

County of Monterey

*Schilling Government Center
1441 Schilling Place
Salinas, CA 93901*



Meeting Agenda

Thursday, February 26, 2026

1:30 PM

**SLO County Chair location: Old Courthouse Room 207
976 Osos St. San Luis Obispo Ca. 93408**

Saffron Room - 1441 Schilling Pl, Salinas CA 93901 or Via Zoom

Water Resources Advisory Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

John Baillie, Chair

Jason Smith, Vice Chair

Ken Ekelund

Jon Conatser

Doug Scattini

David Bunn

Steve McIntyre

Grant Cremers

Dennis Lebow

Robin Lee

Patrick Breen

Nathan Merkel

Anna McKenna

NRWMAC - Vacant

Salinas Valley City - Vacant

How to participate in this meeting:

Via Zoom: Members of the public may participate in this meeting virtually via computer or smart device. To Join the Zoom Meeting, copy and paste the link into your browser:

<https://montereycty.zoom.us/j/94660417478?pwd=tPGpV3BHvH32Z9ikayGJjfjmaIifAT.1>

Meeting ID: 946 6041 7478 Password: 414544

To Participate via phone, you can call the number below and enter the webinar ID number and password when prompted: Phone Number: (669) 219 2599 Meeting ID: 946 6041 7478 Password: 414544

In-Person at the address listed above.

Public Comments: The following options are available to any member of the public participating virtually or in person who wishes to make any comments to the Water Resources Advisory Committee.

Before the Meeting via Email: Written comments can be emailed by 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to the Committee meeting, to WRAPubliccomment@countyofmonterey.gov,. Please indicate the Committee name, meeting date and agenda number in the subject. Comments received by the deadline will be distributed to the Committee and placed in the record.

During the Meeting via Oral Comments: When the Chair calls for public comment, attendees can queue to speak by raising their hand in person. On the Zoom application, click the "Raise Hand" button. On the phone, or press *9 on the phone. The Secretary to the Board Committee will call speaker names and un mute speaker mics. You will have 3 minutes to provide your comments.

Please note, the time limit to speak for commenter's who have already submitted something in writing may be shortened.

PLEASE NOTE: IF ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE PRESENT IN PERSON, ZOOM ACCESS IS FOR CONVENIENCE ONLY AND NOT LEGALLY REQUIRED. IF THE ZOOM FEED IS LOST, THE MEETING MAY PAUSE BRIEFLY BUT CAN CONTINUE AT THE CHAIRPERSON'S DISCRETION

Individuals with disabilities who desire to request a reasonable accommodation or modification to observe or participate in the meeting may make such request by sending an email to WRAPubliccomment@countyofmonterey.gov. The request should be made no later than noon on the Wednesday prior to the Committee meeting in order to provide time for the Agency to address the request.

The Chair and/or Secretary may set reasonable rules as needed to conduct the meeting in an orderly manner

Cómo participar en esta reunión:

De forma remota vía Zoom: Los miembros del público pueden participar en esta reunión de manera virtual a través de una computadora o dispositivo inteligente. Para unirse a la reunión de Zoom, copie y pegue el siguiente enlace en su navegador:

<https://montereycty.zoom.us/j/94660417478?pwd=tPGpV3BHvH32Z9ikayGJjfjmaIifAT.1>

ID de la reunión: 946 6041 7478 Contraseña: 414544

Para participar por teléfono: Puede llamar al número que aparece a continuación e ingresar el ID de la reunión y la contraseña cuando se le solicite:

Número de teléfono: (669) 219 2599 ID de la reunión: 946 6041 7478 Contraseña: 414544

En persona: En la dirección indicada anteriormente.

Comentarios del público: Las siguientes opciones están disponibles para cualquier miembro del público que participe de forma virtual o en persona y desee hacer comentarios ante el Comité Asesor de Recursos Hídricos.

Antes de la reunión por correo electrónico: Los comentarios escritos pueden enviarse por correo electrónico hasta las 5:00 p. m. del miércoles previo a la reunión del Comité a:

WRAPubliccomment@countyofmonterey.gov

Por favor, indique el nombre del Comité, la fecha de la reunión y el número del punto de la agenda en el asunto del correo electrónico. Los comentarios recibidos antes de la fecha límite serán distribuidos al Comité y archivados como parte del registro oficial.

Durante la reunión mediante comentarios orales: Cuando el Presidente solicite comentarios del

público, los asistentes pueden hacer fila para hablar levantando la mano en persona. En la aplicación de Zoom, haga clic en el botón “Levantar la mano”. Por teléfono, presione *9.

El/la Secretario/a del Comité llamará a los oradores por nombre y activará sus micrófonos. Cada persona tendrá 3 minutos para presentar sus comentarios. Tenga en cuenta que el tiempo permitido para quienes ya hayan presentado comentarios por escrito puede ser reducido.

POR FAVOR TENGA EN CUENTA: SI TODOS LOS MIEMBROS DEL COMITÉ ESTÁN PRESENTES EN PERSONA, EL ACCESO POR ZOOM ES SOLO POR CONVENIENCIA Y NO ES LEGALMENTE REQUERIDO. SI SE PIERDE LA SEÑAL DE ZOOM, LA REUNIÓN PUEDE PAUSARSE BREVE PERO PUEDE CONTINUAR A DISCRECIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE.

Las personas con discapacidades que deseen solicitar una adaptación o modificación razonable para observar o participar en la reunión pueden hacerlo enviando un correo electrónico a: WRApubliccomment@countyofmonterey.gov

La solicitud debe realizarse a más tardar al mediodía del miércoles previo a la reunión del Comité, para permitir que la Agencia tenga tiempo de atender la solicitud.

El Presidente y/o el Secretario podrán establecer reglas razonables según sea necesario para conducir la reunión de manera ordenada.

Call to Order

Roll Call

Public Comments

Committee Member Comments

Presentations

1. New Committee Orientation and Introductions. (Staff Presenting: Jason Demers.)

Staff Reports

2. Overview of 2025 Reservoir Release Schedule. (Staff Presenting: Joey Klein.)

Attachments: [2025 Release Schedule Final](#)
[2025 Release Schedule Adopted](#)

3. Current Reservoir Conditions, Releases, and Downstream Flows. (Staff Presenting: Joey Klein, Casey DeLay.)

Attachments: [Reservoir Storage Release Report](#)

4. Reservoir Data and Resources. (Staff Presenting: Casey DeLay.)

Attachments: [WRAC Reservoir Data & Resources Feb 2026](#)

Status Reports

- 5.
- Reservoir Recreation and Parks Activities
 - County of San Luis Obispo Activities

Information Items

6. Water Year 2026 Quarter One Salinas Valley Water Conditions Report

Attachments: [Salinas Valley Water Conditions WY2026 Q1](#)

Calendar

7. Set the next meeting date and discuss future agenda items.

Adjournment



County of Monterey

Item No.1

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAG 26-040

February 26, 2026

Introduced: 2/19/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WR General Agenda

New Committee Orientation and Introductions. (Staff Presenting: Jason Demers.)



County of Monterey

Item No.2

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAG 26-041

February 26, 2026

Introduced: 2/19/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WR General Agenda

Overview of 2025 Reservoir Release Schedule. (Staff Presenting: Joey Klein.)

RESERVOIR RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR 2025

Month	1 2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15		16																	
																															NACIMIENTO										SAN ANTONIO					
																															Combined Releases (cfs) ¹	Combined Releases (ac-ft)	Evap. Losses (ac-ft)	Reservoir Releases (cfs) ¹	Reservoir Releases (ac-ft)	NWP Orders (ac-ft)	NWP Diversions (ac-ft)	Beginning of Month Storage		Elev. (ft)	Evap. Losses (ac-ft)	Reservoir Releases (cfs) ¹	Reservoir Releases (ac-ft)	Beginning of Month Storage		Elev. (ft)
(ac-ft)	(%)	(ac-ft)	(%)																																											
Jan	73	4,487	554	63	3,872	600	126	199,548	53%	763.2	640	10	615	233,863	70%	759.5																														
Feb	172	9,894	568	60	3,466	553	97	196,183	52%	762.4	606	112	6,428	232,588	69%	759.2																														
Mar	203	12,498	821	144	8,884	696	121	251,160	66%	775.4	948	59	3,614	239,640	72%	760.8																														
Apr	288	17,108	1,502	278	16,513	677	117	259,265	69%	777.1	2,060	10	595	241,820	72%	761.3																														
May	469	28,862	2,661	352	21,666	1,616	123	245,725	65%	774.2	3,178	117	7,196	242,260	72%	761.4																														
Jun	513	30,552	3,356	398	23,663	2,129	139	222,563	59%	768.9	3,598	116	6,889	233,438	70%	759.4																														
Jul	558	34,322	2,117	299	18,373	2,188	490	195,985	52%	762.3	2,413	259	15,949	224,060	67%	757.1																														
Aug	623	38,331	1,812	280	17,205	2,188	513	174,477	46%	756.7	2,306	344	21,126	206,180	62%	752.6																														
Sep	464	27,610	1,335	234	13,944	2,144	553	154,573	41%	751.1	1,705	230	13,666	183,753	55%	746.6																														
Oct	70	4,304	1,265	60	3,689	1,369	473	139,010	37%	746.4	1,294	10	615	170,610	51%	742.8																														
Nov	70	4,165	653	60	3,570	996	352	134,498	36%	745.0	682	10	595	169,748	51%	742.6																														
Dec	71	4,352	412	61	3,737	594	199	132,515	35%	744.3	442	10	615	169,230	51%	742.4																														
Jan 2026								146,210	39%	748.6				171,473	51%	743.1																														
Totals	216,485	17,056	138,582	15,750	3,303	19,871	77,903																																							

Draft Date: 2/18/2026

Notes:

1. Mean daily flow for the month in cubic feet per second.
2. Shaded areas denote actual values. Non-shaded areas are projected values.
3. Nacimiento Reservoir storage capacity: 377,900 acre feet; San Antonio Reservoir storage capacity: 335,000 acre feet.
4. Reservoir Operations Advisory Committee may make release considerations for holiday periods to benefit recreation.
5. Schedule assumes no additional storm events that provide inflow to reservoirs. Actual elevations and or releases may be influenced by inflow.
6. "NWP Diversions" are San Luis Obispo County - Nacimiento Water Project conveyance facilities diversions. Max. allowable water year (Oct. 1 - Sept. 30) diversions: 15,750 ac-ft.
7. Nacimiento "NWP Diversions" do not include lakeside water use which is estimated at approximately 1,750 acre feet per year.



RESERVOIR RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR 2025

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16														
																	NACIMIENTO							SAN ANTONIO						
																	Combined Releases (cfs) ¹	Combined Releases (ac-ft)	Evap. Losses (ac-ft)	Reservoir Releases (cfs) ¹	Reservoir Releases (ac-ft)	NWP Orders (ac-ft)	NWP Diversions (ac-ft)	Beginning of Month Storage		Evap. Losses (ac-ft)	Reservoir Releases (cfs) ¹	Reservoir Releases (ac-ft)	Beginning of Month Storage	
							(ac-ft)	(%)	(ft)				(ac-ft)	(%)	(ft)															
Jan	73	4,487	554	63	3,872	600	126	199,548	53%	763.2	640	10	615	233,863	70%	759.5														
Feb	172	9,894	568	60	3,466	553	97	196,183	52%	762.4	606	112	6,428	232,588	69%	759.2														
Mar	203	12,498	993	144	8,884	696	121	251,160	66%	775.4	950	59	3,614	239,640	72%	760.8														
Apr	311	18,528	1,417	301	17,933	677		259,033	69%	777.1	1,387	10	595	241,820	72%	761.3														
May	409	25,171	1,976	326	20,033	1,616		242,613	64%	773.5	1,994	84	5,137	241,284	72%	761.2														
Jun	488	29,058	2,561	358	21,283	2,129		218,823	58%	768.0	2,722	131	7,775	234,151	70%	759.5														
Jul	600	36,893	2,572	270	16,602	2,188		193,075	51%	761.6	2,740	330	20,291	223,092	67%	756.9														
Aug	638	39,234	2,302	275	16,899	2,188		171,709	45%	755.9	2,328	363	22,334	200,083	60%	751.0														
Sep	470	27,967	1,774	279	16,622	2,144		150,346	40%	749.8	1,799	191	11,346	175,512	52%	744.2														
Oct	220	13,527	1,185	158	9,719	1,369		129,809	34%	743.4	1,235	62	3,808	162,730	49%	740.5														
Nov	70	4,165	599	60	3,570	996		118,001	31%	739.5	644	10	595	157,925	47%	739.0														
Dec	70	4,304	368	60	3,689	594		112,863	30%	737.7	416	10	615	156,698	47%	738.6														
Jan 2026								108,361	29%	736.1				155,703	46%	738.3														
Totals		225,726	16,871		142,572	15,750	344				17,462		83,154																	

Draft Date: 4/17/25

Notes:

1. Mean daily flow for the month in cubic feet per second.
2. Shaded areas denote actual values. Non-shaded areas are projected values.
3. Nacimiento Reservoir storage capacity: 377,900 acre feet; San Antonio Reservoir storage capacity: 335,000 acre feet.
4. Reservoir Operations Advisory Committee may make release considerations for holiday periods to benefit recreation.
5. Schedule assumes no additional storm events that provide inflow to reservoirs. Actual elevations and or releases may be influenced by inflow.
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7. Nacimiento "NWP Diversions" do not include lakeside water use which is estimated at approximately 1,750 acre feet per year.





County of Monterey

Item No.3

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAG 26-043

February 26, 2026

Introduced: 2/19/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WR General Agenda

Current Reservoir Conditions, Releases, and Downstream Flows. (Staff Presenting: Joey Klein, Casey DeLay.)

Reservoir Storage & Release Update

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The Board of Directors receives monthly updates on the status of Agency reservoirs.

RESERVOIR ELEVATION / STORAGE: As of February 19, 2026, San Antonio Reservoir has a water surface elevation of approximately 750.15 feet (NGVD 29), with 196,913 acre-feet of water in storage. Nacimiento Reservoir has a water surface elevation of approximately 770.15 feet, with 228,153 acre-feet of water in storage. San Antonio Reservoir is currently at 59% of storage capacity and Nacimiento Reservoir is at 60% of capacity.

RAINFALL: A series of storms throughout the month of February have brought renewed inflow to the reservoirs and created natural flow along the entire Salinas River. Seven-day rain accumulations have been recorded ranging from two inches in the drier valley floors of the Salinas, Nacimiento, and San Antonio watersheds to over nine inches in the Santa Lucia. Inflow to Nacimiento Reservoir peaked at 7,690 cfs measured at the Nacimiento River below Sapaque gage, and inflow to San Antonio Reservoir peaked at 5,810 cfs measured at the San Antonio River near Lockwood gage.

SALINAS RIVER LAGOON: Following storms in late December and early January, Lagoon water surface elevation rose from 4 ft on January 2, 2026 to above 5 ft on January 3, 2026. With natural flows from the Arroyo Seco and upper Salinas Rivers reaching the Lagoon and continuing to increase, the Agency facilitated a breach of the lagoon to alleviate localized flooding in accordance with the Agency's Low Effect Habitat Conservation Plan on January 4, 2026. Water surface elevation in the lagoon reached a peak of 6.82 ft on January 4, 2026. The Salinas Lagoon remains open to the ocean.

RESERVOIR RELEASES: Minimum releases are being made from both reservoirs for maintenance of habitat below the dams. Conservation season releases concluded on Wednesday, September 24, 2025, from San Antonio Reservoir, and Friday, September 26, 2025 from Nacimiento Reservoir.

Releases as of February 19, 2026:

- Nacimiento Reservoir: 60 cfs
- San Antonio Reservoir: 10 cfs

Total releases from both reservoirs to the Salinas River are approximately 70 cfs. The following "provisional" flows have been recorded by the USGS:

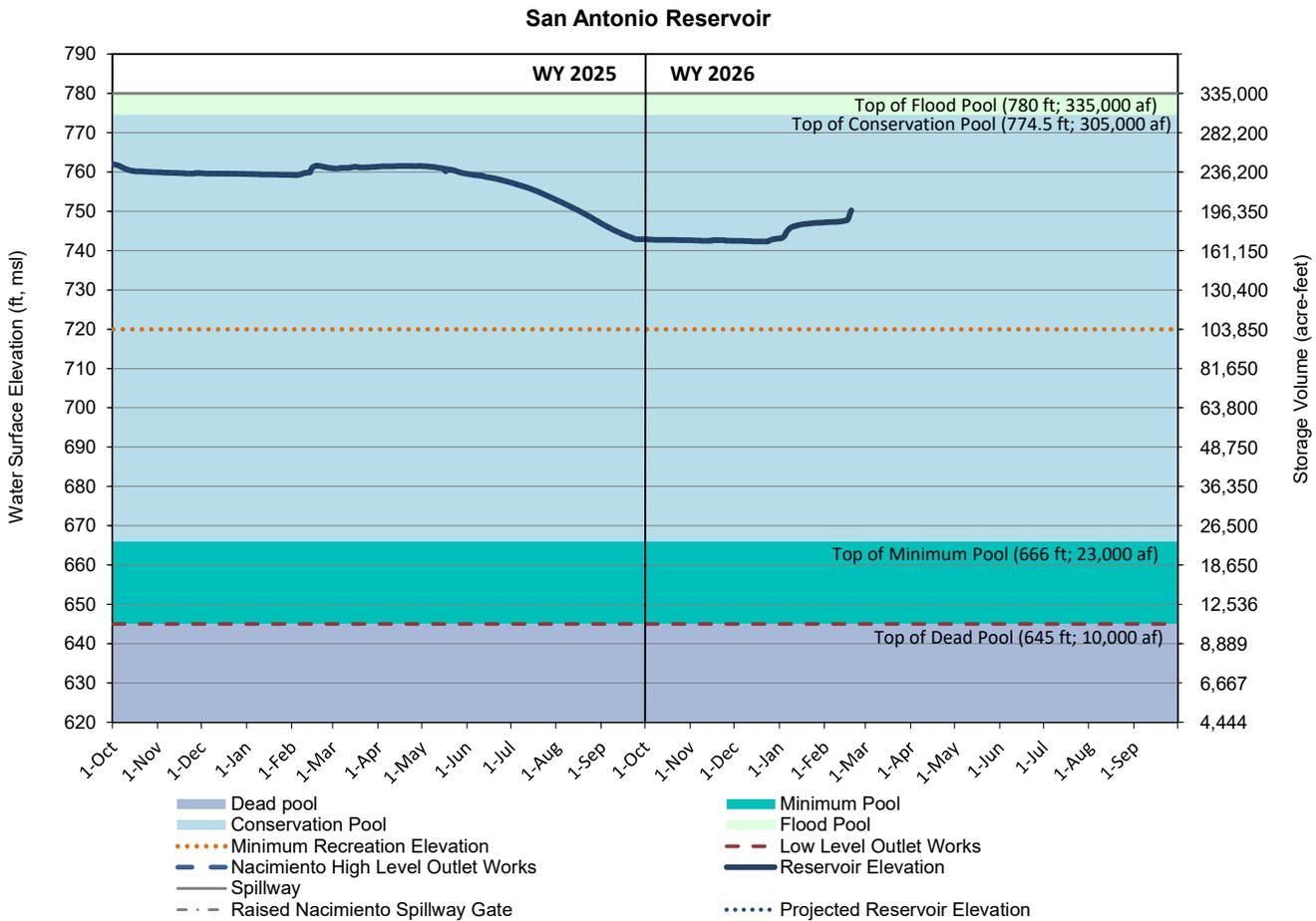
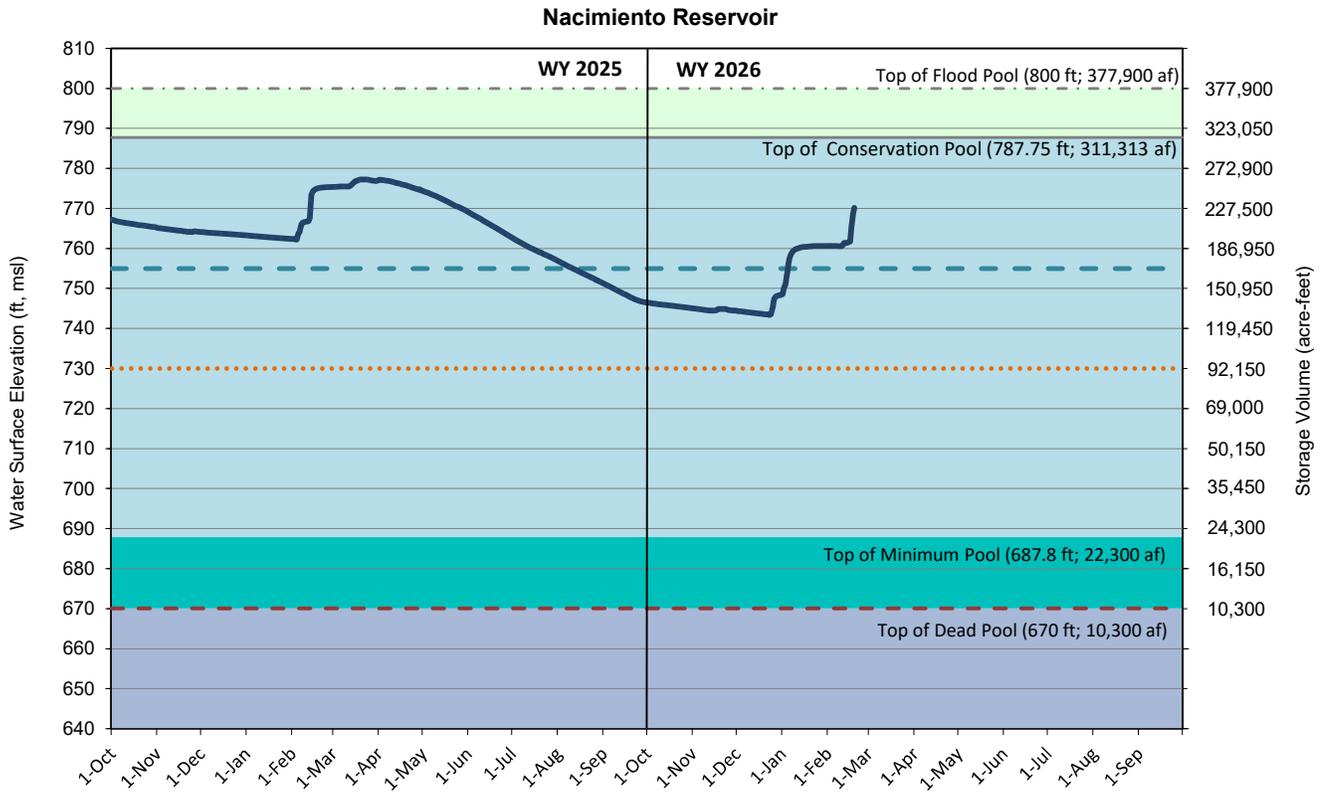
- Nacimiento River below Nacimiento Dam 70 cfs
- Salinas River near Bradley: 2670 cfs
- Salinas River near King City Greater than 603 cfs
- Salinas River at Soledad: 1210 cfs
- Arroyo Seco below Reliz Creek near Soledad 1250 cfs
- Salinas River near Chualar: 2830 cfs
- Salinas River near Spreckels: 2220 cfs

Prepared by: Joseph Klein, Hydrologist (831) 755-4860

Synopsis of Reservoir Release Changes Since September 24, 2025

Date	San Antonio Reservoir		Nacimientto Reservoir		Total Releases
	Starting Flow	Ending Flow	Starting Flow	Ending Flow	
September 24, 2025	245	10	270	270	280
September 25, 2025	10	10	270	130	140
September 26, 2025	10	10	130	60	70

Reservoir Elevation and Storage





County of Monterey

Item No.4

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAG 26-044

February 26, 2026

Introduced: 2/19/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WR General Agenda

Reservoir Data and Resources. (Staff Presenting: Casey DeLay.)



Monterey County Water Resources Agency

Water Resources Advisory Committee Agenda Committee

Reservoir Data and Resources
26 Feb. 2026

Casey DeLay
Hydrologist



Public Reservoir Data

➤ MCwater.info



Monterey County Water Resources Agency

1441 Schilling Place, North Bldg., Salinas, CA 93901
Phone (831) 755-4860 | After Hours (831) 796-1166

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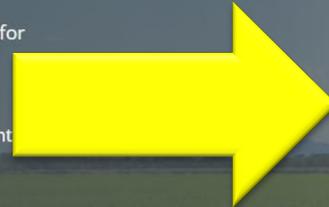
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Water Resources Agency

Mission: Manage water resources sustainably while minimizing impacts from flooding for present and future generations.

Vision: Be recognized throughout the region as a leader in water resource management through demonstrated knowledge, integrity and the quality of our actions.

[MCWRA Bylaw updates - Effective Feb. 2026](#)



- News/Announcements
- Agendas
- Reservoir Data
- Current River Conditions
- Boat Docks



Public Reservoir Data

➤ Reservoir Data

- Current Data
- USGS Gauges
- Release Schedule
- Operations Plan & Policy
- Historical Data
- FAQ (In the Works)

Daily Reservoir & Dam Data

- [Current Week](#)
- [Previous Week](#)

*** You may need to refresh the page to receive the latest reservoir updates

Real-Time Reservoir Elevation Levels

[San Antonio Reservoir USGS Gage](#)

[Nacimiento Reservoir USGS Gage](#)

2025 Reservoir Release Schedule

Reservoir Operations

[Interim Operations Plan](#)

[Nacimiento Dam Operation Policy](#)

Historical Data

Nacimiento Reservoir

[Elevation Graph](#)

[Daily Elevation Data \(PDF\)](#)

[Reservoir Data \(text\)](#)

[Storage Graph](#)

[Daily Releases](#)

San Antonio Reservoir

[Elevation Graph](#)

[Daily Elevation Data \(PDF\)](#)

[Reservoir Data \(text\)](#)

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Public Reservoir Data

➤ Flow Monitoring



Monterey County Water Resources Agency

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Phone (831) 755-4860 | After Hours (831) 796-1166

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Grazing Lease Program	Groundwater Extractions (GEMS)	Groundwater Monitoring Program	Groundwater Level Monitoring		
Protection of Domestic Drinking Water Supplies For The Lower Salinas Valley	Quagga and Zebra Mussels	Salinas River Lagoon Management and Enhancement Plan	Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program (SMP)		
Salinas River Management Program	Seawater Intrusion Monitoring	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act	USGS Cooperative Water Program		
Well Completion Report	Well Registration				



Public Reservoir Data

➤ Flow Monitoring

Background

In 2002, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) Board of Directors certified the Final EIR/EIS and applied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for a permit to construct the [Salinas Valley Water Project \(SVWP\)](#). The SVWP consists of three components:

1. The Nacimiento Dam Modification
2. Reoperation of Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs
3. The Salinas River Diversion Facility

The MCWRA coordinated construction of the SVWP from 2008 through 2010. The project was the culmination of multiple decades of planning, engineering and public involvement. The objectives of the SVWP are to:

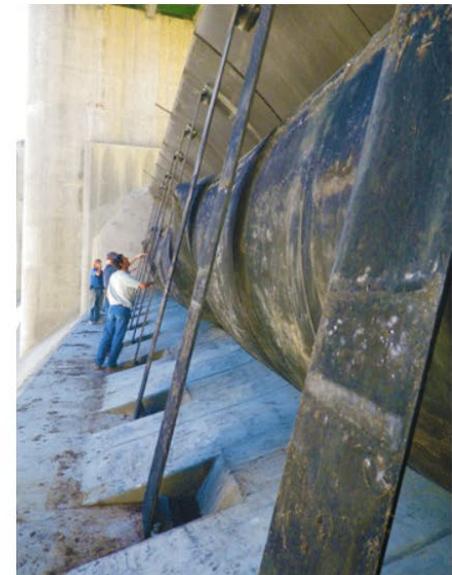
- Halt seawater intrusion
- Provide adequate water to meet current and future (2030) water needs;
- Improve the hydrology of the Salinas Basin.

During the permitting process for the SVWP, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) initiated a formal Section 7 consultation with the Corps on the issuance of a permit for the SVWP. This consultation resulted in the MCWRA authoring the [Salinas Valley Water Project Flow Prescription for Steelhead Trout \(Flow Prescription\)](#) in 2005 and incorporating it into the project description. The Flow Prescription defines flow requirements and operational targets for managing steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in the Salinas River. Three main areas of monitoring are outlined in the Flow Prescription:

1. Quantify the presence of the threatened steelhead trout in the lower Salinas River system (population monitoring)
2. Manage river flows to ensure adequate water for fish passage (migration monitoring)
3. Monitor water quality to determine habitat suitability (habitat monitoring)

The [Flow Prescription](#) has been incorporated into the NMFS Biological Opinion (BO) as a stand-alone document, which may be modified upon mutual agreement between the MCWRA and NMFS, in order to facilitate future adaptive management strategies. The MCWRA submits annually to NMFS reports that summarize SVWP operational and fish flow data in order to comply with the BO. These reports starting with the first year of operation in 2010 are found here:

- [SVWP Annual Flow Monitoring Report - Water Year 2010](#)
- [SVWP Annual Flow Monitoring Report - Water Year 2011](#)



Inflated Nacimiento Spillway rubber dam

Public Reservoir Data

➤ **Contrail**



Monterey County Water Resources Agency

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Grazing Lease Program

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Salinas River Management Program

Well Completion Report

Boat Docks

Fish

Groundwater Extractions (wells)

Quagga and Zebra Mussels

Seawater Intrusion Monitoring

Well Registration

California Statewide Groundwater Level Monitoring Plan (CASGEM)

Flood Warning (ALERT)

Groundwater Monitoring Program

Salinas River Lagoon Management and Enhancement Plan

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

Drought Information

Flow Monitoring

Groundwater Level Monitoring

Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program (SMP)

USGS Cooperative Water Program



Public Reservoir Data

➤ Contrail

- <https://mcwrarealtimehydrodata.com/>



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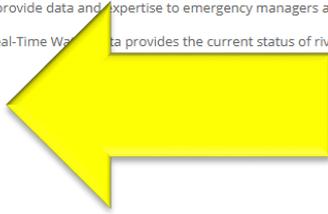
ALERT Flood Warning System

Overview

As reflected in the state legislation that created the Agency, providing flood control services is fundamental to the MCWRA's purpose. This includes structural flood control provided by Agency-owned dams, reservoirs, and pump stations as well as flood warning services provided to Monterey County. Agency staff monitors county wide hydrologic conditions during all significant storm events. A real time flood warning system enables staff to provide data and expertise to emergency managers and local law enforcement at all hours, day or night, as needed for the protection of life and property in Monterey County.

A public portal to the Agency's Real-Time Water Data provides the current status of river stage, flow, and the occurrence and accumulation of rainfall in all major watersheds throughout the county. Access the portal at the following link:

[ALERT Realtime Hydrologic Data](#)



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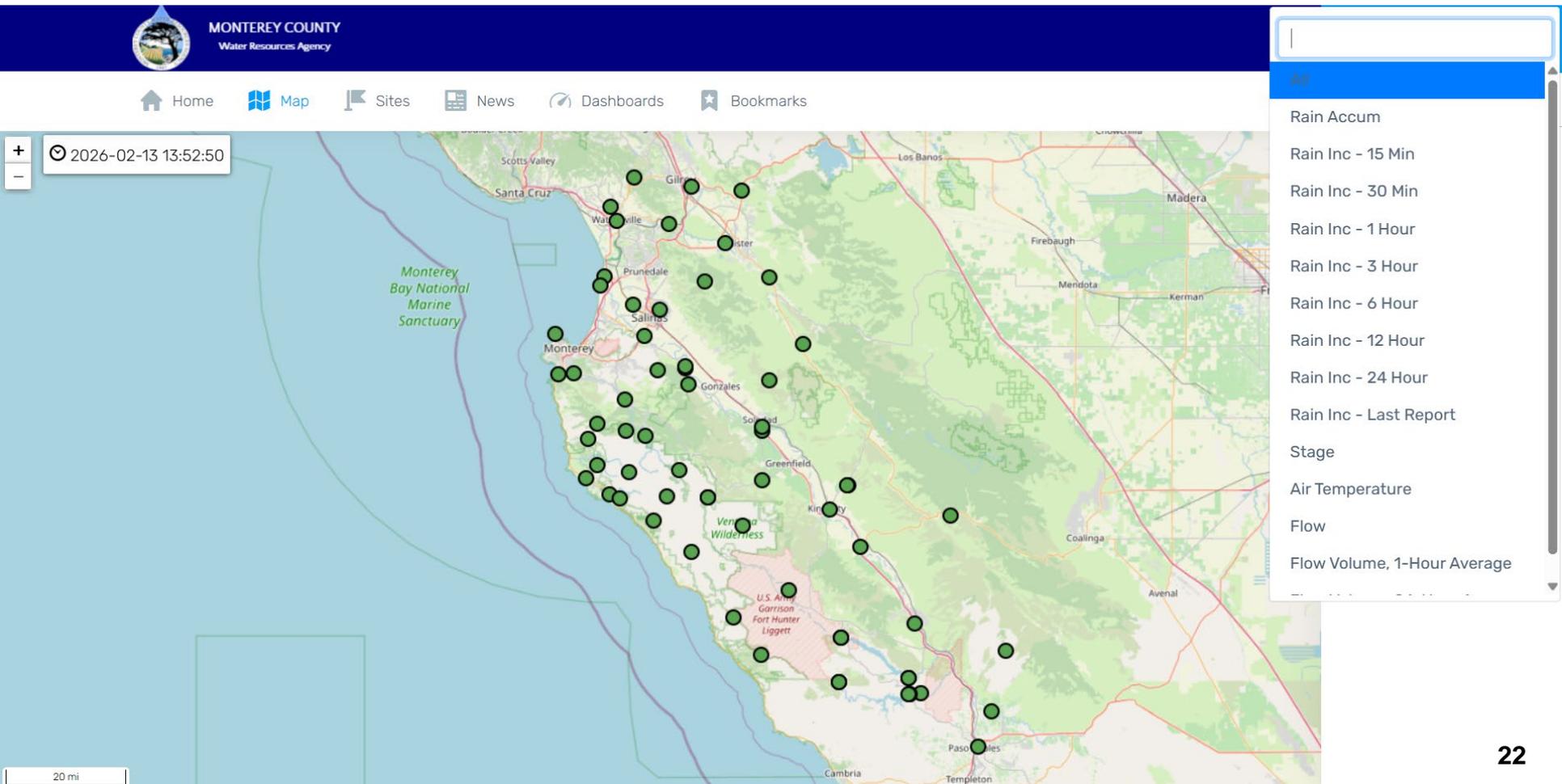
Flood warning gage



Public Reservoir Data

➤ Contrail

- <https://mcwrarealtimehydrodata.com/>





Monterey County Water Resources Agency

Questions?





County of Monterey

Item No.5

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAG 26-045

February 26, 2026

Introduced: 2/19/2026

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Matter Type: WR General Agenda

- Reservoir Recreation and Parks Activities
- County of San Luis Obispo Activities



County of Monterey

Item No.6

Board Report

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Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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Water Year 2026 Quarter One Salinas Valley Water Conditions Report

Salinas Valley Water Conditions: First Quarter of Water Year 2025-2026

January 2026

Monterey County Water Resources Agency





MONTEREY COUNTY WATER RESOURCES AGENCY
Salinas Valley Water Conditions
Quarterly Update for First Quarter of Water Year 2025-2026
January 2026

Prepared by Amanda Cusenza, Guillermo Diaz Moreno and Amy Woodrow

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Introduction

This report covers the first quarter of Water Year 2025-2026 (WY26), consisting of October through December 2025. It provides a brief overview and discussion of hydrologic conditions in the Salinas Valley including precipitation, reservoir storage, streamflow, and groundwater level trends (Figure 1).

Data for the first quarter of WY26 indicate above normal rainfall based on precipitation totals for the quarter. Storage is lower in both Nacimiento Reservoir and San Antonio Reservoir compared to December 2024. Over the first quarter of WY26, groundwater elevations increased across all subareas and aquifers, which aligns with typical seasonal trends.

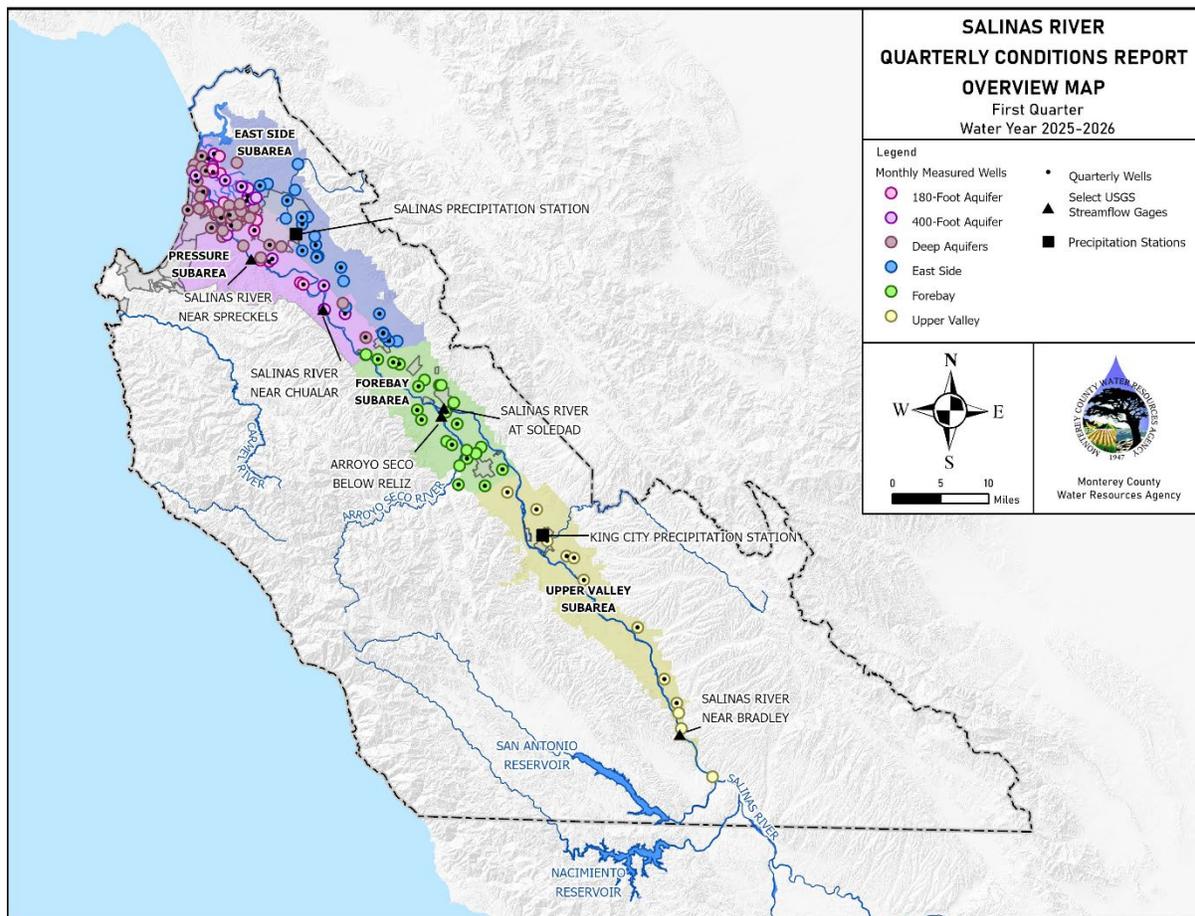


Figure 1: Geographic extent of the area covered by this report and supporting data sources.

Precipitation

Preliminary National Weather Service rainfall data indicates that the first quarter of WY26 brought above normal rainfall to both Salinas and King City. Totals for the quarter were 4.99 inches at the Salinas Airport (125% of normal rainfall of 3.98 inches for the quarter) and 7.30 inches in King City (204% of normal rainfall of 3.57 inches for the quarter).

Figure 2 and Figure 3 show monthly and cumulative precipitation data for the current water year and for a “normal” water year, based on long-term monthly precipitation averages, for the Salinas Airport and King City sites, respectively. Included below each graph is a table showing the numeric values for precipitation as well as percent of “normal” precipitation. For the purposes of these graphs, a “normal” water year is the average precipitation over the most recent 30-year period ending in a decade. Currently, the period from 1991 to 2020 is used for this calculation.

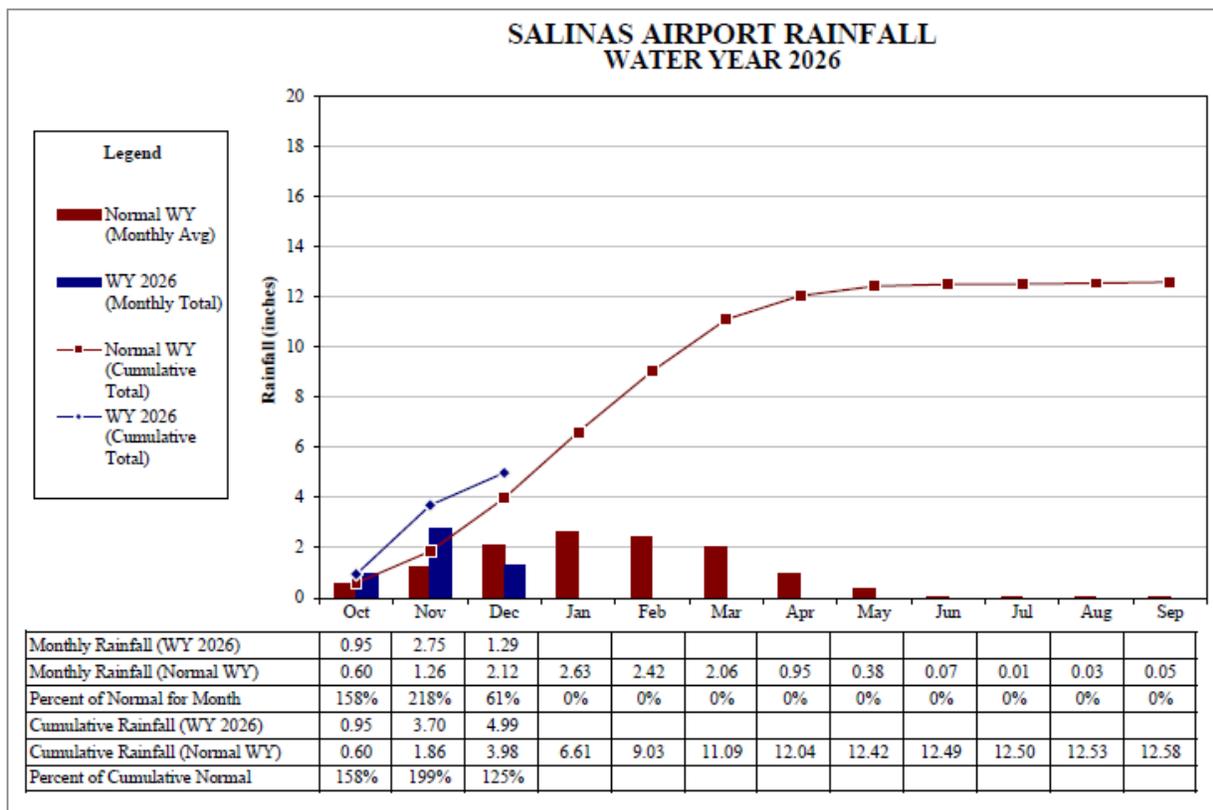


Figure 2: Salinas Airport Rainfall for Water Year 2026

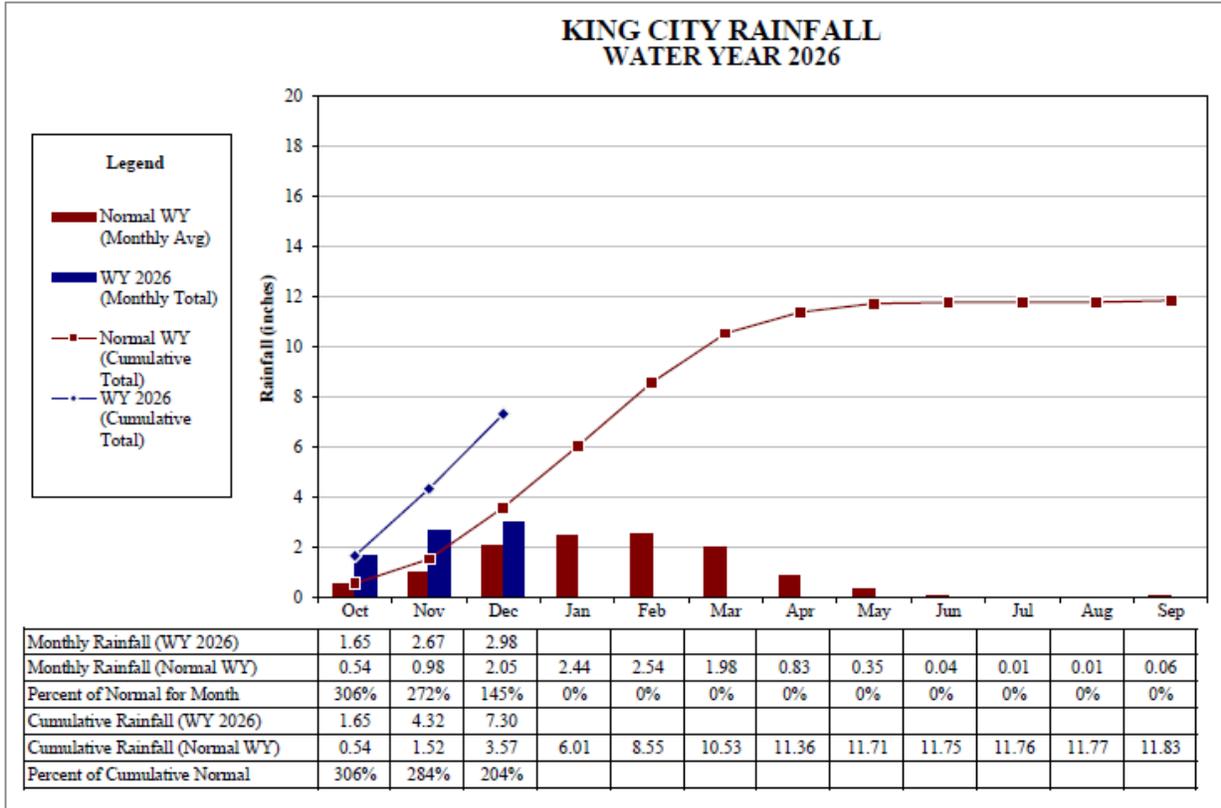


Figure 3: King City Rainfall for Water Year 2026

Reservoir Storage

At the end of the first quarter of WY26, storage at Nacimiento Reservoir on December 31, 2025 was 145,205 acre-feet, which is 54,543 acre-feet lower than on the same day in December 2024. Storage in San Antonio Reservoir on December 31, 2025 was 171,128 acre-feet, which is 62,522 acre-feet lower than on the same day in December 2024.

Reservoir	December 31, 2025 (WY26) Storage in acre-feet	December 31, 2024 (WY25) Storage in acre-feet	Difference in acre-feet
Nacimiento	145,205	199,748	-54,543
San Antonio	171,128	233,650	-62,522

Graphs showing daily reservoir storage for the last five water years, along with 30-year average daily storage for comparison, are included as Figure 4 and Figure 5.

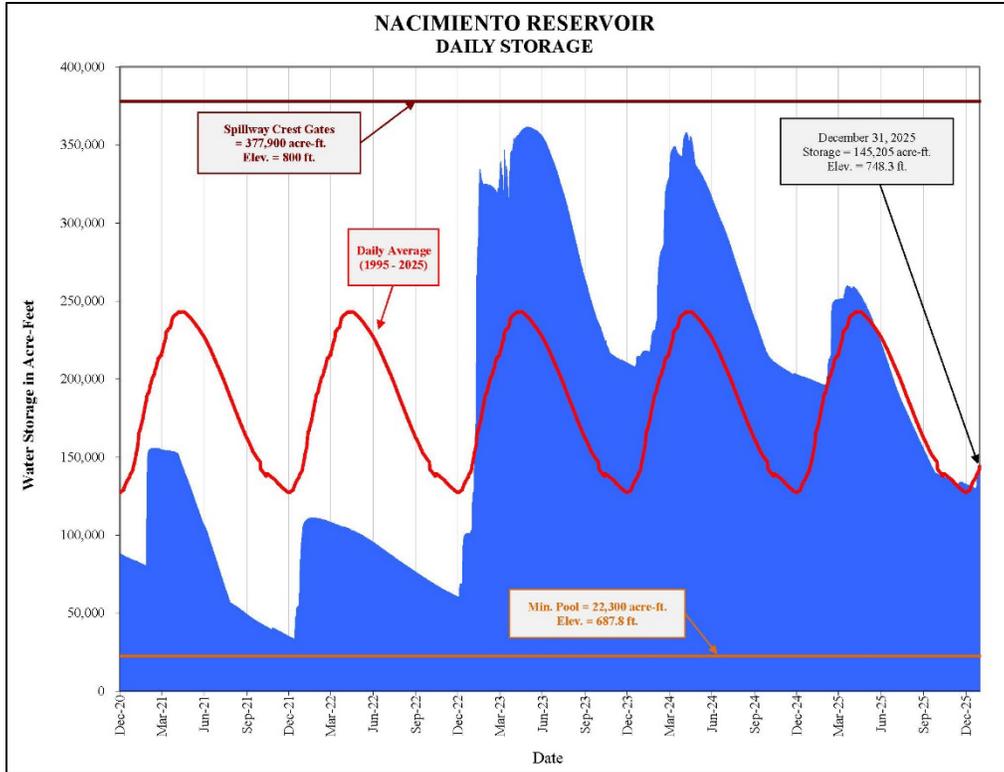


Figure 4: Nacimento Reservoir Storage for Last Five Years

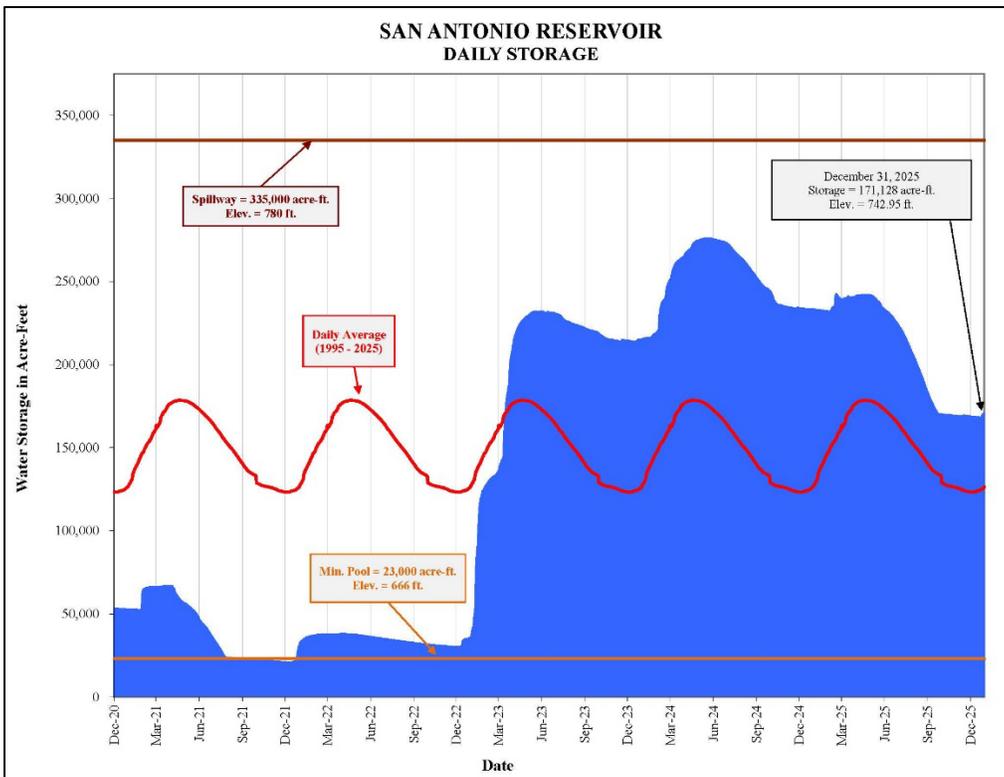


Figure 5: San Antonio Reservoir Storage for Last Five Years

Streamflow

The Salinas River is predominately a losing stream, meaning streamflow moves from the streambed into the underlying aquifers. The U.S. Geological Survey maintains several streamflow gages throughout the Salinas River watershed that continuously measure discharge or flow in the river (Figure 1). Figure 6 shows mean daily flow, in cubic feet per second, from select gages on the Salinas River and Arroyo Seco for the last five years (WY 2022-2026) and the current water year (WY26).

Streamflow recorded during the first quarter of WY26 can be attributed to a combination of managed reservoir releases and a rain event. Flows from October to mid-December are primarily due to minimum releases from the Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs to support habitat downstream of the dams. The peak in streamflow observed in late December is the result of a rain event which prompted increases across all pictured stream gages.

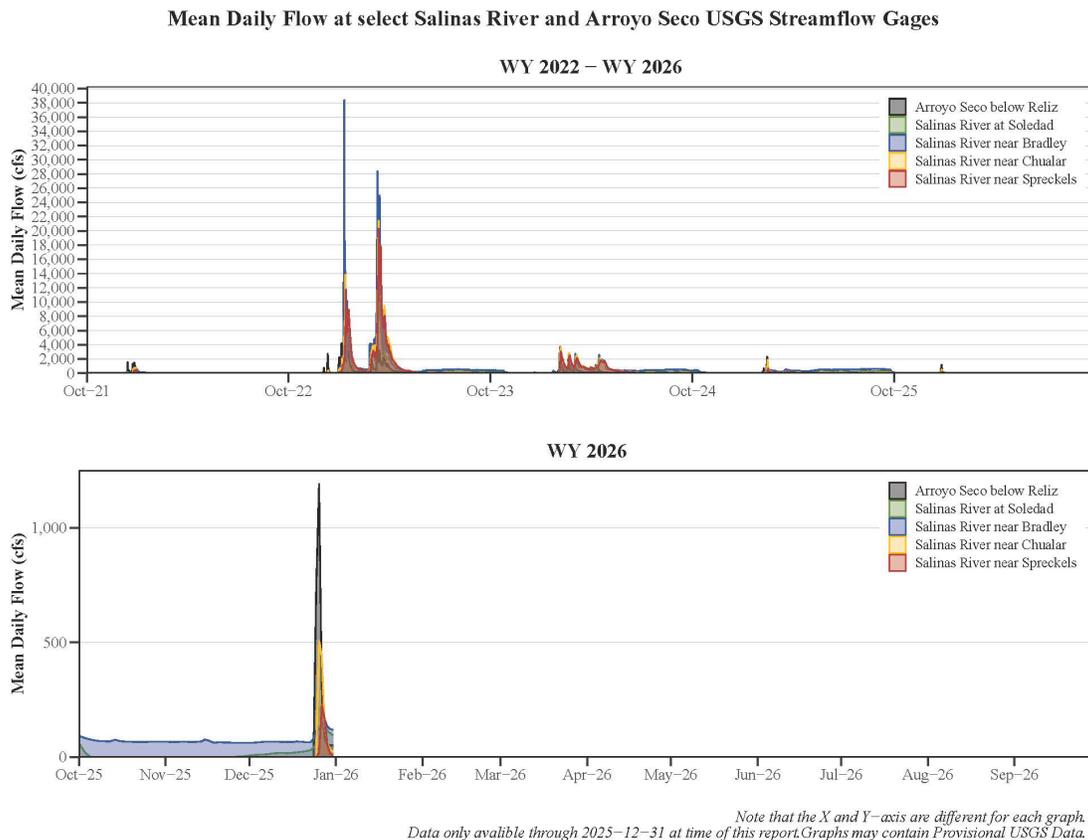


Figure 6: Mean Daily Flow at Selected Stream Gages

Groundwater Elevations

Groundwater elevation data provides insight into how an aquifer or subarea responds to hydrologic conditions over time, such as changes in precipitation and reservoir releases. A one-year comparison can show the short-term effects of a single wet or dry year while a long-term comparison will help provide information on general trends in groundwater storage and demonstrate effects that occur on a longer time scale as surface hydrology interacts with the underlying geology. Subareas or aquifers will respond differently to these hydrologic conditions. For example, groundwater elevations in shallower aquifers may respond more quickly to a wet season while aquifers that are confined, deeper, or more depleted may take longer to show a response to hydrologic conditions. Changes in groundwater elevations within a confined aquifer will also occur in response to groundwater pumping demands.

More than 130 wells are measured monthly by hand throughout the Salinas Valley to monitor seasonal groundwater elevation fluctuations. Additionally, continuous groundwater data are collected from pressure transducers installed in approximately 40 monitoring wells on a quarterly basis. Data from 65 of these wells are used in the preparation of this report (Figure 1). The measurements are grouped by hydrologic subarea, averaged, and a single groundwater elevation value for the wells within each subarea is graphed to compare current groundwater elevations (WY26) with past conditions. Graphs for individual subareas, showing the current year's groundwater elevation conditions, last year's conditions (WY25), and the range between wet conditions (WY99) and dry conditions (WY15) are found in the following sections. No groundwater elevation data are available for July 2025 due to funding constraints during that period that precluded data collection from occurring.

For comparison to long term conditions, a curve showing monthly groundwater elevations averaged over the most recent 30 years (WY96-WY25) is included on each graph. The Deep Aquifers graph (Figure 9) does not include a 30-year average because there is not yet a 30-year period of record to make that comparison. Table 1 provides a summary of the groundwater elevation trends for December 2025 in units of feet relative to mean sea level (ft-msl), with additional detail provided on Figures 7-12.

Table 1: Groundwater Elevation Trends Summary for December 2025

Subarea/Aquifer	December 2025 Groundwater Elevation (ft-msl)	Change during First Quarter	One Year Change	Difference from 30-Year Average Elevation
180-Foot Aquifer	13 ft-msl	Up 10 feet	Up <1 foot	Up 3 feet
400-Foot Aquifer	6 ft-msl	Up 12 feet	Up <1 foot	Up 4 feet
Deep Aquifers	-22 ft-msl	Up 15 feet	Up 2 feet	Not applicable
East Side	3 ft-msl	Up 26 feet	Down <1 foot	Up 1 foot
Forebay	163 ft-msl	Up 4 feet	Down 2 feet	Up 4 feet
Upper Valley	319 ft-msl	Up 3 feet	Up <1 foot	Up 4 feet

180-Foot Aquifer

Over the last quarter, groundwater elevations increased ten feet in the 180-Foot Aquifer (Figure 7). Groundwater elevations for December 2025 are up less than one foot compared to December 2024 and are up three feet from the 30-year average.

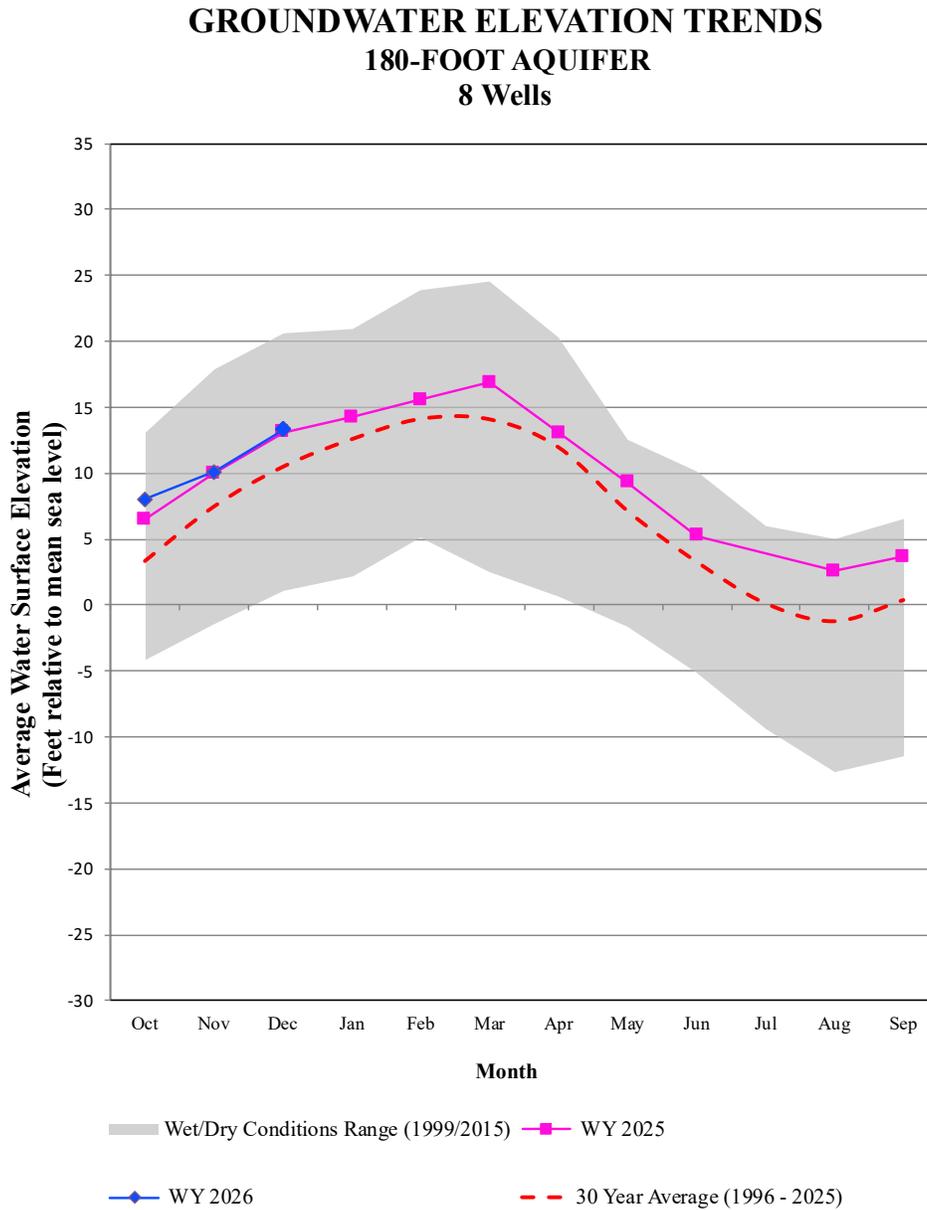


Figure 7: Groundwater Elevation Trends for the 180-Foot Aquifer

400-Foot Aquifer

Groundwater elevations in the 400-Foot Aquifer increased twelve feet over the past quarter (Figure 8). Groundwater elevations for December 2025 are up less than one foot compared to December 2024 and up four feet from the 30-year average.

GROUNDWATER ELEVATION TRENDS 400-FOOT AQUIFER 12 Wells

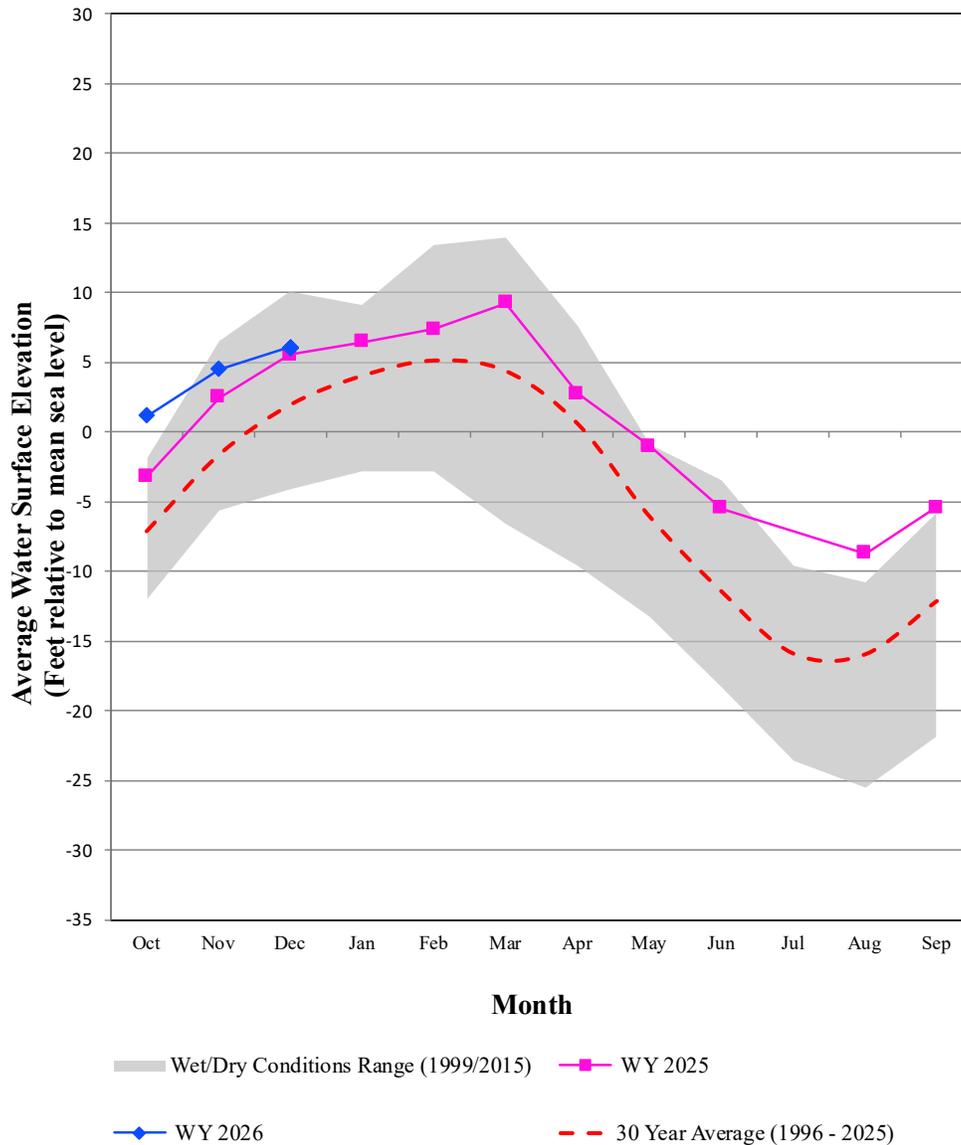


Figure 8: Groundwater Elevation Trends in the 400-Foot Aquifer

Deep Aquifers

Over the last quarter, groundwater elevations increased fifteen feet in the Deep Aquifers, which is consistent with previous observations of seasonal recovery corresponding with a decrease in pumping (Figure 9). Groundwater elevations for December 2025 are up two feet compared to December 2024. Given the shorter period of record available for some of the wells monitored in the Deep Aquifers, a 30-year average cannot yet be calculated. In lieu of a long-term average, Figure 9 includes a 30-year time series graph with groundwater elevation data from the eleven Deep Aquifers wells that are utilized for this report to show the seasonal and long-term trends in these wells.

**GROUNDWATER ELEVATION TRENDS
DEEP AQUIFERS
11 Wells**

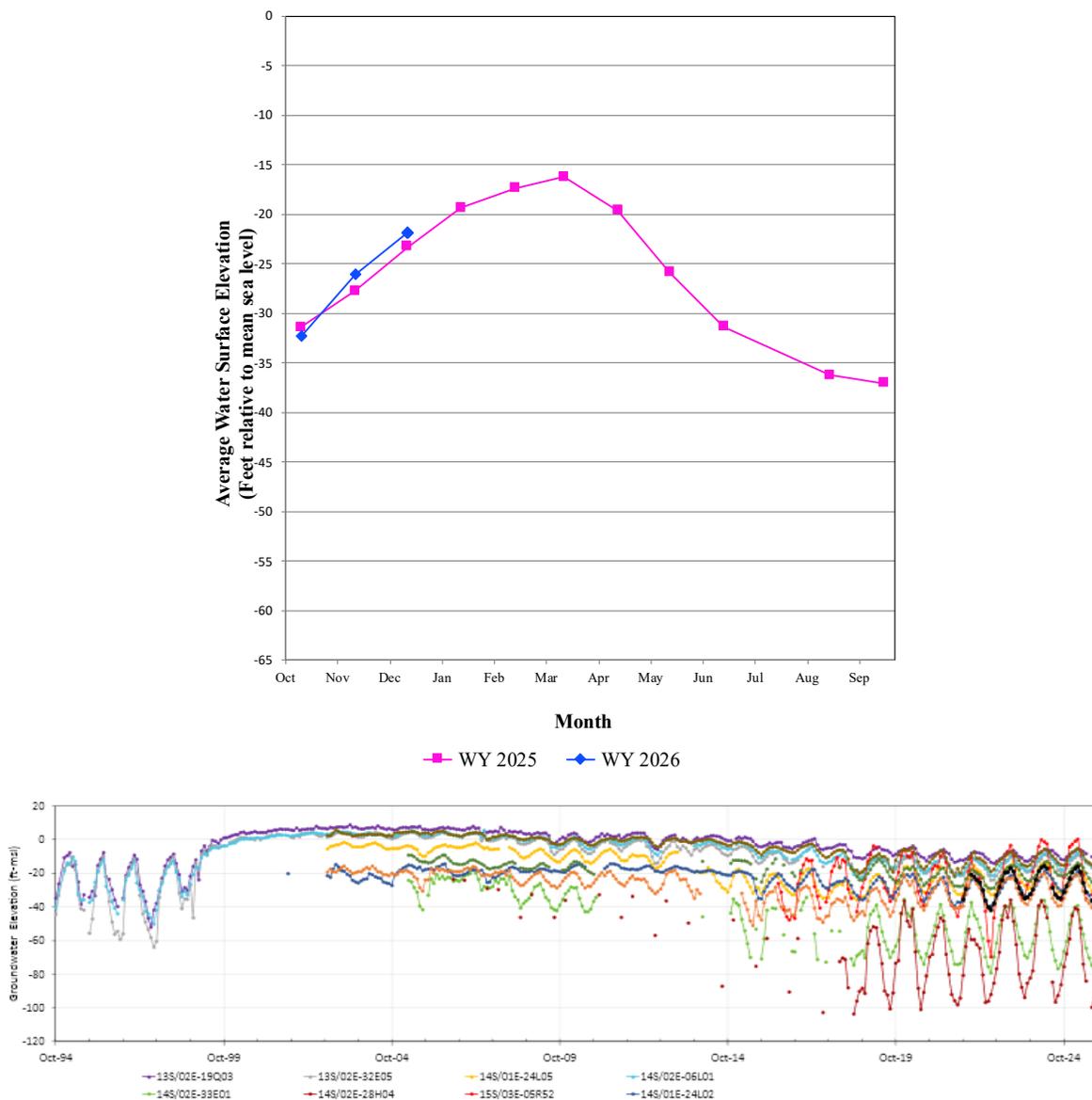


Figure 9: Groundwater Elevation Data from the Deep Aquifers Quarterly Report Wells

East Side Subarea

East Side groundwater elevations increased twenty-six feet over the last quarter (Figure 10). Groundwater elevations for December 2025 are down less than one foot from December 2024 elevations and up one foot from the 30-year average.

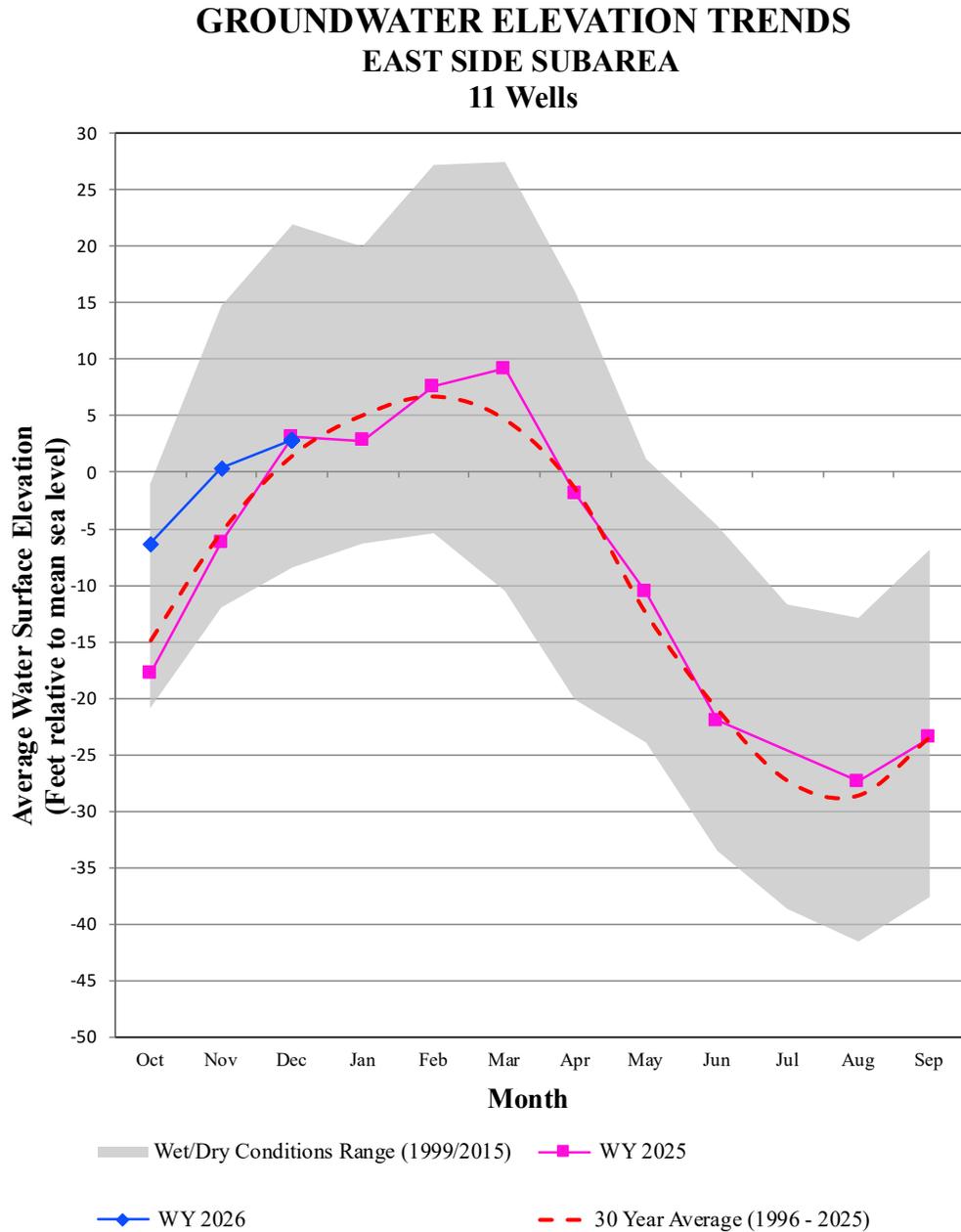


Figure 10: Groundwater Elevation Trends in the East Side Subarea

Forebay Subarea

Over the last quarter, groundwater elevations have increased four feet in the Forebay (Figure 11). Groundwater elevations for December 2025 are down two feet from December 2024 elevations and are up four feet from the 30-year average.

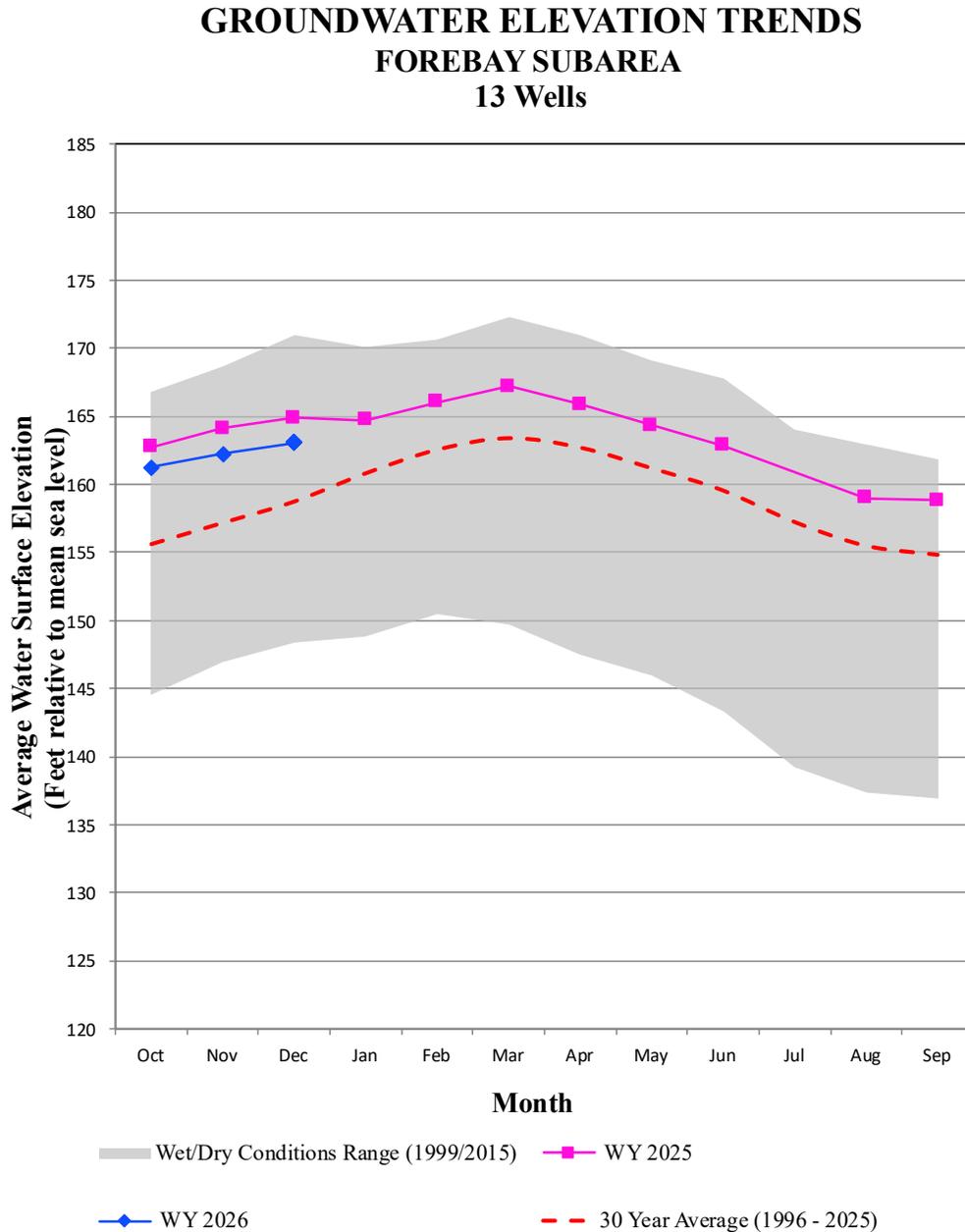


Figure 11: Groundwater Elevation Trends in the Forebay Subarea

Upper Valley Subarea

Upper Valley groundwater elevations have increased by three feet over the last quarter (Figure 12). Groundwater elevations for December 2025 are up less than one foot from December 2024 elevations and up four feet from the 30-year average.

GROUNDWATER ELEVATION TRENDS UPPER VALLEY SUBAREA 9 Wells

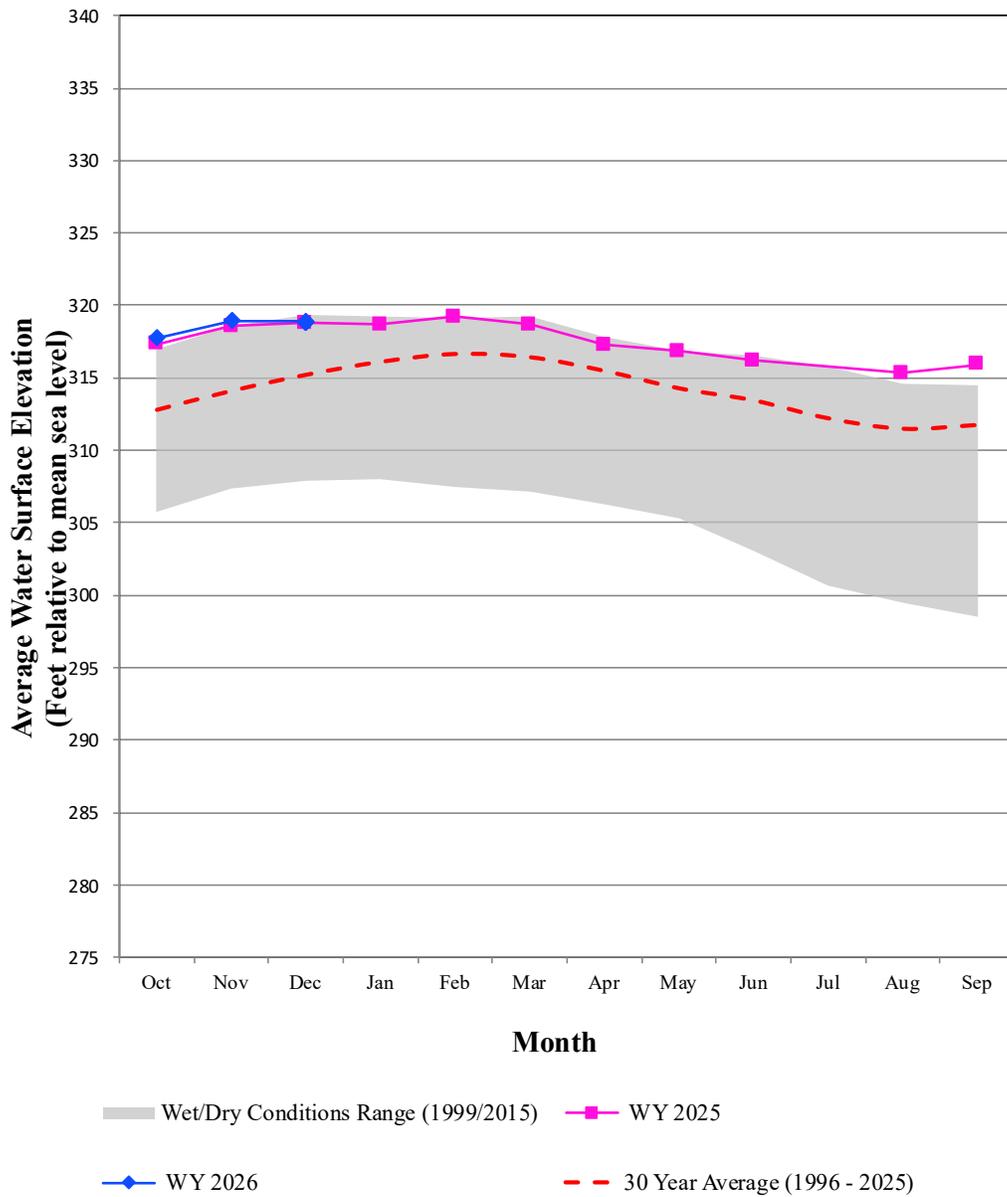


Figure 12: Groundwater Elevation Trends in the Upper Valley Subarea

Figure 13 shows the spatial distribution of changes in groundwater elevations from December 2024 to December 2025. Over the last Water Year, most of the monitored wells in all hydrologic subareas experienced no significant change in groundwater elevation, meaning that fluctuations were within five feet of the prior year's value. However, some sporadic variability in groundwater elevation trends was observed, with one well in the 180-Foot aquifer, East Side subarea, and Forebay subarea each exhibiting a decrease between 5 and 15 feet. One well in the Deep Aquifers saw an increase between 5 and 15 feet compared to the prior year.

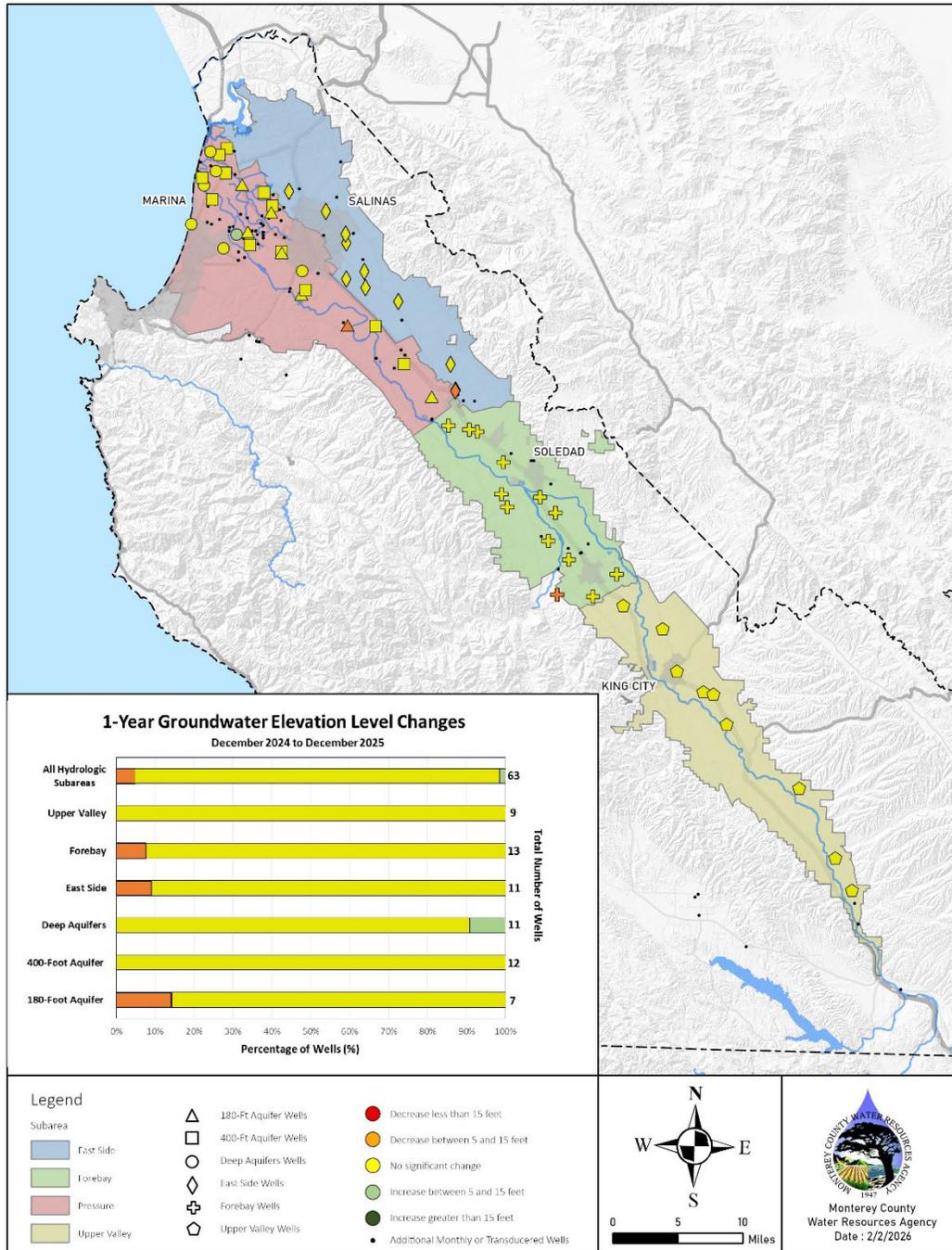


Figure 13: One-Year Groundwater Elevation Changes

Depth to Groundwater vs Groundwater Elevation

Most of the figures in this report use groundwater elevation as a means of describing where groundwater was observed in a well. Using groundwater elevation to describe and analyze the regional groundwater surface allows for comparison of data to determine things such as direction of groundwater flow and groundwater gradient while removing well-to-well variability introduced by topography and well construction design. By measuring the depth to groundwater from a known and consistently used elevation at each well, often referred to as a reference point, it is possible to compare data between wells or to other relevant metrics, such as sea level. Groundwater elevation is calculated from the measured depth to groundwater using the reference point elevation and ground surface elevation. Figure 14 shows the relationship between the reference point and measured depth to water, along with how groundwater elevation is calculated.

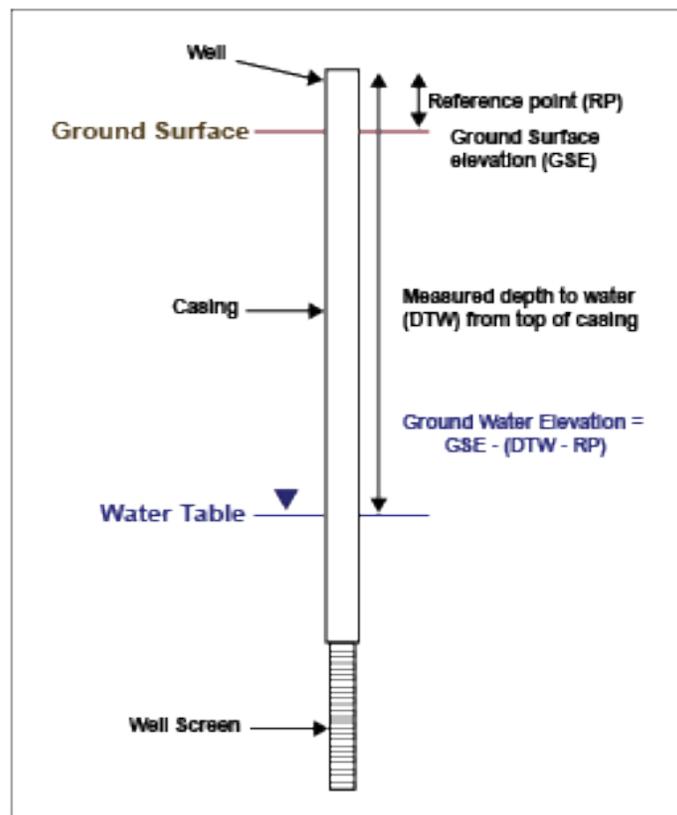
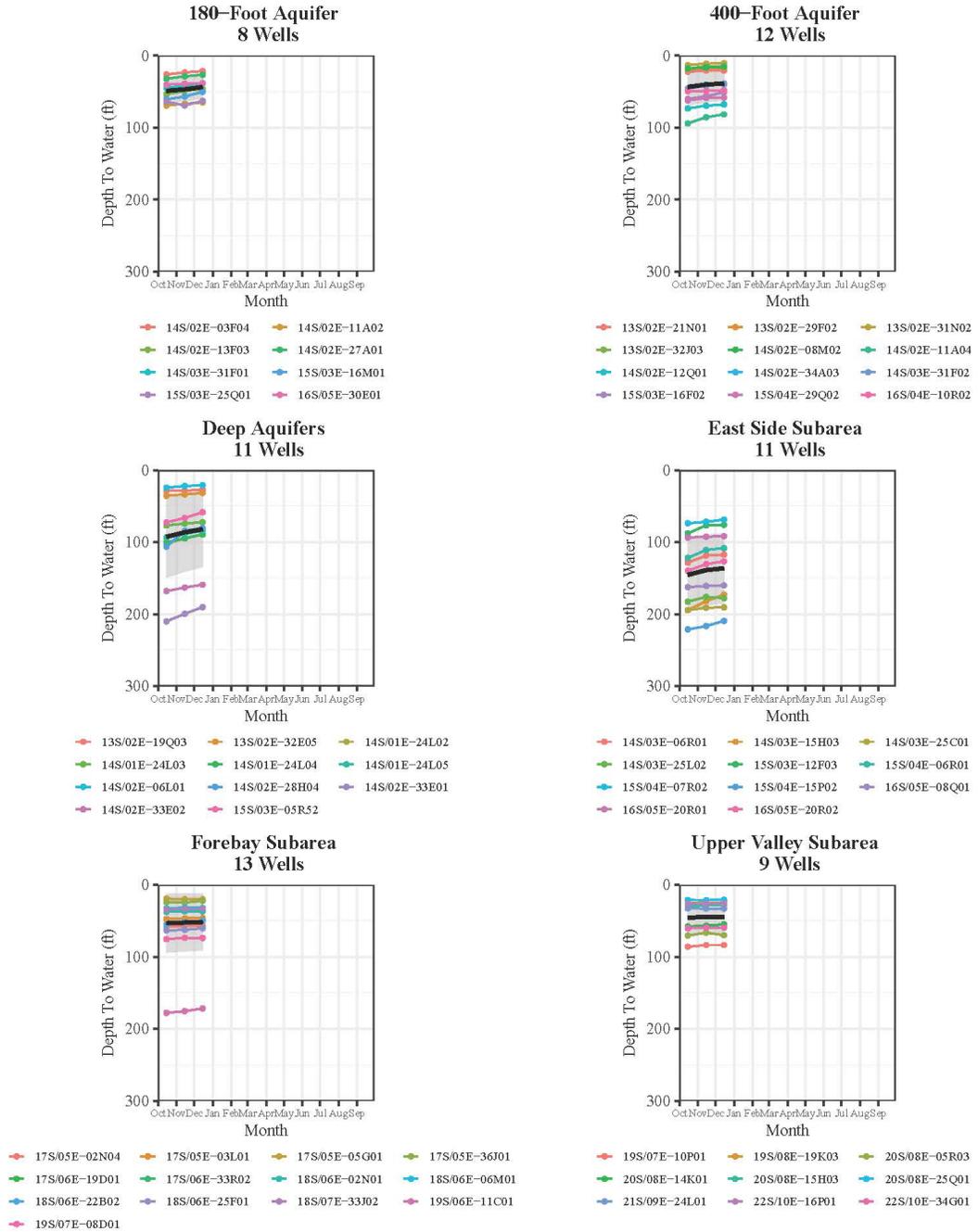


Figure 14: Relationship between Depth to Groundwater and Groundwater Elevation.

Figure 15 shows the depth to groundwater that was measured in each of the wells, within a given subarea, that is used for developing this quarterly water conditions report. As shown on Figure 15, there is a range of depth to water values within each subarea with some, like the East Side Subarea, having a wider range of measured values than others, like the 180-Foot Aquifer. The black line on each of the subarea graphs in Figure 15 is the average depth to groundwater for each set of wells. This value is converted from “depth to groundwater” to “groundwater elevation” by

accounting for the reference point and elevation of the ground surface and graphed as the blue “WY 2026” line on each of the preceding subarea-specific graphs (Figures 7-12). The range in depth to water values is the result of many factors (e.g., variations in topography, thickness of the aquifer, and the length of screen in the well) and illustrates the reason why groundwater elevation is the standard method for evaluating the groundwater system on a regional scale. However, the depth-to-water data have been included with this report as a means of demonstrating the methodology behind the groundwater elevation data that are used throughout the rest of the document.

Depth to Groundwater in Quarterly Conditions Report Wells, WY 2026



Depth to Water is measured in feet below a standard reference point at each well. This may be close to, but not always equal to, the ground surface. The black line on each graph shows the average depth to water for each set of wells. The grey shaded area shows the standard deviation.

Figure 15: Depth to Groundwater in Wells Used for Quarterly Conditions Report, WY 2026



County of Monterey

Item No.7

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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Set the next meeting date and discuss future agenda items.