

## An Agriculture Perspective

The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the North American Subbasin (NASb) completed and submitted the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to the Department of Water Resources on January 31, 2022, pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act regulation. As agriculture has long been a major beneficial user of groundwater, protecting its availability is one of the key priorities of the GSP. The GSP's analysis of the subbasin shows that the groundwater basin is healthy. Based on its ability to recover from past droughts, it is expected to recover from the current drought and continue to be healthy into the future.

The WPGSA and other NASb agencies are committed with staff and funding to continue effective groundwater management and implement the GSP. Currently there is no desire to put measurement devices on wells or tax well owners for groundwater usage. We believe that the future of agriculture groundwater is good, even with the predicted growth and climate change conditions, due to good policies to protect groundwater and the planned projects and management actions in the GSP.

Five management actions are proposed in the GSP for implementation over the next several years. These include development of a federally recognized water bank that would store

groundwater in wet periods for recovery during dry periods; improved well permitting processes in Placer, Sacramento, and Sutter counties to protect sensitive users of groundwater; improved coordination with land use agencies to inform them of groundwater conditions; improved data collection and communication with domestic and other shallow well owners; and improved understanding of groundwater dependent ecosystems. Additionally, Placer County will be developing recharge projects through the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors approved, and developer funded, Sustainable Agricultural Groundwater Recharge Program.

The GSAs recently completed the first GSP Annual Report and will soon be presenting the findings to the NASb interested parties and stakeholders (via Zoom, estimated late June). The West Placer GSA is also planning a "tailgate" meeting with our agriculture community to be scheduled soon. We want stakeholders to be engaged and informed as we implement the GSP. At any time, interested parties can obtain information, review the GSP and annual reports, or sign up for email notifications at [nasbgroundwater.org](https://nasbgroundwater.org), [westplacergroundwater.com](https://westplacergroundwater.com), or by calling your GSA representative.

For more information or questions, please feel free to contact Chris Hanson, Supervising Planner with Placer County at: [CHanson@placer.ca.gov](mailto:CHanson@placer.ca.gov) or (530) 886-4965.

## About the WPGSA

The West Placer Groundwater Sustainability Agency was formed in 2017 to implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act passed in 2014. The Act requires the formation of such agencies to manage local groundwater basins. Placer County, the cities of Roseville and Lincoln, Placer County Water Agency, and in participation with the California American Water Company, make up the West Placer Groundwater Sustainability Agency and manage a portion of the North American Subbasin.

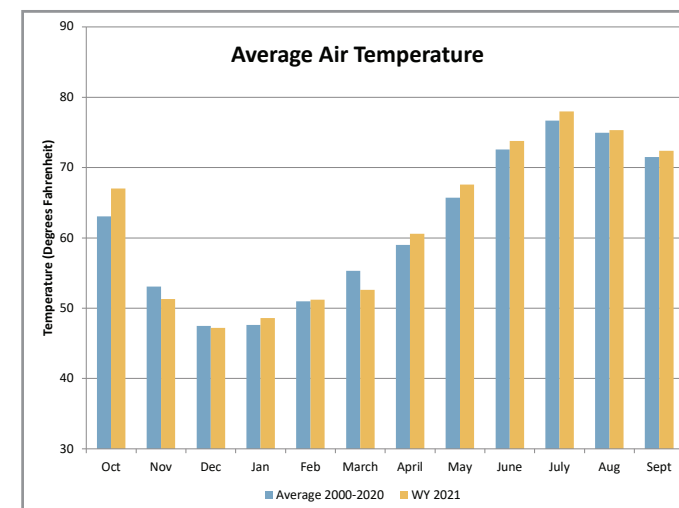
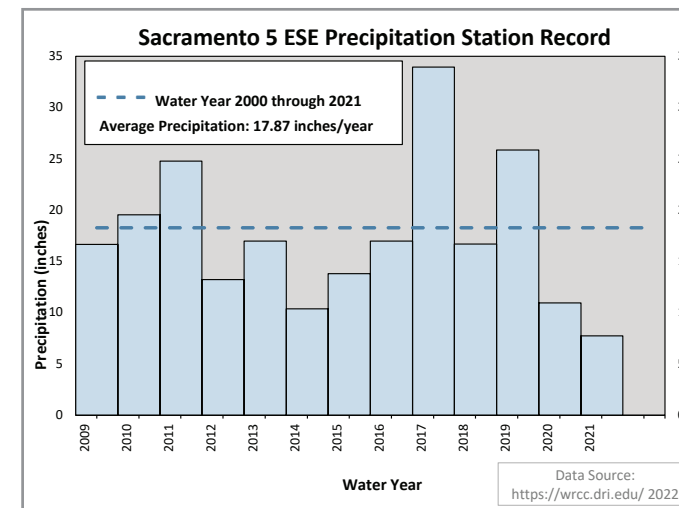


# NORTH AMERICAN SUBBASIN Groundwater Annual Report 2021

This document summarizes the information submitted in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan Water Year 2021 (October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021) Annual Report for the North American Subbasin (NASb). The full report can be obtained here: [sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/gspar/preview/149](https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/gspar/preview/149). For more information about the NASb, please visit <https://nasbgroundwater.org>.

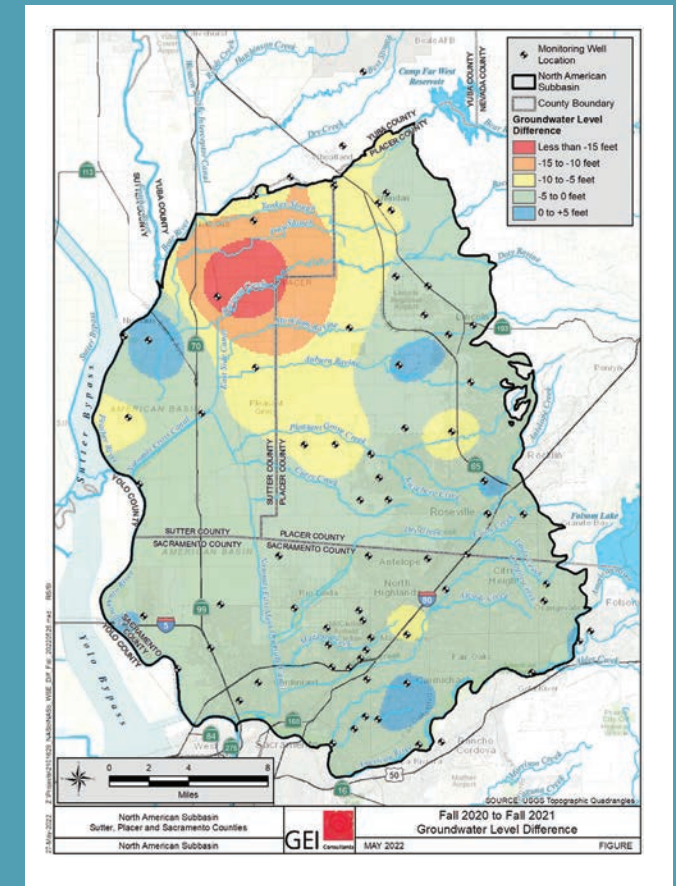
## Hydrologic Conditions

California continues to be in an extreme drought that began in Water Year 2020. Water Year 2021 was extremely dry with precipitation less than half of historical averages. Temperatures this year were also higher than the average annual temperatures in recent years, as shown below.



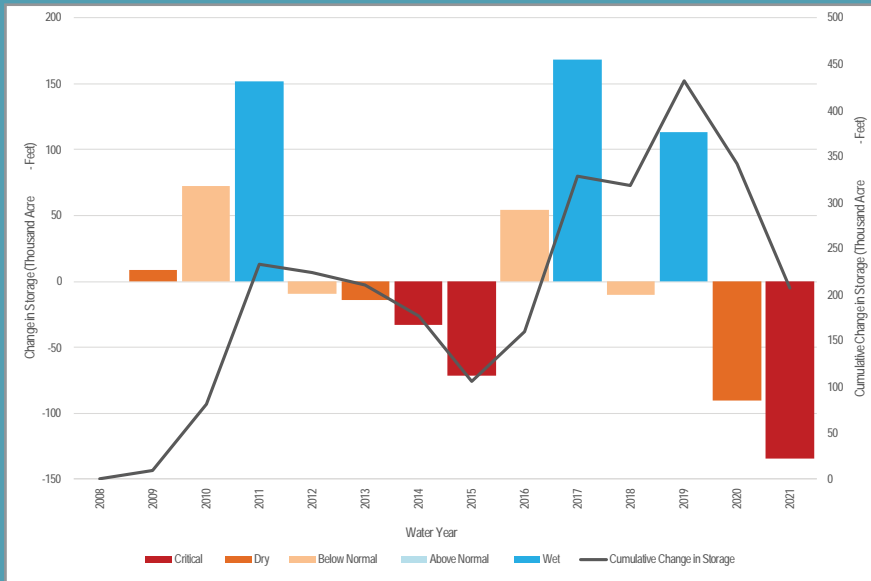
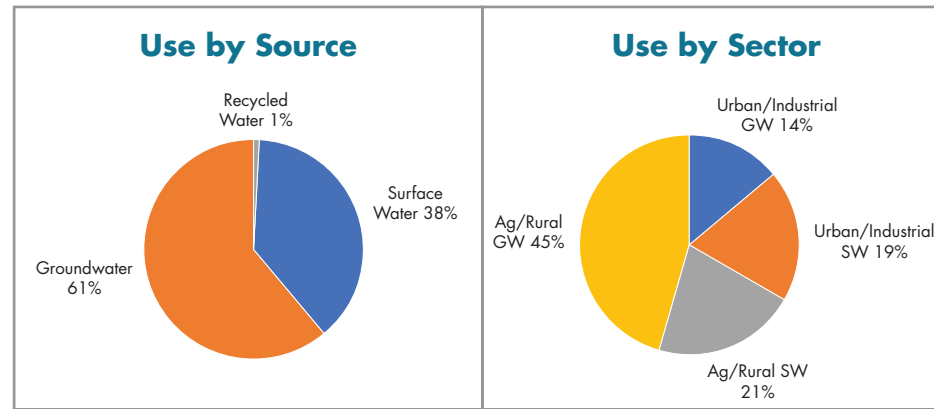
## Groundwater Levels

Understandably, groundwater levels decreased across the subbasin and entire state. There are 41 locations in the NASb where water levels are monitored. The spring (seasonal high) and fall (seasonal low) measurements showed that 2021 groundwater levels were lower than the same periods in 2020. The contour map below shows the change in water levels from fall 2020 to fall 2021. While some areas of the NASb experienced more notable declines, in west Placer, most areas saw water level declines ranging from 0 to 7 feet at most.



## Water Supply and Use

In Water Year 2021, groundwater supplied about 60 percent of the water used in the NASb area with the remainder supplied by surface water and recycled water. Of the total combined water supply in the NASb, about one-third was used by the urban and industrial sector and about two-thirds was used by agricultural and other rural uses. The amount of groundwater and surface water use varies each year, depending upon the amount of rain and surface water availability.



## Change in Groundwater Storage

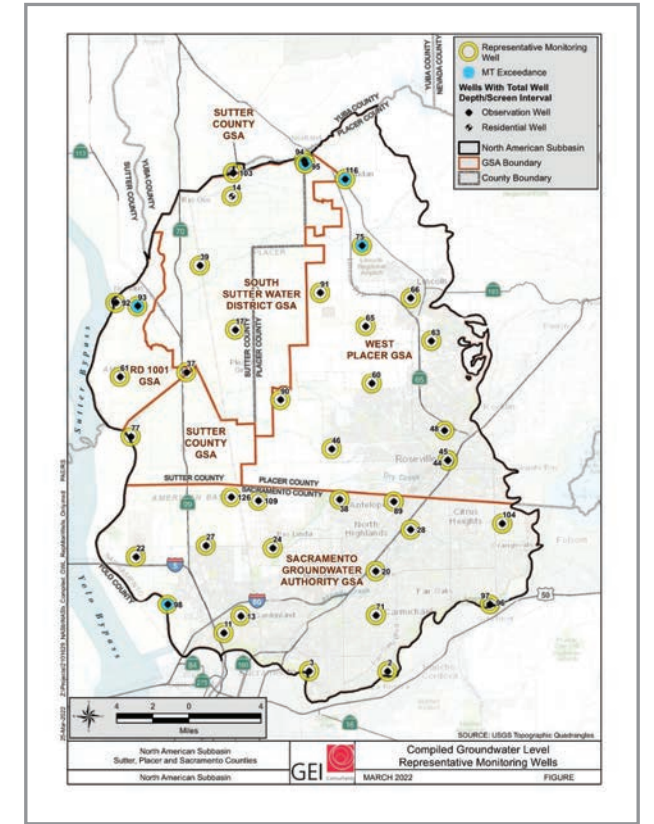
Due to sustained drought conditions and resulting increase in groundwater use, the amount of groundwater stored in the basin has declined. Using measured changes in fall groundwater levels (2021 compared to 2020), the calculated storage decreased by approximately 110,000 acre feet. However, to put in context, the remaining groundwater storage is over 200,000 acre feet above historic low levels. Historic, cumulative storage data (shown below) shows increases in wet years and declines in dry years – demonstrating groundwater in the NASb is elastic and can recover (indicative of a healthy subbasin) – so we expect to see the subbasin recover in coming wetter years.

## GSP Sustainability Indicators

The recent dry years have resulted in some (5 out of 41 wells) of the NASb monitoring locations exceeding the minimum threshold (MT) values established. These were defined in the GSP as groundwater levels that when exceeded, individually or in combination, may cause what SGMA refers to as “undesirable results” – evidence of which could include wells going dry, documentable subsidence, etc. SGMA specifically states that MT exceedances during periods of drought do not automatically indicate an “undesirable result” if groundwater is managed to ensure water level declines during droughts are offset by increases during other periods, e.g. wet years.

## GSP Implementation

Although the NASb GSP was only recently adopted and submitted in January 2022, member GSAs have already begun preparatory activities toward implementing defined Projects and Management Actions. In west Placer, groundwater agencies are already increasing coordination with land use agencies, developing well permitting standards to protect beneficial users and uses, as well as increasing our understanding of and communication with domestic well owners in the basin. West Placer, independent of the GSP, is also working to identify sites for groundwater recharge to increase localized water levels.



## So What Else is New?

### New State website to report dry wells

The GSAs want to know if there are groundwater problems in west Placer and the only way that we can stay informed is with your help. Residents experiencing dry wells, or other problems with their private wells, can report to the CA Department of Water Resource’s Household Water Supply Shortage Reporting System which is available online at:

<https://mydrywell.water.ca.gov/report>.



### Governor’s Drought Executive Order

In response to the extreme drought conditions, the Governor signed Executive Order N-7-22. Among other things, the Order requires additional, specific actions be taken by local well permitting agencies prior to issuing a well permit and consider in their approval of permits whether the new well interfere with nearby, existing wells or are likely to cause subsidence. The well permitting agency must also obtain written verification from their local GSA that proposed wells are consistent with the GSP. The GSAs are working with permitting agencies to develop best practices to comply with this Order.

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/March-2022-Drought-EO.pdf>

