

Farmington Groundwater Recharge Program: Section: Questions & Answers

Q:
What is the Farmington Groundwater Recharge Program?

A:
The Farmington Program is a groundwater recharge effort aimed to stabilize the Eastern San Joaquin County [Groundwater] Basin from further overdraft and migration of saline-tainted water from the west.

"Building water storage projects in harmony with agriculture is a complex task. I congratulate the Corps for its efforts and for adding this valuable layer of service to California."

*Assembly Member
Barbara Matthews*

Q:
What region does the program cover?

A:
The program is generally bound by Jack Tone Road on the east, Highway 99 to the west, the Mokelumne River in the north and Temple Creek in the south.

Q:
Who are the sponsors? Who funds the Program?

A:
The program is lead by Stockton East Water District, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Three-fourths of the \$33.5 million Program will be from Federal funding, with the balance from Propositions 13 and 50, and local water agency assessments.

Q:
Are participants compensated for the lost use of their land?

A:
Yes. Compensation will be based on market lease rates. Growers with equipment to construct and manage recharge parcels will be eligible for additional compensation.

Q:
How much water will be used for recharge?

A:
The program anticipates an average of 35,000 acre-feet/year, applied to recharge basins mostly between

November and April. Water will come from Stanislaus, Calaveras, Littlejohns and Mokelumne watersheds.

Q: How much is the groundwater basin in overdraft?

A:

To restore the basin to a level of safe yield and prevent further eastward progress of saline water, the Eastern San Joaquin County [Groundwater] Basin will need approximately 200,000 acre-feet/year.

Q:

Can 35,000 acre-feet/year make a difference?

A:

Yes. The program strategy is to focus in the western part of the basin by recruiting landowners in areas where groundwater recharge will help build a groundwater barrier to further inhibit saline intrusion and assist in groundwater recovery.

Q:

Why should East San Joaquin County landowners participate?

A:

Saline intrusion is a critical issue for municipal and agricultural users, causing wells to be taken out of service and introducing crop-damaging salts to productive soils. Declining groundwater levels cumulatively increases groundwater pumping costs.

Q:

Can I leave the program at any time?

A:

The duration of the program is suggested to be up to 10 years and will be based on a mutual agreement between the landowner and the program sponsors.

Q:

Will groundwater recharge affect nearby lands? How will you know?

A:

Monitoring wells will be installed at every recharge facility to gauge the progress of water percolation. Lands that show a consistent lateral migration of water – and therefore present a likelihood to damage nearby crops – will be removed from the program.

Q:

Will the Program create permanent wildlife habitat?

A:

Not necessarily. Rotational field flooding would create seasonal habitat for migratory birds. Measures to ensure this intent include installation of buffer zones and discontinuation of field-flooding during the summer. Permanent spreading basins that could support permanent habitat will be designed to protect adjacent lands.