



For Immediate Release

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Scientists launching groundwater study in Southern Coastal Ranges

Public invited to informational meeting April 30.

Scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) next week will present their plans to study untreated well water from groundwater basins in two river valleys in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

The meeting, conducted by the State Water Resources Control Board and the USGS, is set for 1 to 3 p.m. Wednesday, April 30, at the Central Coast Water Authority, 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, CA, 93427. Maps, an agenda and other information are available at the USGS California Water Science Center's Web site at http://ca.water.usgs.gov/news/releaseApril22_2008.html.

The Water Board's Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA) Program is collaborating with the USGS and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories (LLNL) to conduct the Priority Basin Assessment Project. The Priority Basin Assessment Project monitors and assesses groundwater basins in California based on groundwater use. The main goals of GAMA are to improve comprehensive statewide groundwater monitoring and to increase the availability of groundwater quality information to the public.

The USGS California Water Science Center is the project lead for GAMA's Priority Basin Assessment Project. With the voluntary cooperation of local water agencies and well owners, USGS is testing well water in California groundwater basins over a 10-year period.

The Southern Coastal Ranges unit is one of 36 GAMA groundwater study units and consists of the Santa Maria River Valley and Santa Ynez River Valley in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. The sampling will start on May 19 and be finished by mid-August, and a report on the data is expected to be available in about a year.

The GAMA Priority Basin Assessment Project is designed to characterize water quality in groundwater basins. GAMA does not evaluate the quality of water delivered to consumers. After withdrawal from the ground, water for public systems is typically treated or mixed to maintain water quality before consumers receive it.

More information on the GAMA program is available at: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/gama/> and <http://ca.water.usgs.gov/gama/>.

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The USGS California Water Science Center (<http://ca.water.usgs.gov/>) operates project offices in Sacramento and San Diego where more than 130 scientists bring a broad range of disciplines to modern water-management issues. The center also has nine field offices where scientists and technicians gather hydrologic data on California's surface-water and ground-water resources.