

Conserving a vital resource



2017-Register-Pajaronian

PV Water seeks community involvement

By: JOHANNA MILLER – July 8, 2017

<https://register-pajaronian.com/article/conserving-a-vital-resource>

(Contributed photo)

WATSONVILLE — For the past 33 years, the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency has aimed to solve water usage issues in the Pajaro Valley and neighboring regions.

Groundwater from the Pajaro Valley Basin, which covers areas of Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties, is the valley's primary source of water. It has been over-drafted for decades and continues to be at risk of seawater intrusion. Common on the coast of California, seawater intrusion occurs when groundwater aquifer levels lower, and freshwater resources are at risk to instead be contaminated by seawater.

“Our agency was formed for the same reason we still exist today,” said Brian Lockwood, PV Water’s general manager. “With a changing climate and conditions, we continue to face challenges.”

In 1993, PV Water developed the first Basin Management Plan (BMP) with help from a group of Pajaro Valley stakeholders. While the plan has undergone a number of revisions since, PV Water representatives said its goal has remained the same: to ensure the future of water resources, for everything from household use to the agricultural economy.

Amy Newell, current vice chair of PV Water’s Board of Directors, served on the board of stakeholders to form the BMP.

“It was a fascinating introduction to what PV Water has done,” she said. “It was extremely rewarding.”

PV Water is a small agency, with a staff of about 13 people. They often work with other local agencies such as the Resource Conservation District and UC Ag Extension.

Lockwood explained how important it is for the community to be aware of what PV Water is working on.

“A lot of people don’t know what this agency does and why it’s so important,” Lockwood said. “We want to change that.”

On Monday, PV Water will hold an open house at Watsonville’s Civic Plaza Community Room, 275 Main St. (fourth floor). Educational stations and informational booths will be set up for the public to visit.

There will also be a community meeting and Q&A session following to discuss Pajaro Valley’s water resources as well as the proposed College Lake Project.

The project, PV Water’s largest ongoing water supply project in the BMP, proposes to build a new pipeline from College Lake to either the Recycled Water Facility storage tank or the Coastal Distribution System.

PV Water hopes Monday's event will help start a dialogue between them and the public.

"Water issues affect everyone," Lockwood said. "So getting the community involved and hearing what they have to say is very important."

For information on PV Water, call 722-9292 or visit pvwater.org.