is excited about paying fees, thanks to a contribution from Sonoma County, the majority rural residents will pay \$20 a year to help sustainably manage groundwater," said Sonoma County Supervisor David Rabbitt, who chairs the Petaluma Valley GSA.

A contribution from Sonoma County will allow non-municipal groundwater users to pay a fee that will be the same in all three basins: \$40 per acre foot of groundwater pumped annually (an acre foot equals approximately 326,000 gallons). For rural residents, who use wells for a single home, garden and landscaping, the fee will be \$20 annually. Without the county contribution, which was approved during recent budget hearings, ratepayers in Sonoma Valley would have

paid \$73 per acre foot of groundwater pumped annually and in Petaluma Valley, \$147 per acre foot. The Santa Rosa Plain fee of \$40 per acre foot was not affected by the county contribution.

“Sonoma Valley faces significant groundwater problems in the future unless we take action. The fees will help pay for programs and projects needed to reverse declining groundwater levels and make us competitive to receive grant funding,” said Sonoma County Supervisor Susan Gorin, who is the chair of the Sonoma Valley GSA.

The fees apply to groundwater users whose property lies within one of the three basins, including rural residents, agriculture, businesses, golf courses, mutual water companies, schools, churches, parks and other groundwater users. Cities and water districts will pay fees, and urban water users will not be directly charged, but may see the fees reflected in their water bills.

The GUIDE program was developed for the GSAs by Permit Sonoma and Sonoma Water. In addition to providing transparency to groundwater users, GUIDE will help the GSAs learn more about groundwater uses and users in the basin as people voluntarily submit information through the program. The project was funded by the California Department of Water Resources through the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68).

For more information, go to

<https://petalumavalleygroundwater.org/guide/>
<https://sonomavalleygroundwater.org/guide/>
<https://santarosaplaingroundwater.org/ /user/>

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