

# Glossary of Terms

**alluvial** Of or pertaining to or composed of alluvium.

**aquitard** A confining bed and/or formation composed of rock or sediment that retards but does not prevent the flow of water to or from an adjacent aquifer. It does not readily yield water to wells or springs, but stores ground water.

**aquifer** A body of rock or sediment that is sufficiently porous and permeable to store, transmit, and yield significant or economic quantities of groundwater to wells and springs.

**artificial recharge** The addition of water to a groundwater reservoir by human activity, such as putting surface water into dug or constructed spreading basins or injecting water through wells.

**critical conditions of overdraft** A groundwater basin in which continuation of present practices would probably result in significant adverse overdraft-related environmental, social, or economic impacts. The definition was created after an extensive public input process during the development of the Bulletin 118-80 report.

**groundwater basin** An alluvial aquifer or a stacked series of alluvial aquifers with reasonably well-defined boundaries in a lateral direction and having a definable bottom.

**groundwater overdraft** The condition of a groundwater basin in which the amount of water withdrawn by pumping exceeds the amount of water that recharges the basin over a period of years during which water supply conditions approximate average conditions.

**groundwater recharge facility** A structure that serves to conduct surface water into the ground for the purpose of replenishing groundwater. The facility may consist of dug or constructed spreading basins, pits, ditches, furrows, streambed modifications, or injection wells.

**groundwater recharge** The natural or intentional infiltration of surface water into the zone of saturation.

**groundwater subbasin** A subdivision of a groundwater basin created by dividing the basin using geologic and hydrologic conditions or institutional boundaries.

**groundwater table** The upper surface of the zone of saturation in an unconfined aquifer.

**groundwater** Water that occurs beneath the land surface and fills the pore spaces of the alluvium, soil, or rock formation in which it is situated. It excludes soil moisture, which refers to water held by capillary action in the upper unsaturated zones of soil or rock.

**infiltration** The flow of water downward from the land surface into and through the upper soil layers.

**in-lieu recharge** The practice of providing surplus surface water to historic groundwater users, thereby leaving groundwater in storage for later use.

**lithology** The description of rocks, especially in hand specimen and in outcrop, on the basis of such characteristics as color, mineralogic composition, and grain size.

**recharge** Water added to an aquifer or the process of adding water to an aquifer. Ground water recharge occurs either naturally as the net gain from precipitation, or artificially as the result of human influence. See artificial recharge.

**recharge basin** A surface facility constructed to infiltrate surface water into a groundwater basin.

**saline intrusion** The movement of salt water into a body of fresh water. It can occur in either surface water or groundwater bodies.

**seawater intrusion barrier** A system designed to retard, cease or repel the advancement of seawater intrusion into potable groundwater supplies along coastal portions of California. The system may be a series of specifically placed injection wells where water is injected to form a hydraulic barrier.

**stakeholders** Any individual or organization that has an interest in water management activities. In the broadest sense, everyone is a stakeholder, because water sustains life. Water resources stakeholders are typically those involved in protecting, supplying, or using water for any purpose, including environmental uses, who have a vested interest in a water-related decision.