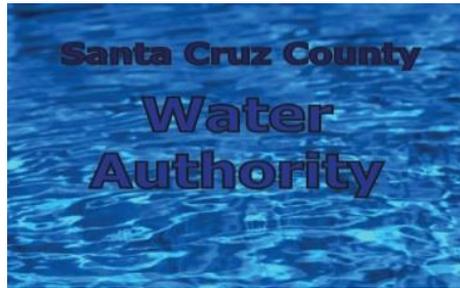


**WASC Proposal ID: Smallman: Regional Water Authority**

*The Regional  
Water Authority  
Plan*

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# The Regional Water Authority Plan



## **Create the Santa Cruz County Water District, SCCWD.**

Why try to fix a problem in only in one area, or have all the water agencies work separately to solve their problems on their own? The issues of ground water replenishment, recycling water, additional water storage and supply affects the entire County. This why we need a County-wide, regional District which would have a similar role as the Santa Clara Valley Water District, SCVWD, has with all water retailers in Santa Clara County. Just like SCVWD, this District would wholesale recycled water, manage ground water, water storage reservoirs, and recreational areas. None of this is possible by a single water agency alone, which is the reason for this is absolutely necessary to effectively move forward to the best solution.

## **New State Legislation**

New legislation is going to give the power to the State to force local governments to develop a sustainable ground water plan. If Santa Cruz County wants to be serious and take a leadership role towards this goal, than creating a Special District like is essential. Having separate agencies attempt to work together to meet the new State requirements would be highly problematic.

## **Creation and Important Considerations**

If the Water Supply Advisory Committee, WASC, elects to adopt this proposal, or modified version thereof, then they would either appoint another committee or change their task from approving proposals into adopting proposals, and take a leading role in achieving this.

Forming a Special District requires a great deal of effort by qualified people to develop the exact structure of the District, its Mission Statement, Charter, and all other legal documents required by the Local Agency Formation Committee, LAFCO. These documents all get distributed to all the City Councils, Board of Supervisors and all the Water Boards for review

and approval. It would be extremely important to have someone who could craft language in these documents to insure SCCWD changes the way we manage water, because what we are doing now is unsustainable, not working and we are not selecting the best solutions. The one person I would like to recommend for this committee is Paul Gratz.

In addition, and to move forward the most effective way, I also believe that this group should also have the task of developing plans for recycled water. Of all the proposals that I have submitted, the one which has the highest priority and benefits the City of Santa Cruz the most is Recycle, (WASC ID: Smallman: Recycle). If this proposal, or modified version thereof, is also accepted by WASC, then at the same time this Special District is being created, the committee can work with the Regional Transportation Commission and do whatever it takes to have them forgo the plans for the Train and parallel bike path, and adopt my plans for a Utility Corridor. The salvage rights to the rails and ties can be sold to a contractor. The contractor would remove the tracks and be required to grade the right of way into basically a gravel road, which can immediately be used by the public as a path. It is estimated that these salvage rights are worth around \$650,000, and this money could be applied to design work for the project. After it is created, the new Santa Cruz County Water District, SCCWD, would take over the reins from the committee. Bottom line, SCCWD would have a running start, saving precious time, and move towards getting an extremely beneficial new water source implemented and the public would gain a 25 mile long gravel path they can use.

### **Need for a MODEL**

This would be one of the first tasks and the primary tool for the newly created District. It would be a highly sophisticated computerized model with the primary goal of avoiding any devastating effects from a long term drought. There are three types of variables entered in to the model:

- A. **Fixed:** This would be a decided variable; the most controversial one would be to decide the *maximum allowable water service connections* in all the various areas in the County.
- B. **Engineered:** These are variables selected using scientific data. For example, the length and duration of the drought could be selected based on historical records, and other studies. Or, the amount of water saved by conservation can also be studied from past data.
- C. **Real:** These are simply real time variables like ground water levels, storage tank or reservoir levels etc.

Like Loch Lomond, all the reservoirs provide water needed during droughts. So, the model would use the storage level of the reservoirs and other variables compared to the calculated demand and determine the amount of time of a severe drought and automatically issue warnings and recommend fixes to avoid devastating effects, like saltwater intrusion.

## Effectiveness, Practicability, Environmental and Community Considerations

- **Effectiveness:** A group that focuses on the entire County versus portions of the County is more able to solve water issues that affect all the water agencies in the County. Marin County, which is similar in size and population, has a clear advantage having most of the populated areas controlled by the large Marin Municipal Water District, MMWD. It would be near impossible to have all of the water agencies in the County merge as one. Even tiny Lompico Water District, LCWD, was extremely difficult to merge with the San Lorenzo Valley Water District, SLVWD. The Santa Clara Valley Water District, SCVWD, has been very effective in addressing water supplies, ground water levels, recycled water and water storage for the very large population of Santa Clara County. For example, they constructed the Lexington and Anderson Reservoirs for the exact reason of a low ground water basin, which we face. Having a scaled down version of SCVWD for Santa Cruz County, basically is the only choice for an effective means towards a sustainable water system.
- **Practicability:** Again, it would not be practical to try and merge all of the major water agencies into something like MMWD, especially since we saw the difficulty of merging LCWD to SLVWD. The alternative is to create a Special District, like SCVWD, in a smaller scale. The County's Local Agency Formation Commission, LAFCO, would be in charge to create this District. This is truly the most practical way to deal with all these important issues. It is not practical to have numerous water agencies try to solve them separately.
- **Environmental Considerations:** Many of the improvements involved with water affect the environment to a large degree. Again, having these decisions made by one agency, rather than many, makes it far easier to scrutinize environmental issues.
- **Community Considerations:** These large water projects can benefit the Community in numerous ways because they often use of large areas of land and water is essential for a good economy. Yet again, one agency in charge of designing projects with the goal of benefiting the community the most is far more effective than separate agencies attempting this.