

## 20.0

# UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

This chapter provides an evaluation of potential environmental effects by and to utilities and service systems, including water supply and treatment, wastewater collection and treatment, stormwater drainage, and solid waste collection and disposal. As established in the Notice of Preparation (2035 General Plan) (see [Appendix A, Notice of Preparation](#)), population and associated urban development and other activities resulting from implementation of the Plan may result in strains on existing service systems, and potential environmental degradation of the lands, waters, and communities that supply and receive water, wastewater and stormwater discharges.

The following environmental assessment includes a review of the capacity and capabilities of the existing water supply, wastewater, storm drain and solid waste utility systems potentially affected by the implementation of the 2035 General Plan. Potential impacts to the environment related to the use and expansion of utility and service systems to meet demands were analyzed based on CEQA assessment criteria and guidelines provided by San Benito County (County) applied to the extent of potential development that could occur with implementation of the 2035 General Plan. This analysis includes documenting existing water resource conditions, evaluating historical and planned water supply and demand conditions, and summarizing water management activities and plans. A Water Supply Evaluation (WSE) ([Appendix C](#)) was prepared by Todd Engineers; it documents the County's existing and future water supplies and demands, evaluates drought impacts, and provides a comparison of estimated future water supply and demand as the basis for determination of water supply adequacy.

Much of the existing conditions information was taken from Chapter 7, Public Services and Utilities, of the General Plan Background Report (Background Report)(San Benito County 2010b). In that chapter, rules and regulations relevant to water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, stormwater drainage, and solid waste collection and disposal were identified and reported based on a review of federal, state, and local regulations that relate to water

management, water quality protection, and water rights. The existing condition of County water resources was determined through a review of local groundwater resource reports, including the annual groundwater reports of the San Benito County Water District (SBCWD 2006-2013). Recent water resources management plans also were reviewed; key documents include the Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan (City of Hollister 2008) and Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan (City of Hollister 2011).

## **20.1 SETTING**

The environmental and regulatory setting of San Benito County with respect to public utilities and service systems described below is based on the General Plan Background Report (San Benito County 2010b). Pursuant to §15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this document is incorporated into this RDEIR by reference as though fully set forth herein. Where necessary, setting information originating from the Background Report has been updated with the best available and most current data, as previously discussed in Section 4.3. The Background Report is available for download from the San Benito County General Plan Update website at: <http://sanbenitogpu.com/docs.html>. Copies of the Background Report may also be viewed during standard business hours (8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.), Monday through Thursday, at the San Benito County Planning and Building Department, 2301 Technology Parkway, Hollister, CA 95023-9174. County offices are closed to the public on Fridays.

### **20.1.1 Environmental Setting**

#### **Water Supply and Delivery**

As of 2010 there are three sources of water that supply municipal, rural, and agricultural land uses in San Benito County. These include water purchased and imported from the Central Valley Project (CVP) by the San Benito County Water District (SBCWD), local surface water stored in and released from SBCWD owned and operated Hernandez and Paicines reservoirs, and local groundwater pumped from wells. While the SBCWD is the CVP wholesaler for municipal and industrial use and has jurisdiction over water management throughout the County, much of the population is served by water purveyors, including the City of Hollister, Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD), and other small local purveyors. Some communities within the County are not served by water districts or do not have water systems that provide water service. These communities and rural residents must rely on private wells and groundwater. For the last decade (2000-2010) total water use, including CVP water and groundwater, has ranged from between 35,000 and 47,000 acre feet per year (AFY) in the CVP

delivery area (termed Zone 6), depending on weather conditions, the economy, and water conservation measures. Total water use in Zone 6 generally declined over the period from 2000 to 2010, with year-to-year fluctuations most likely caused by variable weather conditions. Long-term trends may be due to the economy and water conservation. Agricultural, municipal, and industrial use has generally declined during this same time frame, mostly due to conservation and the economic downturn.

### **Water Projects**

Water projects are large water development and conveyance systems which are typically built and operated by Federal, State, and local agencies. Water projects are typically developed to provide irrigation and drinking water to areas that lack adequate local water resources to provide for existing and projected growth. The County population has historically relied on groundwater to serve water demands. However, over production led to overdraft in the 1960s and 1970s. Water projects such as reservoirs on local streams and imported water are used in the County to supplement supply and provide sustainable groundwater management.

*Central Valley Project.* The CVP is one of the nation's major water conservation developments, covering the entire Central Valley and portions of the Coastal Range and Sierra Nevada. The CVP is a Federal water system operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and was created to protect the Central Valley from water shortages and floods; improve navigation on the Sacramento River; ensure supplies of domestic and industrial water; enhance water quality; generate electric power; conserve fish and wildlife; and create opportunities for recreation. The CVP consists of 20 dams and reservoirs, 11 power plants, and 500 miles of major canals, conduits, and tunnels. About nine million AFY of water is managed by CVP and about 5.6 million AFY of water for agricultural, urban, and wildlife use is delivered annually (USBR 2012). An average of five million AFY of CVP water is provided to farms to irrigate about three million acres of land, and about 600,000 AFY of water is provided for municipal and industrial uses. About 800,000 AFY are provided for fish and wildlife habitats and 410,000 AFY to Federal and State wildlife refuges and wetlands, pursuant to the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA).

The CVP generates 5.6 billion kilowatt hours of electricity annually.

The Sacramento River carries water to the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta where the Tracy Pumping Plant at the southern end of the Delta lifts the water into the Delta Mendota Canal, a 117 mile canal with a capacity of about 4,600 AF. A portion of the CVP water is conveyed to the San Luis Reservoir and through the Pacheco Tunnel to CVP contractors in the San Felipe division, which includes portions of Santa Clara and San Benito Counties. CVP water brought into San Benito County is stored in San Justo Reservoir which is used exclusively to store and regulate imported CVP water. The SBCWD has a 40 year contract (extending to 2027) for a

maximum of 8,250 AFY of municipal and industrial (M&I) water and 35,550 AFY of agricultural water. The imported water is delivered to agricultural, municipal, and industrial customers in Zone 6, the District's zone of benefit for CVP water. Zone 6 overlies the Pacheco, Bolsa Southeast, San Juan, Hollister East, Hollister West, and Tres Pinos subbasins through 12 subsystems containing approximately 120 miles of pressurized pipeline laterals. SBCWD distributes CVP water to both agricultural and M&I customers in the County.

Actual CVP deliveries are modified on an annual basis by USBR, reflecting hydrologic conditions (e.g., drought) and the environmental status of the Delta. For example, between 2009 and 2014 allocations for agriculture ranged between zero and 80 percent of the contracted historic amount and allocations for M&I ranged between 50 and 100 percent. These allocations and how they affect water supply is discussed in further detail under Impact USS-1 below. Reductions in recent years are a combined result of sustained drought and recent Federal Court decisions on the status of endangered Delta fish species. The direct use of CVP water for M&I purposes in the County is limited by the available treatment capacity of the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant, which provides treatment for local municipal uses. Other M&I uses of CVP water include urban irrigation, golf courses, and potable supply for the Stonegate community. CVP water has also been used historically for groundwater replenishment.

### **Water Treatment**

Water treatment for potable CVP M&I supplies within the County is provided by the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant (WTP), a jointly owned facility of the City of Hollister and SSCWD. The Lessalt WTP was placed into operation in January 2003 and is designed to treat imported CVP water using microfiltration and chlorine disinfection. The treated water is distributed to both City of Hollister and SSCWD customers. The Lessalt WTP was constructed to provide a source of water to replace groundwater use and improve water quality by supplementing the existing groundwater supply with higher quality surface water. The plant was designed with a rated treatment capacity of 3,360 AFY of imported CVP supply. However, since the plant was placed in service in 2003, it has been unable to achieve its design capacity due to hydraulic constraints and treated water capacity issues. In 2013, Lessalt produced 1,648 AF for municipal supply, amounting to 49 percent of the design capacity. A new water treatment plant, the West Hills WTP, is planned to serve the Hollister urban area. A Draft EIR for the West Hills WTP project (SBCWD 2014) was prepared in January 2014. The West Hills WTP will have an initial capacity of 4.5 to 6 mgd and will provide treatment for iron, manganese, and organic material (SBCWD 2014).

### **Local Surface Water Projects**

SBCWD owns and operates two reservoirs along the San Benito River. Hernandez Reservoir (capacity 17,200 AF) is located on the upper San Benito River in southern San Benito County.

Paicines Reservoir (capacity 2,870 AF) is an offstream reservoir between the San Benito River and Tres Pinos Creek, and is filled by water either diverted from the San Benito River, natural runoff, or water released from Hernandez Reservoir. Water stored in the two reservoirs is released for percolation in Tres Pinos Creek and the San Benito River to augment groundwater recharge during the dry season.

### **Groundwater**

Groundwater is currently the main source of water supply in San Benito County. Most groundwater is extracted from wells in the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin by agricultural users and domestic water providers. The other major source of water to the County is CVP water that is delivered to the Zone 6 portions of the Hollister Valley. The relative proportions of groundwater and CVP water are affected primarily by the availability of CVP water from USBR.

### **Domestic Water Providers**

There are approximately 116 water purveyors in San Benito County. The majority of these purveyors (73 percent) have only one or two groundwater wells. These systems provide water to communities such as mobile home parks and homeowner associations and to schools, parks, and businesses. These purveyors are required to report periodic water quality data to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The following is a summary of the five largest water systems in the County.

- San Benito County Water District (SBCWD). San Benito County Water District manages the water resources for the 47,000 acres of San Benito County. SBCWD is a California Special District that was formed in 1953 by the San Benito County Water Conservation and Flood Control Act. SBCWD has jurisdiction throughout San Benito County and has formed three zones of benefit to obtain funds to support surface water management and groundwater replenishment activities. Zone 1 covers the entire County and provides the funding base for certain SBCWD administrative expenses. Zone 3 generally covers the San Benito River Valley to the confluence with the Pajaro River, from the State Route 25 bridge nine miles south of the town of Paicines to San Juan Bautista, and the Tres Pinos Creek Valley from Paicines to the San Benito River. Zone 3 provides the funding base for operation of Hernandez and Paicines Reservoirs and related percolation and groundwater management activities. Zone 6 includes the six major delineated subbasins in the northern portion of the County and provides the funding base for importation and distribution of CVP water and related groundwater management activities (HDR 2008). SBCWD has an annual requirement to prepare a groundwater report. This annual report describes the groundwater conditions in the San Benito County part of the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin, and provides a “state of the basin” summary of groundwater levels and storage, water supplies and demands, and management actions for the groundwater basin.

- City of Hollister. The City of Hollister is the largest incorporated city in San Benito County. Its service area includes much of the city and serves a population of over 23,000. The City has eight groundwater wells: Wells 1 through 6 are located in the Northern Hollister East and Hollister West subbasins and Cullum Wells 1 and 2 are in Cienega Valley (located outside of the subbasins). In 2009 the City of Hollister produced 2,626 AF from their groundwater wells. The City, along with SSCWD, delivered 1,338 AF of treated imported CVP water (through Lessalt WTP).
- Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD). Sunnyslope County Water District is a water purveyor whose service area includes part of Hollister and unincorporated areas of the County near the city. SSCWD serves over 5,200 connections. It operates four active wells located in the Hollister West and Tres Pinos subbasins. In 2010, SSCWD produced 1,948 AF of groundwater and supplied additional imported CVP water from the Lessalt WTP, according to the 2010 Hollister Urban Area Urban Water Management Plan, prepared by Todd Engineers on behalf of SBCWD, SSCWD, and the City of Hollister (Todd Engineers 2011).
- Hollister Urban Area Agreement. The SBCWD, the County, the City of Hollister, and the SSCWD have a memorandum of understanding that established a framework for water and wastewater planning in the Hollister urban area.
- Aromas Water District. Aromas Water District supplies water to approximately 2,700 residents in and around the community of Aromas (east of Chittenden Gap). In 2009 the Aromas Water District extracted 350 AF of groundwater from three wells located outside the Gilroy Hollister groundwater basin. The water system includes an iron and manganese removal plant that came on line in 2009.
- City of San Juan Bautista. The City of San Juan Bautista is located in the San Juan subbasin and serves water to a population of around 1,700 residents. The City operates two active wells and maintains an additional inactive well, all of which are located within city limits. In 2010 the City supplied 267 AF of water from groundwater to its residents (DWR 2011).

## **Wastewater Collection and Disposal**

### **Wastewater and Sewer Service**

Most of the unincorporated areas of San Benito County lack public sewer infrastructure and instead are serviced by either community septic systems or individual septic systems and leachfield disposal. The incorporated areas, including Hollister and San Juan Bautista, are serviced by each city's wastewater and sewer services. Unincorporated areas in the County that

have public wastewater service are served by the Sunnyslope County Water District, the Tres Pinos Water and Sewer District, or by one of the four County Service Areas (CSAs). The four CSAs with sewer collection and treatment facilities in the county include: CSA #22 Cielo Vista, CSA #51 Comstock Estates, CSA #54 Pacheco Creek Estates, and CSA #45 Rancho Larios. The majority of the sewer districts that provide wastewater service in the unincorporated County have service areas that also cover the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista, and planned developments within several subdivisions outside city limits. Most communities south of Hollister, near Tres Pinos and in the far western and southern portion of the County, are on septic systems.

*City of Hollister Wastewater Treatment.* The City of Hollister collects and transmits all domestic, commercial, and industrial wastewater to one of two wastewater treatment plants. The sewer service area for the city is known as the Hollister Urban Area, which includes the entire incorporated city and some parcels outside the city limits that are designated for urban development. The unincorporated area designated for urban development includes parcels located east of Fairview Road, South of Airline Road, and small parcels west of State Route 156.

Five wastewater treatment plants treat domestic, commercial, and industrial wastewater flows generated in the Hollister Urban Area. However, only two of the five wastewater treatment plants are owned and operated by the City. The other existing wastewater facilities are owned and operated by two separate entities, the Sunnyslope County Water District and San Benito County, which operates the Cielo Vista Estates Wastewater Treatment Plant (discussed below under CSAs). All domestic and commercial wastewater within the City of Hollister is collected through gravity pipelines and force mains, then transmitted through six lift stations, depending on the transfer location. Once collected, the wastewater is transferred to the City's Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant (DWTP). The DWTP is located west of the City at the intersection of San Juan Road and State Route 156 along the San Benito River. All excess flows and industrial water uses are diverted to the City's Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant (IWTP) located less than one mile east of the DWTP. Compared to the DWTP, the IWTP is designed to treat high strength organic loading, mostly from canneries. While the facility treats mainly cannery wastewater, it also treats excess municipal wastewater and stormwater. Both the DWTP and the IWTP facilities operate under permits from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (CCRWQCB).

*City of Hollister Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant (DWTP).* The DWTP disposes treated effluent in 15 percolation beds located on the eastern and western sides of State Route 156, and additional beds located at the City's IWTP, and it also delivers recycled water to Brigantino Park and the Hollister Municipal Airport for irrigation purposes. Wastewater services include over 19 miles of wastewater pipeline, and three lift stations that are able to provide approximately 5,564 connections for collection, conveyance, treatment, and disposal service. On average the plant

treats approximately 2.7 million gallons per day (mgd) of dry flows. The City commissioned a new membrane bioreactor treatment system in 2008 to improve treatment to tertiary levels and enable agricultural reuse. In 2010, 203 acre-feet of wastewater was recycled (Hollister 2011).

*City of Hollister Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant (IWTP).* The IWTP was built in 1971 to process wastewater from canneries. San Benito Foods is currently the only remaining industrial discharger to the IWTP. It mainly discharges tomato cannery wastewater during the summer and early fall of each year. The City has implemented a series of improvements at the IWTP and has received permission from the CCRWQCB to temporarily divert excess domestic wastewater from the DWTP to the IWTP to leverage additional treatment and disposal capacity available when the cannery is not discharging wastewater. The IWTP currently combines its operations with the DWTP and treats on average approximately 0.66 mgd of dry weather flows. The permitted capacity of the IWTP facility varies by season, between 0.18 mgd to 3.5 mgd. Once treated, the effluent is treated and discharged to evaporation ponds that cover approximately 39 acres.

*Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Management Plan.* In 2004 the City of Hollister, the SBCWD, and San Benito County entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the development of the Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Management Plan (also known as a Master Plan). The Master Plan addresses water quality, water supply reliability, and water and wastewater system improvements within the Hollister Urban Area, which includes all of Hollister and portions of San Benito County. Wastewater system improvements identified in the Master Plan have been implemented, resulting in the expansion of the DWTP capacity from 2.7 mgd to 5 mgd, or 0.5 mgd greater than the 2023 wastewater flow projection of 4.5 mgd. However, as population increases, major infrastructure improvements identified in the plan would need to be implemented, including further increases for treatment and disposal capacity and reductions in effluent concentrations.

*City of Hollister Reclaimed Water Project.* The City has initiated recycling efforts for reclaimed water that intend to test land application scenarios at six sites scattered throughout the San Juan Valley and Hollister Gilroy (Bolsa) Valley of the larger Pajaro River Watershed. The project is broken into two phases. The first phase involves the implementation of the Long Term Wastewater Management Program (LTWMP) described below. The LTWMP describes the implementation plan and schedule for the land application scenarios. These scenarios include recycling treated wastewater from the DWTP by developing 200 to 350 acres of sprayfields at five potential sites (Hollister Municipal Airport, Pacific Sod Farm, San Juan Oaks Golf Club, Brook Hollow Ranch, and Brigantino Site). This phase also includes the construction of storage ponds, pipelines, and spray fields for tertiary wastewater application. The second phase implements a water supply component, which involves the demineralization of source water and the construction of a desalination plant. This project was approved as part of the DWTP project in late 2006, and construction began in early 2007.



In June 2014 the SBCWD release an addendum to the environmental report for the project due to changes to the project. A supplement to the original environmental report was also released in 2010. The District is proposing to move forward with the first phase of the project, for a 1,900 acre service area located along Wright Road. With the additional recycled water storage provided by lining of the seasonal storage reservoir, the District would be able to provide up to 3,000 acre feet of recycled water within the boundary of the proposed 1,900-acre service area. Recycled water irrigation under the proposed project would off-set irrigation with groundwater (SBCWD 2014c).

*City of Hollister Long Term Wastewater Management Program (LTWMP).* The City completed its LTWMP for both the DWTP and the IWTP in 2005. It identifies major components and actions required under the CCRWQCB's permit for the DWTP and the IWTP. It also describes the City's plan for wastewater treatment and effluent management of current and future wastewater flows. The LTWMP assumes the DWTP will treat wastewater from the Sunnyslope County Waste District in the future.

*City of Hollister Sewer System Management Plan.* As part of the Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems adopted by the SWRCB in 2006, the City must now report all sanitary sewer overflows to the California Integrated Water Quality System (CIWQS). The new order requires the City to prepare a Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP), which still needs to be completed. The latest plan on sewer systems is the Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan, completed in November 2008, as part of the MOU developed in 2004. The plan was required to reduce and prevent sanitary sewer overflows, but it was developed primarily to identify water and wastewater service development as defined by both the City of Hollister and San Benito County General Plans.

*City of San Juan Bautista.* The City of San Juan Bautista encompasses approximately 0.7 square miles, but still provides many of its own services, including wastewater collection, conveyance, treatment, and disposal services for approximately 689 account connections for residential, commercial, and institutional uses (Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) 2007). The City's service area includes the entire city and several properties outside the City's boundaries. The City's wastewater system facilities currently include two lift stations and sewer mains that collect and convey wastewater to the San Juan Bautista Wastewater Treatment Plant.

*City of San Juan Bautista Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP).* The WWTP provides tertiary treatment and has capacity for 0.27 mgd. Average dry weather flows are currently 0.18 mgd. Once treated, effluent is discharged into San Juan Creek. The CCRWQCB permits the WWTP.

*Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD).* The Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD) serves approximately 2.5 square miles that include the eastern portion of Hollister and an unincorporated area with an estimated population of 16,000 located to the east and southeast of

Hollister. While the SSCWD provides water services to the entire 2.5 square mile service area, SSCWD only provides wastewater services to a small area that includes the Ridgemark Estates community and the Oak Creek and Quail Hollow subdivisions. According to the LAFCo Municipal Services Review (MSR), in 2007 the SSCWD served approximately 1,200 customers. However, the Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan (2008) states that the Ridgemark sewer service area is estimated to serve approximately 3,720 customers. In general, the SSCWD's Sphere of Influence is coterminous with its boundary, and any future expansion of the service areas would result if the service area's population increased. A summary of the SSCWD's LTWMP is described below.

*Ridgemark Wastewater Treatment Systems (RM).* The SSCWD's Ridgemark wastewater system includes wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services. It consists of the Ridgemark (RM) wastewater treatment system, which includes three lift stations, 27 miles of sewer line, and two treatment facilities with a permitted capacity of 370,000 gallons per day (gpd). The treatment facilities are known as the Ridgemark Estates Wastewater Treatment Plant I and II (or RM I and RM II), both of which use treatment ponds and disposal at 10.2 acres of evaporation ponds. RM I consists of six ponds and RM II consists of four ponds. Flows can be transferred between both plants through an interconnecting force main and transfer lift station. Currently, both treatment facilities are permitted for a combined 30 day operational running average, dry weather flows of 0.3 mgd, and a 30 day running average for wet weather flows of 0.31 mgd. Currently, the 30 day running average dry and wet weather flows conveyed to the two treatment plants are estimated at 0.26 and 0.28 mgd.

As outlined in the latest LAFCO MSR, SSCWD provided 1,207 service connections through these two treatment plants and its collection system, which uses three lift stations to convey wastewater to the treatment facilities and ponds. Once treated, approximately 254 acre feet is discharged, of which 227 acre feet is estimated to percolate into the groundwater. According to the LAFCO MSR, a new treatment process will need to be implemented to meet more stringent water quality requirements. As a result, the SSCWD has considered several treatment and disposal alternatives and a potential connection with the new Hollister Regional Wastewater Treatment Plan (expansion of the DWTP and IWTP). SSCWD's wastewater services operate under waste discharge permits and sanitary sewer requirement orders issued by the CCRWQCB.

*SSCWD Long Term Wastewater Management Plan (LTWMP).* The SSCWD LTWMP was adopted by the SSCWD in January 2006 because disposal capacity at both the RM I and RM II will need to be increased in the future to meet population demands and to account for decreasing percolation rates. Based on the LTWMP, the annual disposal capacity of the two treatment plants needs to be increased by 264 acre feet to accommodate future development and disposal needs. The LTWMP also addresses the SSCWD's regulatory requirements as defined in its Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) to meet waste quality standards for nitrogen, total dissolved solids (TDS), chloride, sodium, and other constituents.

*Tres Pinos Water District (TPWD).* The TPWD was formed in 1962 to serve the unincorporated Tres Pinos community in the eastern portion of San Benito County. The TPWD provides water and wastewater services for approximately 113 customers (LAFCo 2007). Based on the LAFCo MSR, the TPWD treatment facility discharged an estimated 33 AFY of which seven AFY evaporated and 22 AFY were estimated to percolate. The treatment facility has been cited for a number of violations over the years prior to 2007 due to effluent violations. Since 2007 the TPWD has begun planning to expand the wastewater treatment plant and develop a LTWMP and a SSMP.

*San Benito County Wastewater Systems.* The majority of the unincorporated County relies on septic tank systems for waste disposal, and only approximately 1 percent of the unincorporated area located within cities' spheres of influence has the potential to use public sewer and wastewater services (CPUC 2009). In addition, four CSAs provide wastewater collection and disposal for subdivisions located outside the Hollister area. Therefore, most wastewater from rural dwellings scattered across the county is usually disposed of via septic systems and in-ground disposal. As a result, prior to issuing a septic system permit, the County Environmental Health Department must assess whether soil and site conditions are favorable, whether maintenance of the system will be adequate, and whether or not the septic tank system can be expected to provide satisfactory service for the applicant. The few public wastewater systems managed by the County through CSAs, as well as a summary of the septic tank systems issued by the County Department of Public Health, are described below.

*County Service Areas.* CSAs provide municipal services within unincorporated areas. They are dependent special districts, governed by the County Board of Supervisors. San Benito County includes 30 active CSAs and seven inactive CSAs, many of which have aging facilities according to the MSR. Of the 30 active CSAs, only four provide sewer collection, treatment, and disposal through small community wastewater systems that are regulated by the Order No. 2006-0003-DWQ (as revised by Order No. WQ 2008-0002-EXEC and Order No. WQ 2013-0058-EXEC) "Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems" or individual Orders issued by the CCRWQCB with oversight by both the County Environmental Health Department and the County Public Works Department. The CSAs with community wastewater service systems include Cielo Vista, Comstock Estates, Pacheco Creek Estates, and Rancho Larios. Rancho Larios is the only development that has a 40,000 gpd treatment plant with a disposal system. The other three have community wastewater treatment plants with leachfield disposal systems. As of 2007, some CSAs required remedial actions, such as emergency water systems and improvements at their wastewater treatment plants. For example, Rancho Larios (CSA No. 45) began working with the County to resolve the operational failures at their wastewater treatment plant. The CCRWQCB has issued Waste Discharge Requirements Order Nos. R3-87-115 to Cielo Vista Estates and R3-2004-0153 to Rancho Larios (CCRWQCB 2011). Rancho Larios and Cielo Vista have contracted privately to operate and maintain their

wastewater treatment systems, and the plants have met all discharge requirements on a consistent basis, except Cielo Vista has not met requirements for salt levels due to water softener use by homeowners (BEI 2014).

*Cielo Vista Estates Wastewater Treatment Plant (CSA No. 22).* Cielo Vista Estates was established as San Benito County Service Area No. 22. The subdivision is located northwest of the intersection of Fairview Road and Airline Highway and consists of 70 acres of residential development with approximately 76 residences. Approximately 1.2 miles of sewer collection pipelines provide service to the area. It is the closest CSA to the city of Hollister. The wastewater treatment facility consists of an enclosed package sequencing batch reactor that has the capacity to treat up to 30,000 gpd of domestic wastewater. The average estimated influent wastewater flow to the facility is estimated to be 20,000 gpd (Hollister Urban Water and Waste Management Plan 2005). Approximately 22 AFY of treated wastewater is disposed of on leachfields adjacent to the treatment facility.

The County has considered decommissioning the Cielo Vista Estate WWTP and conveying raw wastewater to the DWTP in Hollister.

*Septic Tank Systems.* When an applicant, such as a homeowner or business, applies for a septic tank permit, the San Benito County Environmental Health Department assesses whether the design of the septic system is adequate and whether the proposed location has suitable soil for absorbing the effluent and at what rate. San Benito County contains approximately 97,855 acres (11 percent) of soil that has slight to moderate septic tank limitations, and the remainder of the soils (89 percent) have severe limitations. Several thousand individual septic systems exist throughout the County. Between 1990 and 2010 approximately 1,410 new septic tank installation permits and approximately 962 septic replacements were issued (Andrade 2010). Therefore, on average the County reviews and issues approximately 67 new septic system permits and 45 septic replacements a year. During this time period the County also issued 35 removal permits, or around two septic tank destruction permits per year.

## **Storm Drainage and Storm Water Quality**

### **Storm Drainage Systems**

The majority of surface areas in San Benito County ultimately drain to the Pajaro River, with small exceptions in the southwest and southeast corners of the County which drain to the Salinas River and Central Valley. San Benito County does not have a comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan, but some sub watersheds have been subject to special studies, drainage assessments, and improvement projects. Additionally, the Countywide drainage ordinance is enforced and the County Public Works Department has been pro-active in their review of development applications to place conditions of approval that require stormwater quality

measures to control potential urban pollutants. Private subdivisions are typically required to have either a Homeowners Association (HOA) or CSA created to maintain drainage systems.

Within the Santa Ana Creek watershed, which has had serious flooding problems, a special study determined the need for drainage/maintenance fees that have been adopted as part of County Code (Chapter 5.01, Article II, Drainage Impact Fees) and apply within the San Felipe Lake Drainage. Localized flooding concerns in the vicinity of Fallon and Fairview during events as small as the 10 year storm prompted a tributary drainage study. Strategies to preserve habitat along natural drainages, but also increase conveyance at culverts, bridges, and along a constructed overflow channel were identified and adopted by the County. The study recommendations are used in development project reviews as the basis for potential conditions of approval.

Another sub watershed that has had specific study and improvements is along the southwest side of the City of Hollister, serving unincorporated lands and some portions of that city. An 84-inch cast in place pipe and detention basins receives water from storm drainage systems and discharge to the San Benito River. The Enterprise Drainage Basin Benefit Area has established fees to support facilities maintenance, and the project was implemented in phases during the early to mid-1990s.

Stormwater quality measures have been advocated and required by County Public Works as a practice during review of development for many years. However, specific requirements and performance standards are not codified. To date, the relatively low magnitude and intensity of development in unincorporated areas, and the availability of land to cost effectively site and construct storm drainage features, have made monitoring of maintenance and performance unnecessary.

### **Storm Drainage Entities**

*San Benito County Water District.* San Benito County Water District (SBCWD) was formed by a special act of the State Legislature in 1953, which gives the SBCWD broad powers for the conservation and management of water throughout San Benito County, including flood, surface, drainage, and groundwater. The boundaries of the SBCWD are coterminous with the County boundary. There are several distinct service zones within SBCWD: Zone 1 covers the entire county, Zone 3 covers the San Benito River Valley, Zone 6 includes the six major delineated subbasins that are part of the San Felipe Project, and Zones 103 and 104 are rural water systems. SBCWD has several programs and activities related to water resources and water supply, which are described in Chapter 13, Hydrology and Water Resources, of this RDEIR.

*County Service Areas of San Benito County.* There are 30 active and seven inactive CSAs. Many of the CSAs have aging and deteriorated facilities, including drainage infrastructure. They are

dependent special districts governed by the County Board of Supervisors, and their infrastructure needs are managed by the Public Works Department of the County.

*City of Hollister.* The City of Hollister is responsible for local drainage within the incorporated area. Storm water facilities are provided through a City maintained network of storm drains that flow to the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, and a Santa Ana Creek tributary. The City last adopted a Storm Drain Master Plan in 2002. The ongoing operation and maintenance of these facilities is funded through storm water impact fees. The City has an adopted Phase II NPDES General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). The plan includes strategies for the protection of water quality and reduction of pollutant discharges to the maximum extent practicable from all areas and facilities within the city.

*City of San Juan Bautista.* The City of San Juan Bautista is responsible for local drainage within the incorporated area. This is provided by a City maintained network of storm drains that flow to San Juan Creek and ultimately the San Benito River. The LAFCO MSR (2007) stated that existing facilities are in poor condition and that significant funding would be needed to assess existing conditions for both drainage and roadways, and to repair, rehabilitate, or reconstruct as necessary. Replacement of sections of the stormwater drainage pipeline is included in the City's water and sewer upgrade project, although this will not address all of the drainage issues within the city.

*Aromas Water District.* The Aromas Water District (AWD) is a tri-county district (Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito) that serves four separate service areas within the unincorporated community of Aromas and its vicinity. The portion in San Benito County is in the northwest corner of the County. The primary function of AWD is water supply. The District does not have formal stormwater drainage systems or responsibilities.

*Sunnyslope County Water District.* The Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD) provides both water and wastewater services to an area on the east portion of Hollister and unincorporated lands to the east and southeast (LAFCO 2007). SSCWD does not have specific stormwater systems or responsibilities.

*Tres Pinos Water District.* The Tres Pinos Water District (TPWD) was formed in 1962 to serve the unincorporated Tres Pinos community in eastern San Benito County, primarily with water and wastewater services (LAFCO 2007). TPWD does not have specific stormwater systems or responsibilities.

*Pacheco Stormwater District.* Pacheco Stormwater District (PSD) is an independent special district formed in 1909 that is no longer active; the LAFCO MSR (2007) stated that the PSD should be dissolved and its revenue reallocated to other entities

## **Solid Waste**

### **Solid Waste Hauling**

San Benito County, through the San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency, administers a countywide exclusive franchise contract (including the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista) for solid waste collection operations through one private hauling firm, Recology. This firm operates 14 to 15 trucks per day within the unincorporated portions of the County. No transfer or recycling stations exist in the County, and Recology uses curbside separation via separate carts for household garbage, greenwaste, and recyclables and collection as the primary mode of collection. Recology operates approximately eight hauling trucks for garbage, five trucks for recyclables, and two trucks for yard waste. Approximately three additional private drop box haulers collect and haul waste for County businesses thru non-exclusive franchise agreements with the County.

### **Solid Waste Landfill**

The John Smith Road landfill, located at 2650 John Smith Road in Hollister, is the only operating solid waste landfill within San Benito County that serves the entire County. The landfill is a Class III active municipal solid waste (MSW) landfill. The materials accepted at Class III landfills include household waste, construction and demolition debris, and other nonhazardous materials like vegetative debris. This facility is operated by Waste Connections through a contract administered by SBCIWM.

### **Compost and Recycling Programs**

There are several privately owned and operated compost sites that process inert, green, and agricultural waste in the County, which are regulated, and inspected by CalRecycle. Curbside collection is the primary household recycling method; bins for source separated materials are available at John Smith Road Landfill. There is no Material Recovery Facility in San Benito County and all curbside and commercially collected recyclables are processed at a facility outside of the County. The County has over 12 certified used oil centers. Nine of the oil centers are located in Hollister, one is located in Aromas, one is located in San Juan Bautista, and one is located in Paicines. Electronic waste, household hazardous waste, oil, and grease are prohibited from landfills. Instead, these materials are stored at the designated area at the John Smith Road Landfill and hauled to appropriately permitted recycling or disposal sites outside the County.

### **Solid Waste Generation, Diversion, and Landfill Capacity**

According to the latest air space capacity report prepared for John Smith Road Landfill in 2014, the John Smith Road Class III landfill had a remaining capacity of approximately 4,777,674 cubic yards based on receiving approximately 500 tons of solid waste per day with a diversion rate of 50 percent, and is expected to reach capacity by 2030.

However, the approved John Smith Road Landfill expansion project added 33.8 acres to permit a tonnage increase from 500 tons per day to 1,000 tons per day and allow the facility to accept additional out of County waste, the ability to accept unlimited recyclables for diversion, and temporarily stockpile soil. The expansion resulted in an additional approximately 2,880,000 cubic yards of capacity and a disposal rate increase of 180,500 tons per year (500 more tons per day, in effect extending the capacity year 2021). In addition, Waste Connections Inc. under an Operating Agreement with the County will be constructing a new landfill in 2016 with an estimated capacity of 45 years at 850 tons per day.

In addition, a Resource Recovery Park project was approved in March of 2014 that will operate in partnership with the John Smith Road Landfill to offset the need for additional landfill capacity and provide recyclable materials and energy for businesses also located in the Resource Recovery Park (San Benito County 2011d). The County owns a total of 133 acres adjacent to John Smith Road Landfill. The Resource Recovery Park would be constructed on 30 acres adjoining the new landfill footprint. The proposed recycling facilities and expanded landfill footprint would be used to limit the need to permit additional landfill capacity in the County.

### **Household and Small Quantity Generator Hazardous Waste Disposal**

San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency operates a permanent Household Hazardous Waste Collection program for household hazardous waste (HHW) disposal at the John Smith Road Landfill. The facility receives household hazardous waste on the third Saturday of each month. Household hazardous waste includes car batteries, latex paints, used oil and oil filters, antifreeze, medically prescribed hypodermic needles, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, paints and thinners, and pool chemicals. Disposal of ammunition, explosives, radioactive materials, medical waste, and compressed gas cylinders is not allowed at the facility. If electronic waste, household hazardous waste, and oil and grease are found after dumping by residents or businesses on the landfill face, as these waste types are prohibited from landfills, they are temporarily stored and eventually hauled to appropriate recycling or disposal sites outside the County.

### **Hazardous Waste Landfills**

Other than the SQG program's temporary storage provisions (listed in the Regulatory Setting section of this chapter) and based on Title 22, there are no hazardous waste transfer, storage, and disposal facilities in San Benito County. Specific detail regarding the human made hazards and more information on the CUPA Program are provided in the Chapter 12. There is a closed Class I landfill adjacent to John Smith Road Landfill—it was operated as an agricultural disposal site in 1977-1983 and is under Post –Closure care through a permit with the Department of Toxics Substances Control. The Class I site is owned by the City of Hollister but maintained through an agreement by the County of San Benito IWM Department.



## 20.1.2 Regulatory Setting

### Federal

- **Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).** The SDWA, administered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in coordination with the SWRCB Division of Drinking Water, is the main federal law that ensures the quality of Americans' drinking water. Under the SDWA, USEPA sets standards for drinking water quality and oversees the state, local and other water suppliers who implement those standards.
- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.** The USEPA is responsible for developing and enforcing regulations that implement environmental laws enacted by Congress. It is responsible for researching and setting national standards for a variety of environmental programs, and delegates to states and tribes the responsibility for issuing permits, and for monitoring and enforcing compliance. The USEPA Office of Wastewater Management (OWM) supports the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act (CWA)) by promoting effective and responsible water use, treatment, disposal, and management, and by encouraging the protection and restoration of watersheds. The OWM is responsible for directing the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, pretreatment, and municipal bio-solids management programs (including beneficial use) under the CWA.

In 1990, USEPA published final regulations establishing stormwater permit application requirements known as Phase I of the NPDES program that cover medium to large municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) serving populations greater than 100,000, industrial sites, and construction sites greater than five acres. Phase II of the NPDES program requires operators of small MS4s (serving less than 100,000) in urbanized areas and small construction sites between one and five acres to be covered under a NPDES permit, and to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater runoff. The Phase II Small MS4 General Permit (Order No. 2013-0001) was adopted and became effective on July 1, 2013.

- **Small Quantity Generators.** Businesses that generate less than 220 pounds, 100 kilograms, or 27 gallons of hazardous waste in one month qualify as a Small Quantity Generator (SQG). SQG businesses and other household or business waste generators can dispose hazardous materials at the John Smith facility. John Smith Landfill staff sends these materials to appropriate off site (i.e., outside of the county) final disposal facilities. To qualify as a SQG, businesses must meet the following criteria: Hold an EPA Identification Number. Submit Form 1358 to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (form to [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov)). Generate no more than 220 pounds or 27 gallons of waste per month; no single container greater

than 5 gallons; and less than 2.2 pounds of acutely hazardous waste. This is approximately equal to one quart of liquid with a comparable weight to water. Generate no more than 110 pounds of perchloroethylene. This is approximately equal to 13 gallons of liquid with a comparable weight to water. Generate no farm chemicals, radioactive waste, biohazardous waste or compressed gas cylinders. These guidelines are set out in the Code of Federal Regulations 40 CFR 265.201 and the California Code of Regulations Title 22, Section 66260.10.

- **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.** The USBR was established in 1902 as part of the U.S. Department of the Interior. It is best known for its dams, power plants, and canals that were constructed in the 17 western states. These water projects led to homesteading, and promoted the economic development of the West. USBR owns and operates the CVP, of which the San Felipe Project is a unit. The San Felipe Project consists of facilities that convey water from San Luis Reservoir in the Central Valley to Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) and SBCWD. SBCWD purchases San Felipe Project water from USBR.
- **Clean Water Act.** The CWA is the cornerstone of surface water quality protection in the United States. The statute employs a variety of regulatory and non-regulatory tools to sharply reduce direct pollutant discharges into waterways, finance municipal wastewater treatment facilities, and manage polluted runoff. Section 303 of the CWA requires states to adopt water quality standards for all surface water of the United States. In 1972, the CWA was amended to provide that the discharge of pollutants to waters of the United States from any point source is unlawful unless the discharge is in compliance with an NPDES permit. The 1987 amendments to the CWA added Section 402(p), which establish a framework for regulating municipal and industrial stormwater discharges, including discharges associated with construction activities, under the NPDES program. The SWRCB and the RWQCBs are responsible for ensuring implementation and compliance with the provisions of the federal CWA.

## State

- **California Water Code (CWC).** The CWC, and related sections of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), establishes the governing law pertaining to all aspects of water management in California. Domestic water service in the unincorporated areas of the County is generally provided by special districts or private groundwater supply wells.
- **Title 22 of CCR.** Title 22 regulates the use of reclaimed wastewater and its allowable application on edible and/or food crops, orchards, vineyards, parks, playgrounds, and landscaping. Regulation of reclaimed water is governed by the nine RWQCBs and the CDPH.

- **The Groundwater Management Act (CWC §§ 10750-10755.4).** The Act provides a systematic procedure for a management agency to develop a groundwater management plan. SBCWD, in collaboration with local organizations, has developed a groundwater management plan consistent with the CWC, and is actively managing groundwater resources. In 2014, the Legislature enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (CWC §§ 10720-10728.6), which will take effect January 1, 2015. Under that Act, local agencies, individually or in combination, will be required to develop groundwater sustainability plans for each basin or subbasin designated by the DWR. That Act will require that a plan demonstrate how the basin or subbasin will be operated within its sustainable yield within approximately 20 years of the plan's adoption. The plans for most basins and subbasins will be due in 2022. Plans for basins and subbasins that DWR finds to be "critically overdraft" will be due in 2020.
- **The Groundwater Monitoring Program Act (California Water Code §§ 10920 and 10936).** The Act establishes a monitoring program for all DWR-defined groundwater basins in California. SBCWD, the groundwater monitoring entity for San Benito County groundwater basins, maintains an active water resource monitoring program in the San Benito County portion of the Gilroy-Hollister basin, where most County groundwater pumping and management occurs.
- **California Department of Public Health (CDPH).** Historically, a major component of the CDPH Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management was the Drinking Water Program (DWP) which regulates public water systems. Regulatory responsibilities under the DWP include the enforcement of federal and state Safe Drinking Water Acts, regulatory oversight of approximately 8,700 public water systems, oversight of water recycling projects, issuance of water treatment permits, and certification of drinking water treatment and distribution operators. In 2014, responsibilities for the DWP were transferred from CDPH to the State Water Resources Control Board.
- **California Department of Water Resources.** DWR is responsible for preparing and updating the California Water Plan, which is a policy document that guides the development and management of the state's water resources. The plan is updated every five years to reflect changes in resources and urban, agricultural, and environmental water demands. The plan was updated, circulated for public review and comment in early 2009, and adopted in late 2009. The California Water Plan suggests ways of managing demand and augmenting supply to balance water supply with demand. One focus of the plan is on scientific strategies to reduce demand and improve delivery of agricultural water, thereby creating more efficient use of agricultural water (DWR 2009).

- **Urban Water Management Planning Act (CWC §§10610 – 10656).** The Act, enacted by the California Legislature in 1983, states that every urban water supplier that provides water to 3,000 or more customers, or that provides over 3,000 acre-feet annually, should make every effort to ensure the appropriate level of reliability in its water service sufficient to meet the needs of its various categories of customers during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. The act also requires that urban water suppliers adopt and submit an urban water management plan at least once every five years to the DWR.
- **Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Governmental Reorganization Act of 2000.** The Act requires LAFCos to conduct municipal service reviews (MSR) for specified public agencies under their jurisdiction in order to evaluate the agency’s ability to provide adequate public services. The San Benito LAFCo last conducted a Countywide MSR in 2007.
- **Senate Bills (SB) 610 and SB 221 Water Supply Assessment and Verification.** SB 610 and SB 221 amended state law in 2002 to improve the link between information on water supply availability and certain land use decisions made by cities and counties. Both statutes require detailed information regarding water availability to be provided to the city and county decision-makers prior to approval of specified large development projects.

Under SB 610, water assessments must be furnished to local governments for inclusion in any environmental documentation for development of more than 500 dwelling units or hotel or motel rooms, shopping centers or businesses with more than 1,000 employees or 500,000 square feet of floor space; commercial office buildings with more than 1,000 employees or 250,000 square feet of floor space; industrial manufacturing or processing plants or industrial parks with more than 1,000 employees occupying more than 40 acres of land or having more than 650,000 square feet of floor area; a mixed use project or a project demanding an amount of water equivalent to or greater than that required by a 500 dwelling unit project, as defined in CWC §10912 subject to CEQA. Specific plans for new projects involving 500 or more new homes would be required to have their own SB 610 water supply assessments, unless their demands already were analyzed in an urban water management plan. Under SB 221, approval by a city or county of certain residential subdivisions requires an affirmative written verification of sufficient water supply.

- **SB 7x7 Statewide Water Conservation.** In November 2009 the California Legislature passed a comprehensive package of water legislation, including SB 7x7 addressing water conservation. In general, SB 7x7 requires a statewide 20 percent reduction in per capita urban water use by 2020, with an interim 10 percent target in 2015. The legislation requires urban retail water suppliers to develop specific water use targets and to use those targets in their urban water management plans. SB 7x7 also requires certain agricultural water

suppliers to implement a variety of water conservation and management practices, and to submit agricultural water management plans in 2012.

- **State Water Resources Control Board.** The SWRCB, in coordination with nine RWQCBs, performs functions related to water quality, including issuance of wastewater discharge permits (NPDES and Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR)) and other programs regulating stormwater runoff, and underground and above-ground storage tanks. San Benito County falls within the jurisdiction of the CCRWQCB. The Basin Plan of the CCRWQCB includes designation of beneficial uses of waters, water quality objectives to meet those uses, and description of programs and actions that need to be implemented to achieve the objectives. The Basin Plan review determined that groundwater recharge area protection is a high priority. The SWRCB's Recycled Water Policy encourages water recycling and development of a salt and nutrient management plan. San Benito County Water District developed a Salt and Nutrient Management Plan in 2014. In 2014, the SWRCB took over responsibility for the Drinking Water Program from the CDPH.
- **NPDES General Permit.** In California, owners of construction projects that will disturb more than one acre may obtain NPDES general permit coverage by submitting Permit Registration Documents, including a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) under SWRCB Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ (NPDES No. CAS000002), as amended by 2010-0014-DWQ and 2012-0006-DWQ. The California general permit requires a risk level determination based on site and receiving water characteristics, a range of monitoring, sampling and discharge requirements based on defined risk level, and post construction runoff reduction requirements that went into effect September 2012. The CCRWQCB requires all wastewater collection and disposal providers to prepare both a long-term wastewater management plan (LTWMP) according to wastewater requirements, and a Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP) according to the Statewide General Order Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems (WQO No. 2006-003-DWQ), which was adopted in 2006 and requires wastewater collection and service providers to report all sanitary sewer overflows and management plans for all sanitary sewer systems.

No municipalities in San Benito County are covered under the Phase I NPDES program. Under Phase II, small MS4s in an urban area with a population of 50,000 and density of 1,000 persons/square mile are required to obtain coverage under the SWRCB General Permit. The City of Hollister is a current participant in the Phase II municipal NPDES program, but no communities in unincorporated areas participate in the Phase II program.

- **Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).** The RWQCBs, SWRCB, and USEPA also establish and approve TMDL programs for water bodies that are identified as impaired and in need of actions to implement applicable water quality standards under Section

303(d) of the CWA. In San Benito County several water bodies have approved TMDLs to address specific constituents of concern several of which are linked to stormwater runoff and surface erosion sources (see [Table 20-1](#)). The TMDLs establish implementation activities to achieve the numeric targets for the constituents and impose regulatory mechanisms for various discharge types. Point source pollution is regulated through NPDES permits, such as an MS4 permit or the construction general permit. Nonpoint source pollution is regulated under State law (Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act) through WDRs, waivers of WDRs, and basin plan prohibitions. The streams and water bodies discussed below are identified as impaired under Section 303(d) of the CWA.

**Table 20-1 TMDL Status of 303(d) Impaired Water Bodies in San Benito County**

<b>TMDL Project</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Implementation Actions</b>
Pajaro River Watershed Sediment TMDL	EPA approved May 3, 2007	Pajaro River Watershed land disturbance prohibition or other NPS <sup>1</sup> compliance
Pajaro River Watershed Nitrate TMDL <sup>2</sup>	EPA approved October 13, 2006	Load allocations to point and NPS; reduction of croplands under Irrigated Lands Conditional Waivers of WDRs
Pajaro River Fecal Coliform TMDL	EPA approved August 3, 2010	Pending: Domestic Animal Waste and Human Fecal Material Discharge Prohibitions
Pajaro River Fecal Coliform Chlorpyrifos and Diazinon	EPA approved November 12, 2013	Aquatic habitat impairment controls, improvement in water quality
Clear Creek and Hernandez Reservoir Mercury TMDL	EPA approved June 21, 2004	Remedial erosion control measures by the US Bureau of Land Management (complete)

*Source:* CCRWQCB 2014.

*Note:* <sup>1</sup>NPS = non-point source.

<sup>2</sup>The only section within San Benito County is along the main stem of Pajaro River on the County border.

Past mining activities for asbestos, chromium, mercury, and other metals in the watershed of Clear Creek, in the headwaters of the San Benito River including Hernandez Reservoir, have contributed to the need for the mercury TMDL. The land use legacy effects and modern erosion factors require management, and the TMDL requires the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to continue to control mercury-rich sediment runoff to achieve the load allocation limits for Clear Creek and restore beneficial uses of the reservoir. Remedial actions have been implemented by the BLM.

In addition to the water bodies that already have adopted TMDLs in place, others within San Benito County have recently been identified as 303(d) listed and needing TMDLs, including: Pacheco Creek, San Juan Creek, Tequisquita Slough, and Tres Pinos Creek. Once approved, the TMDLs may impose modifications to stormwater management, erosion control, or other measures to meet the requirements.

- **Small Community Wastewater Grant Program.** The small community wastewater grant program, funded by Propositions 40 and 50, provides grant assistance for the construction of publicly-owned wastewater treatment and collection facilities. Grants are available for small communities with financial hardships. Communities must comply with population restrictions (maximum population of 20,000 people) and annual median household income provisions (maximum of \$37,994) to qualify for funding under this program.
- **California Code of Regulations (CCR).** In accordance with CCR Title 27, Division 2, Subdivision 1, Chapter 4, §§ 21440 through 22103, solid and hazardous waste transfer and disposal facilities in the County are regulated jointly by the CCRWQCB and CalRecycle. Compost facilities are regulated under CCR Title 14, Division 7, Chapter 3.1 §§ 17850 to 17895, by CalRecycle. Permit requests, reports of waste discharge, and reports and disposal site information are submitted to the RWQCB and CalRecycle, and are used by the two agencies to review, permit, and monitor these facilities. Both the RWQCB and CalRecycle regulate facilities individually and through local enforcement agencies staffed by County employees. In the County, the local enforcement agency for CalRecycle was the Environmental Health Division. In 2012, San Benito County requested that CalRecycle resume responsibility, which it did (Anyeneh 2014).

## Regional

- **The Pajaro River Watershed Collaborative (Collaborative).** The Collaborative was established in October 2004 via a memorandum of understanding between the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PVWMA), SBCWD, and SCVWD to coordinate water resources planning and implementation watershed wide. The Collaborative partners have led the development of the IRWMP, with goals and objectives focused on water

supply, water quality, flood protection, environmental protection and enhancement. As a partner in the Collaborative, San Benito County is responsible for assisting in priority IRWMP projects and participating in review of all development applications for consistency with the adopted IRWMP.

### **San Benito County**

- **San Benito County Environmental Health Division (EHD).** The EHD regulates the construction and operation of individual septic systems within the County.
- **San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Department.** The Department is responsible for the oversight of landfill operations and the County refuse/recycling contracts. It is responsible for the County' mandated waste diversion goals and implementation of the County-wide household hazardous waste program and the small quantity generator program for qualifying business hazardous waste.
- **San Benito County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).** LAFCO oversees public agency boundary changes, as well as the establishment, update, and amendment of spheres of influence (SOI) (Government Code §§56001, 56375 and 56425). The overarching goal of LAFCO is to encourage the orderly formation and extension of governmental agencies. The primary purposes of LAFCO are to facilitate orderly growth and development by determining logical local boundary changes; to preserve prime agricultural lands by guiding development away from presently undeveloped prime agricultural preserves; and to discourage urban sprawl and encourage the preservation of open space by promoting the development of vacant land within cities before annexation of vacant land adjacent to cities. LAFCO's approval is required for proposed changes of organization or reorganization of service districts, or proposed annexations or detachments of services districts. LAFCO last updated the Countywide Municipal Service Review in 2007.
- **San Benito Countywide Municipal Services Review.** The 2007 MSR addresses the services provided by the two cities, Hollister and San Juan Bautista, and special districts within the County. California state law authorizes the LAFCO within each County to establish boundaries and SOIs for cities and special districts under their purview, and to authorize the provision of services within the approved service areas. As part of this responsibility, LAFCO is required to conduct periodic reviews of each service provider, and to adopt determinations with respect to the need for, and adequacy of, current services and each agency's ability to continue to provide adequate services in the future.

The County has several service providers, including the two cities, five water districts, and several other services providers, such as CSAs. For example, both the Cities of Hollister



and San Juan Bautista are full service cities, providing water, wastewater, fire, police, recreation, roads, drainage, and other general government services. The SBCWD was formed by a special act of the State Legislature, which gives the District broad powers for the conservation and management of water throughout the County, including flood, surface, drainage, and groundwater. The Aromas Water District is a tri-County district (Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito) that serves four separate service areas within the unincorporated community of Aromas and its vicinity. The Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD) and Tres Pinos Water District provide both water and wastewater services. The numerous CSAs in the County provide enhanced municipal services, mainly wastewater collection and disposal, for communities within unincorporated areas of the County.

- **Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan (WWMP).** The 2008 WWMP is a cooperative effort of the City of Hollister, San Benito County, and the SBCWD, to determine a long-term vision to guide water resource improvements in the Hollister urban area. The WWMP's goals are to improve water quality, increase the reliability of the water supply, and integrate the goals from long-range wastewater and groundwater management programs.
- **Subdivision Drainage Design Standards: SBC Code Chapter 23.31, Article III Section 23.31.040–23.31.045.** The standards are part of Appendix D (Improvement Standards) to the Subdivision Ordinance. The storm water drainage system for any proposed development within the County must be designed in accordance with the standards, which establish guidelines for the design of storm for various locations and systems (ranging from the 10-year to 100-year storm) and hydraulic methods for calculations; identifies construction requirements to address alignment, easements, use and design of closed conduits and open channels; and specifies the drainage reports necessary for subdivisions larger than two acres. The County's ordinance is more strict than typical state requirements, requiring that the post-development 100-year storm peak flow discharged off-site be limited to the pre-development 10-year storm peak flow or channel capacity, whichever is the lesser (SBC Code §23.31.041 (F)). This requirement is intended to help prevent adverse changes in localized or downstream flooding, and to accommodate the existing conveyance system in undeveloped areas, which is primarily unlined earthen ditches.
- **Water System Design Standards: SBC Code Chapter 23.31, Article IV, Section 23.31.060 – 23.31.062, in Appendix D of the Subdivision Ordinance.** These sections include design standards for any water facility or system in the County, except individual residential parcel systems and small water systems.

- **Sewer System Design Standards: SBC Code Chapter 23.31, Article V, Section 23.31.08 – 23.31.083), in Appendix D to the Subdivision Ordinance.** These sections include provisions on the design and construction of sanitary sewers, sewer pump stations, sewer treatment plants and sewer systems in the unincorporated area of the County.
- **San Benito County Grading Ordinance: SBC Code Chapter 19.17.** The grading, drainage, and erosion control ordinance is contained in this chapter. The ordinance regulates grading, drainage, and erosion control on private and public property, and requires grading, erosion, and drainage control plans to prevent water pollution and sedimentation of the County's water resources. Grading permits from the Building Inspection and Planning Department are required for grading activities, aside from exemptions listed in SBC Code §19.17.004. Permits are required primarily for activities not otherwise regulated or having reasonable extent (>50 cubic yards) and risk (e.g., crossing or affecting natural drainages). Grading is not permitted within 50 feet of the top of bank of a stream, creek, river or other water body; in areas of active landslides; or areas over 30 percent slope. The grading permit applications require an erosion and drainage control plan that specifies measures to minimize construction phase water quality risks.
- **County Solid Waste Regulations: SBC Code Chapter 15.01.** San Benito County code sections related to solid waste are set forth in Chapter 15.01, Solid Waste Regulations of Title 15 (Public Works) of the San Benito County Code. The Integrated Waste Management Department works with other County and state and federal agencies to ensure compliance with all applicable laws related to solid and hazardous waste.
- **County Water Regulations SBC Code Chapter 15.05.** SBC Code sections related to groundwater aquifer protections, local small water systems, and well standards are set forth in Chapter 15.05, Water of Title 15 (Public Works) of the Code. Section 15.05.004 states that it is unlawful to extract groundwater, or for a property owner to allow the extraction on his or her land, for the purpose of using the water or selling the water for use on a parcel other than one located within the same subbasin as described in the SBCWD annual groundwater report, without first obtaining a permit under Chapter 15.05.
- **Sewers and Sewage Disposal: SBC Code Chapter 15.07.** SBC Code sections related to sewage disposal systems and septic tanks are set forth in Chapter 15.07, Sewers and Sewage Disposal of Title 15 (Public Works) of the San Benito County Code.
- **San Benito County Integrated Waste Management (SBIWM) Department.** The SBIWM Department is responsible for oversight of landfill operations and the County refuse/recycling contracts. In addition, this department serves as lead agency for the San Benito County Integrated Regional Waste Management Agency, which consists of the County and the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista. This agency is responsible for ensuring that all jurisdictions within San Benito County comply with state-mandated

waste diversion goals of 50 percent (AB 939/1989) and AB 341 /2012 75 % recycling goal; this diversion goal has been achieved within the County. The SBIWM also implements the Countywide Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and Small Quantity Generator (SQG) programs for qualifying business hazardous wastes. (See Chapter 11, Safety, Section 11.4, Human-Made Hazards, of the Background Report for more information.) The SBIWM is primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations to ensure public health and safety related to refuse and HHW. Departmental responsibilities include landfill operations oversight and regulatory compliance, refuse and recycling contract oversight, HHW/SQG programs, and public education on waste diversion and household hazardous waste.

- **San Benito County 1992 General Plan.** The existing 1992 General Plan includes objectives and policy statements with regard to wastewater collection, conveyance, treatment, and disposal. They are included in the Open Space and Conservation Element (Policy 31) and the Land Use Element (Policies 10 and 11, and supporting actions). These policies require that wastewater systems be designed and operated to ensure the long-term protection of groundwater by establishing standards for the siting and development of individual and small community wastewater treatment systems.

## 20.2 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

This analysis evaluates whether implementation of the 2035 General Plan could result in adverse impacts to water supply, with emphasis on groundwater supply, and potential effects from and to wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste service systems. Relevant features of the 2035 General Plan include a potential increase in vineyards (associated with winery and hospitality land uses) and an increased population from baseline conditions to 2035. These changes could affect recharge areas, increase water use (groundwater and/or imported CVP water), and require construction of new or expanded water, wastewater, storm drain and solid waste facilities to meet demand.

### 20.2.1 Significance Criteria

As set forth in Appendix G to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section XVII, Utilities and Service Systems, the following criteria have been established to quantify the level of significance of an adverse effect being evaluated pursuant to CEQA. The numeration of each criterion below corresponds to the questions in the checklist in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines (e.g., XVII.a, XVII.b). Implementation of the 2035 General Plan would result in a significant utilities or service system impact if it would:

- Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board. (XVII.a)
- Require or result in the construction of new water treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. (XVII.b)
- Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. (XVII.c)
- Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed. (XVII.d)
- Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments. (XVII.e)
- Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs (XVII.f)
- Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. (XVII.g)

This section also evaluates topics covered in Section IX, Hydrology and Water Quality, of Appendix G to the State CEQA Guidelines. For a discussion on whether the proposed 2035 General Plan would result in a substantial depletion of groundwater supplies due to a reduction in recharge to the groundwater basin, see Chapter 13, Hydrology and Water Resources, of this RDEIR.

### **20.2.2 Analysis Methodology**

Evaluation of potential water supply and treatment, wastewater collection and treatment, stormwater drainage and solid waste disposal impacts associated with implementation of the proposed 2035 General Plan are based on a review of the Background Report and applicable federal, state, and regional laws, regulations, codes, and guidelines. Potential water supply impacts are analyzed primarily through preparation of the WSE, which documents the County's existing and estimated future water supplies and demands. Countywide sources of water supply are described and documented, water demands are quantified, drought impacts are evaluated, and a comparison of water supply and demand is provided, including normal and drought conditions. Future water demands for 2035 were based on forecasted development that would occur under the 2035 General Plan through 2035, the planning horizon year for the 2035 General Plan.

As discussed in Section 4.5.7, Potential Growth Scenarios, this RDEIR considers two potential growth scenarios: Scenario 1 and Scenario 2. For the purposes of this programmatic analysis, the impacts on utilities and public services would be the same under any growth scenario because the County would apply the 2035 General Plan policies, including additional policies from mitigation measures contained in the certified EIR, equally in approving development, regardless of location. Site specific analysis would be required for particular development proposals that may be considered in the future. In particular, sizable future developments could require preparation of both a specific plan subject to approval by the County and a Water Supply Assessment, approved by a water supplier or the County pursuant to Senate Bill 610, evaluating the availability of water to meet current and future demands associated by the project.

The evaluation presented here also considered whether the goals and policies in the 2035 General Plan promote adequate planning and oversight of the new facilities that are needed as development occurs to help ensure that existing users and the environment would not be negatively impacted.

### **20.2.3 Environmental Impacts**

The following discussion examines the potential impacts of adoption of the 2035 General Plan based on the impact threshold criteria described above. [Table 20-2](#) summarizes 2035 General Plan policies that would mitigate environmental impacts associated with utilities and service systems, including an explanation of how the policy would avoid or reduce impacts.

**Table 20-2 2035 General Plan Goals and Policies that Mitigate Utility and Service System Impacts**

<b>Goals and Policies</b>	<b>How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact</b>	<b>Impact USS-#</b>
<b>Land Use Element</b>		
<p><b>LU-1.10: Development Site Suitability</b> The County shall require specific development sites to be free from natural and manmade hazards, including, but not limited to, active seismic faults, landslides, slopes greater than 30 percent, and floodplains. Development sites shall also be on soil suitable for building and maintaining well and septic systems (i.e., avoid impervious soils, high percolation or high groundwater</p>	<p>Helps protect water quality by prohibiting septic system installation in areas of unsuitable soils, or areas in close proximity to surface water features and/or high groundwater tables.</p>	4

Goals and Policies	How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact	Impact USS-#
<p>areas, and provide setbacks from creeks).                      The County shall require adequate mitigation for any development located on environmentally sensitive lands (e.g., wetlands, erodible soil, archaeological resources, important plant and animal communities).</p>		
<p><b>Policy LU-8.4: New Community Application Content Requirements</b>                      The County shall require all project applicants for New Communities to provide the County with the following information:                      f. A Water Supply Assessment that demonstrates access to adequate existing and future water supply for the project.</p>	<p>Provides the County with a tool to determine whether development in a specific area would have adequate water supply for both existing uses and the proposed development in the service area. Confirms the importance of Water Supply Assessments, as defined in the Water Code, in documenting long-term sustainable supply before a development is approved. Supports IRWMP and Groundwater Basin Management Planning.</p>	<p>1,2</p>
<p><b>Public Facilities and Services Element</b></p>		
<p><b>Policy PFS-3.1: Water District Support</b>                      The County shall support efforts of the San Benito County Water District to ensure that adequate high-quality water supplies are available to support current residents and businesses and future development projects.</p>	<p>Ensures that adequate water supply and treatment is available to support current and future demand. Supports SBCWD in its efforts to secure high quality supplies such as CVP water that can be used in lieu of groundwater</p>	<p>1,2</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-3.2: Interagency Coordination</b>                      The County shall cooperate with public and private water agencies in order to help address existing and future water needs for the County.</p>	<p>Encourages partnership and cooperation between all water suppliers in order to comprehensively address water supply needs. Promotes cooperation with SBCWD, local water purveyors, and federal and state agencies in securing water supplies to match current and future water demands.</p>	<p>1,2</p>

Goals and Policies	How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact	Impact USS-#
<p><b>Policy PFS-3.3: Water Rights Protection</b> The County shall support public and private water agencies in their efforts to protect their water rights and water supply contracts, including working with Federal and State water projects to protect local water rights.</p>	<p>Helps preserve Central Valley Project water supplies for the County. Supports local agencies in protecting the water rights and water supply contracts that are the legal basis for securing specific water supplies.</p>	<p>1,2</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-3.4: Drought Response</b> The County shall encourage all public and private water agencies to develop and maintain drought contingency and emergency services plans, emergency inter-ties, mutual aid agreements and related measures to ensure adequate water services during drought or other emergency water shortage.</p>	<p>Helps ensure that water conservation measures are implemented so that adequate water supply is available during drought conditions. Promotes coordinated planning and actions among local water agencies to respond to emergency water shortages, so that water demands can be reasonably satisfied, even in times of shortage.</p>	<p>1,2</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-3.5: Water Supply Development</b> The County shall support plans to develop new reliable future sources of supply, including, but not limited to, the expansion of surface water storage and conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater, while promoting water conservation and water recycling/reuse.</p>	<p>Requires the County to coordinate with service providers to ensure that water conservation measures are implemented and that plans are in place for water treatment and distribution facilities needed to serve existing and future development. Indicates the County's support for developing new water supply sources, conjunctive use, water conservation, and water recycling.</p>	<p>1,2</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-3.6: Conjunctive Use</b> The County shall support conjunctive use of groundwater and surface water to improve water supply reliability.</p>	<p>Encourages dual use of groundwater and surface water to improve water supply and avoid negative impacts such as groundwater overdraft. Supports conjunctive use of groundwater, local surface water, imported water and recycled water to improve overall water supply reliability and thereby protect groundwater resources.</p>	<p>1,2</p>

Goals and Policies	How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact	Impact USS-#
<p><b>Policy PFS-3.7: Groundwater Management</b>                      The County shall support cooperative, regional groundwater management planning by water resource agencies, water users, and other affected parties to ensure a sustainable, adequate, safe, and economically viable groundwater supply for existing and future uses within the County.</p>	<p>Cooperative and comprehensive groundwater management to maintain groundwater source reliability. Recognizes the importance of regional planning, such as groundwater basin management plans, in ensuring economical and sustainable groundwater supply.</p>	<p>1,2</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-3.8: Integrated Management</b>                      The County shall support and participate in the integrated management of surface water and groundwater resources, wastewater, stormwater treatment and use, and the use of reclaimed water.</p>	<p>Incorporation of managed stormwater and reclaimed water lessens demand for potable water use. Recognizes the importance of integrated planning for water, wastewater, and stormwater, and promotes the coordinated development of each supply.</p>	<p>1,2</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-3.9: Sufficient Water Supply for New Development</b>                      The County shall require new developments to prepare a source water sufficiency study and water supply assessment analysis for use in preparing, where required, a Water Supply Assessment SB 610 and a Source Water Assessment per Title 22. This shall include studying the effect of new development on the water supply of existing users. The County encourages the development of integrated regional water management plans or similar plans.</p>	<p>Provides the County with a tool to determine whether development in a specific area would have adequate water supply for both existing uses and the proposed development in the service area. Confirms the importance of Water Supply Assessments, as defined in the Water Code, in documenting long-term sustainable supply before a development is approved. Supports IRWMP and Groundwater Basin Management Planning.</p>	<p>1,2</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-4.1: Adequate Water Treatment and Delivery Facilities</b>                      The County shall ensure, through the development review process, that adequate water supply, treatment and delivery facilities are sufficient to serve new</p>	<p>Ensures that adequate water supply, treatment and delivery are available prior to the approval of proposed developments.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4</p>



Goals and Policies	How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact	Impact USS-#
development, and are able to be expanded to meet capacity demands when needed. Such needs shall include capacities necessary to comply with water quality and public safety requirements.		
<p><b>Policy PFS-4.2: Water Facility Infrastructure</b></p> <p>As a condition of approval for discretionary developments, the County shall not issue approval of final map until verification of adequate water and wastewater service, which may include verification of payment of fees imposed for water and wastewater infrastructure capacity per the fee payment schedule from the water and wastewater provider.</p>	Allows the County to ensure that proposed developments have obtained necessary water and wastewater infrastructure capacity from the appropriate agency.	1, 2, 3, 4
<p><b>PFS-4.5: Water System Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>The County shall encourage the rehabilitation of irrigation systems and other water delivery systems to reduce water losses and increase the efficient use and availability of water.</p>	Encourages practices that will help conserve water, lessening the demand for groundwater supplies.	1, 2
<p><b>PFS-4.6: New Community Water Systems</b></p> <p>The County shall require any new community water system, in the unincorporated area of the County, serving residential, industrial, or commercial development to be owned and operated by a public or private entity that can demonstrate to the County adequate financial, managerial, and operational resources.</p>	Ensures continuation of a new water system by requiring proof up front that the public or private entity can support the system financially, managerially, and operationally.	3, 4

<b>Goals and Policies</b>	<b>How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact</b>	<b>Impact USS-#</b>
<p><b>PFS-4.8: Water Supply Planning</b></p> <p>The County shall encourage water purveyors to develop plans for responding to droughts and the effects of global climate change, including contingency plans, the sharing of water resources to improve overall water supply reliability, and the allocation of water supply to priority users.</p>	<p>Establishes County policy to work with water purveyors to anticipate and reduce the effects of droughts and global climate change on water supplies.</p>	<p>1, 2</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-5.1: Water and Sewer Expansion</b></p> <p>The County shall encourage public wastewater system operators to maintain and expand their systems to meet the development needs of the County.</p>	<p>Encourages the various wastewater providers to expand and maintain their operations in order to continuously address wastewater demand.</p>	<p>3, 4</p>
<p><b>PFS-5.2: Reclaimed Water</b></p> <p>The County shall encourage public wastewater system operations to upgrade existing wastewater treatment systems to produce reclaimed water suitable for unrestricted reuse.</p>	<p>Establishes County policy to encourage the use of reclaimed wastewater to enhance water supplies</p>	<p>1, 2</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-5.3: Adequate Water Treatment and Disposal</b></p> <p>The County shall ensure through the development review process that wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal facilities are sufficient to serve existing and new development, and are able to be expanded to meet capacity demands when needed.</p>	<p>Provides the County with a tool during development review to ensure new development wastewater treatment needs are met and don't cause detriment to existing users.</p>	<p>3, 4</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-5.4: Developer Requirements</b></p> <p>The County shall require that new development meet all County requirements for adequate wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal prior to project approval.</p>	<p>Provides the County with an oversight opportunity to ensure that new development wastewater treatment needs are able to be met and don't cause detriment to existing users.</p>	<p>3, 4</p>

Goals and Policies	How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact	Impact USS-#
<p><b>Policy PFS-5.5: Individual Onsite Septic Systems</b></p> <p>The County shall permit onsite septic systems only when connection to an existing wastewater system or sewer system is not reasonably available. Approval, installation, and use of individual septic systems shall be consistent with Regional Water Quality Control Board regulations.</p>	<p>Discourages septic system installation by allowing only when sewer systems are unavailable, and requiring design and installation to be consistent with RWQCB regulations in order to protect water quality.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-5.6: Septic System Design</b></p> <p>The County shall require individual septic systems to be properly designed, constructed, and maintained to avoid degradation of ground and surface water quality.</p>	<p>Allows County oversight regarding septic system design and placement to improve water quality protection.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-5.7: Alternative Rural Wastewater Systems</b></p> <p>The County shall investigate and recommend alternative rural wastewater systems for individual homes. Alternative systems could include elevated leach fields, sand filtration systems, evapotranspiration beds, osmosis units, and holding tanks. In addition, composting toilets should be considered for appropriate situations. For clusters of homes, alternative systems could include communal septic tank/leach field systems, package treatment plants, lagoon systems, and land treatment.</p>	<p>Provides additional wastewater treatment and disposal options for developments in rural areas where the site conditions may be unsuitable for septic tank design, installation and operation.</p>	<p>4</p>

<b>Goals and Policies</b>	<b>How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact</b>	<b>Impact USS-#</b>
<p><b>Program PFS-F: Regional Planning Group</b></p> <p>The County shall participate in regional water, wastewater, and watershed planning groups designed to discuss and solve water supply, water quality, watershed, and other water/wastewater-related issues within the County, and to identify and pursue alternative funding sources for future projects.</p>	<p>Improves upon existing standards to better meet the SWRCB requirements for protecting water quality.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-6.1: Adequate Stormwater Facilities</b></p> <p>The County shall require that stormwater drainage facilities are properly designed, sited, constructed, and maintained to efficiently capture and dispose of runoff and minimize impacts to water quality.</p>	<p>Obligates new developments to design, install, and maintain adequate stormwater drainage facilities.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-6.2: Best Management Practices</b></p> <p>The County shall require best management practices in the development, upgrading, and maintenance of stormwater facilities and services to reduce pollutants from entering natural water bodies while allowing stormwater reuse and groundwater recharge.</p>	<p>Integrates low impact development (LID) practices to reduce peak flows and runoff volumes, which will indirectly lessen the impacts to downstream drainage systems and/or water bodies.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-6.4: Development Requirements</b></p> <p>The County shall require project designs that minimize stormwater drainage concentrations and impervious surfaces, complement groundwater recharge, avoid floodplain areas, and use natural watercourses in ways that maintain natural watershed functions and provide wildlife habitat.</p>	<p>Requires developments to integrate and present to the County for review LID drainage designs into their overall designs which will minimize demand impacts on stormwater infrastructure.</p>	<p>5</p>

Goals and Policies	How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact	Impact USS-#
<p><b>Policy PFS-6.5: Stormwater Detention Facilities</b></p> <p>Where necessary, the County shall require on-site detention/retention facilities and/or velocity reducers to maintain pre-development runoff flows and velocities in natural drainage systems.</p>	<p>Facilitates seamless agreement with NPDES requirements for reductions in storm water runoff volumes for post-construction conditions which will minimize demand impacts on stormwater infrastructure.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-6.7: Runoff Water Quality</b></p> <p>The County shall require all drainage systems in new development and redevelopment to comply with applicable State and Federal non-point source pollutant discharge requirements.</p>	<p>Encourages drainage designs to be part of new development and redevelopment designs, and provides for these designs to be in agreement with RWQCB requirements for non-point source pollutants.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-7.1: Adequate Capacity</b></p> <p>The County shall ensure that there is adequate capacity within the solid waste system for the collection, transportation, processing, recycling, and disposal of solid waste to meet the needs of existing and projected development.</p>	<p>Requires the County to assess and maintain adequate capacity of solid waste systems as urban areas are developed and the current landfill begins to fill up thereby complying with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations governing solid waste.</p>	<p>6</p>
<p><b>Policy PFS-7.2: Transfer Stations</b></p> <p>The County shall provide adequate transfer station facilities that meet local demands, including recycling facilities, and avoid conflicts with surrounding uses.</p>	<p>Provides impetus to identify and implement transfer station(s) in order to improve recycling capabilities and waste reduction in the County thereby complying with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations governing solid waste.</p>	<p>6</p>

Goals and Policies	How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact	Impact USS-#
<p><b>Policy PFS-7.3: Onsite Facilities for Non-Residential Development</b></p> <p>The County shall require that all new non-residential development has the necessary onsite facilities for temporary solid waste and recycling storage, handling, and collection prior to issuing building permits.</p>	<p>Requires non-residential development to provide for on-site recycling facilities prior to being issued a building permit in order to lessen the amount of material that needs to be placed in the landfill, thereby complying with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations governing solid waste.</p>	6
<p><b>Policy PFS-7.5: Waste Diversion</b></p> <p>The County shall require waste reduction, recycling, composting, and waste separation to reduce the volume and toxicity of solid wastes sent to landfill facilities and to meet or exceed State waste diversion requirements of 75 percent.</p>	<p>Requires waste diversion through recycling, reduction, and composting in order to meet the state waste diversion of 75 percent, thereby complying with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations governing solid waste. Indirectly reduces the total volume required to be sent to the landfill.</p>	6
<p><b>Policy PFS-7.6: Construction Materials Recycling</b></p> <p>The County shall encourage recycling and reuse of construction waste, including recycling materials generated by the demolition of buildings, with the objective of diverting 50 percent per local ordinance and Cal Green Building Code to a certified recycling processor. The County shall encourage salvaged and recycled materials for use in new construction.</p>	<p>Encourages recycling and reductions in waste from construction sites in order to reduce the total volume needing to be sent to the landfill, thereby complying with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations governing solid waste.</p>	6
<p><b>Policy PFS-7.8: Waste-to-Energy Projects</b></p> <p>The County shall promote technologies, including biomass and biofuels, that use solid waste as an alternative energy source. The County shall support efforts to develop and install waste-to-energy projects in appropriate locations.</p>	<p>Promotes technologies that will convert solid waste to biomass or biofuels, which in turn will lessen the volume of solid waste that will need to go to the landfill and thereby complying with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations governing solid waste.</p>	6

Goals and Policies	How the Goal/Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact	Impact USS-#
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources Element</b>		
<p><b>Policy NCR-4.10: Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance</b></p> <p>The County shall develop, maintain, and implement a Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, consistent with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance prepared by the California Department of Water Resources, to require greater use of regionally native drought-tolerant vegetation, limitations on the amount of turf in residential development, and other measures as appropriate.</p>	<p>Encourages water conservation for urban landscaping, so that water supplies are utilized efficiently to help ensure continued supply from existing entitlements.</p>	<p>2</p>
<p><b>Policy NCR-4.15: Septic Systems</b></p> <p>The County shall require septic systems to be limited to areas where sewer services are not available and where it can be demonstrated that septic systems will not contaminate groundwater.</p>	<p>Limits septic systems to areas not able to access existing sewer services, and requires them to be located and designed in a manner to protect water quality.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p><b>NCR-4.16: Develop in Existing Areas</b></p> <p>The County shall encourage development to occur in or near existing developed areas in order to reduce the use of individual septic systems in favor of domestic wastewater treatment in an effort to protect groundwater quality. )</p>	<p>By encouraging development in areas served by existing domestic wastewater treatment facilities, it minimizes the number of individual septic systems proposed, thereby reducing the overall number of septic systems that require County resources to review and that could pose a risk.</p>	<p>4</p>

*Source:* San Benito County 2011, 2014; EMC Planning Group 2014; Planning Partners 2012.

**Impact USS-1:** *Sufficient water supplies are available from existing entitlements and resources to serve the additional development envisioned in the 2035 General Plan, without requiring new or expanded entitlements. (XVII.d)*

**Significance of Impact:** Less than significant, no mitigation required.

Existing water supplies that serve agricultural, municipal, and industrial uses were examined to determine if they would be adequate to accommodate future water demands from increased population growth and urban footprint under the 2035 General Plan. Based on the WSE as summarized in this impact statement, water supplies have been determined to be sufficient to serve planned uses in the 2035 General Plan. For this reason, this impact would be less than significant.

### **Water Demand**

Potential growth under the 2035 General Plan would include an estimated increase in total County population from approximately 55,269 in 2010 to approximately 94,731 by 2035, an increase of 71 percent. Hollister and San Juan Bautista urban area populations would increase from 36,790 to 40,150 under both Scenarios, an increase of 9 percent. Other residential growth would occur in unincorporated areas, such as in the northern portion of the County, around Hollister, or in the New Community Study Area, reaching an estimated population of 54,581 residents by 2035. [Table 20-3](#) presents 2010 water demands for incorporated (urban) and unincorporated areas in the County and estimated water demands in 2035 with implementation of the 2035 General Plan. The water demands summarized in [Table 20-3](#) include the water demands for the Hollister and San Juan Bautista urban areas, and the rural and agricultural water demands for the other areas of the County. Because both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County rely on the same water sources, it is appropriate to consider both areas when evaluating water demand. Reflecting the anticipated increase in population in the unincorporated areas, there would be an increase in estimated annual water demand in the entire County from 70,047 AFY in 2010 to 80,135 AFY in 2035. This estimated increase in water demand is considered conservatively high as it does not account for impacts of conservation efforts and potential conversion of irrigated agriculture to urban uses, as further discussed below.



**Table 20-3 San Benito County Urban and Unincorporated Water Demands for 2010 and 2035**

	2010			2035		
	Unit of Measure	Water Use	Water Use Ratio	Unit of Measure	Water Use	Water Use Ratio
<b>Incorporated Urban</b>						
Hollister	34,928 residents	5,065 AFY	0.145 AFY/capita	37,488 residents	7,235 AFY	0.193 AFY/capita
San Juan Bautista	1,862 residents	307 AFY	0.165 AFY/capita	2,662 residents	439 AFY	0.165 AFY/capita
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>36,790</i> <i>residents</i>	<i>5,372</i> <i>AFY</i>	<i>0.146</i> <i>AFY/capita</i>	<i>40,150</i> <i>residents</i>	<i>7,674</i> <i>AFY</i>	<i>0.191</i> <i>AFY/capita</i>
<b>Unincorporated</b>						
Residential, Commercial, Industrial	18,479 residents	3,049 AFY	0.165 AFY/capita	54,581 residents	9,006 AFY	0.165 AFY/capita
Agricultural	30,372 irrigated acres	61,626 AFY	2.03 AFY/acre	31,372 irrigated acres	63,455 AFY	2.02 AFY/acre
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>18,479</i> <i>residents</i>	<i>64,675</i> <i>AFY</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>54,581</i> <i>residents</i>	<i>72,461</i> <i>AFY</i>	<i>n/a</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,269</b> <b>residents</b>	<b>70,047</b> <b>AFY</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>94,731</b> <b>residents</b>	<b>80,135</b> <b>AFY</b>	<b>-</b>

*Source:* SBCWD 2014.

*Note:* See Tables 3 and 4 in Appendix C.

The top two rows of [Table 20-3](#) summarize the population, water use, and water use per capita for Hollister and San Juan Bautista, accounting for the population and water demand in the respective incorporated areas of the two cities. As indicated, the population and total water demand of these two urban areas is anticipated to increase. The water use per capita in the San Juan Bautista area (0.165 AFY) is assumed to remain the same; this is a conservative assumption in that it does not incorporate local water conservation efforts and therefore potentially overestimates future water demand. Water use per capita in the Hollister area is shown to increase from 0.145 AFY/capita to 0.193 AFY/capita. This increase in per capita water use assumes a large increase in industry in the area immediately north of the current

incorporated area of Hollister, as described in the Hollister Urban Area 2010 Urban Water Management Plan (SBCWD 2011) and the Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan (City of Hollister, 2008). The WSE assumes that this industrial growth eventually will occur within Hollister's incorporated area. The 2035 General Plan does not include industrial growth in this area, so the WSE's water demand estimates and those in Table 20-3 may conservatively overestimate water use in this area.

In Table 20-3, the row for Total Unincorporated Areas summarizes the water use in the remainder of the County, including residential, commercial/industrial, and agricultural water demands. As shown in the table, the 2010 water demand for the unincorporated areas of the County is estimated at 64,675 AFY. The 2035 demand for these areas is projected to increase to a conservatively high value of 72,461 AFY. The projected increase in total water use reflects the population increase projected to occur in unincorporated portions of the County and the associated increase in residential and commercial/industrial water use. The projected increase is based on the assumption that per capita residential and commercial/industrial water use will be 0.165 AFY/capita, the same as current San Juan Bautista area per capita water use, and does not consider impacts of future conservation efforts.

However, as shown in Table 20-3, most of the water use in the unincorporated areas of the County is for irrigated agriculture (i.e., 61,626 AFY in 2010 and 63,455 AFY in 2035). The WSE conservatively assumes no change in the total irrigated acreage in the County (30,447 acres) will occur between 2010 and 2035, with the exception of an additional about 1,000 acres of vineyards resulting from the new Wine/Hospitality Priority Area (refer back to Figure 3-7). The projected increase in vineyards reflects the 2035 General Plan Goal ED-4 to expand the County's wine and hospitality industry in the areas south and east of Hollister Valley. This assumption does not account for agricultural conservation efforts and the likely conversion of some irrigated acreage to urban uses in unincorporated areas, which would result in an exchange of demands, resulting in the totals in Table 20-3 probably being overestimates of demands. As such, projected water use estimates for the County are likely to be conservatively high. The negligible amount of livestock water demand is assumed relatively unchanged from 2010 to 2035, increasing by up to approximately 100 AFY. This demand is so negligible that Table 4 of the WSE does not reflect the change. The Air Quality and GHG Technical Appendix (Appendix B) did show an estimated slight growth in livestock population of about 8.5 percent, based on USDA nationwide trends. This increase would result in approximately 100 AFY or less in livestock water demand, or 0.001 percent of the total 2035 water demand.

## **Water Supply**

As discussed in the WSE, sources of water supply in San Benito County include surface water, imported water, groundwater, and recycled water. Some surface water is used for stock watering

throughout the County, but most surface water from the San Benito River is used for groundwater recharge. For the purposes of this discussion, this recharge is included in groundwater supply.

### **Imported Water Supplies**

Imported water is provided by the CVP through a 40-year contract between the USBR and SBCWD, which delivers water to agricultural, municipal, and industrial customers in Zone 6, the District's zone of benefit for CVP water. Zone 6 overlies much of the County's portion of the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin, including the Pacheco, Bolsa Southeast, San Juan, Hollister East, Hollister West, and Tres Pinos subbasins. Beginning in 2007 and continuing to the present, CVP supply limitations were imposed by environmental, regulatory, and legal constraints in the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta (Delta). Further, during recent drought years, such as 2009, 2012, 2013, and 2014, when CVP allocations were even further reduced. However, the SBCWD was able to obtain additional CVP supplies by pursuing other options such as use of rescheduled water from previous years, use of water stored in local reservoirs, and purchase of water on the spot market (SBCWD 2009, 2012, 2014). Even in this latest drought, which represents the most severe droughts on record and CVP allocations for agriculture were dropped to 0 percent in 2014, SBCWD was able to secure over 8,000 AF of CVP supplies. It is expected that such strategies will be used in the future, if needed.

Imported CVP water is treated and delivered for municipal and industrial use in the Hollister urban area. Recognizing the high quality of CVP water, SBCWD and local water retailers are implementing plans to increase the treatment and delivery of CVP water for municipal and industrial use. The plans include improvement of the existing Lessalt Water Treatment Plant and construction of a new West Hills Water Treatment Plant to serve the Hollister Urban Area. These efforts will allow utilization of the entire available CVP municipal and industrial entitlement.

### **Groundwater Supplies**

Groundwater is the major source of water supply in San Benito County. Groundwater is used throughout the County for irrigation of agriculture and limited domestic and livestock supplies. DWR identifies a total of 12 groundwater basins or subbasins within San Benito County. A figure showing the location of these basins is included in the WSE. The majority of groundwater use in the County occurs from the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin, which underlies the northern portion of the County. The portion of the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin that underlies San Benito County ("San Benito Gilroy-Hollister Basin") is broken up into three subbasins by DWR and nine subbasins by SBCWD. These subbasins defined by SBCWD include: Bolsa, Bolsa Southeast, San Juan, Tres Pinos, Hollister West, Southern Hollister East, Northern Hollister East, Pacheco, Tres Pinos Creek Valley, and Paicines. The subbasins defined

by DWR include Bolsa, Hollister, and San Juan Bautista. The nine other subbasins defined by DWR provide groundwater to other areas of the County. A map depicting the groundwater basins is presented in the WSE.

### **San Benito Gilroy-Hollister Basin**

Most of the discussion in the WSE and herein focuses on the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister Basin, reflecting its importance as a source of groundwater supply now and into the future. The total groundwater storage capacity of the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister Basin is estimated to be approximately 500,000 AF within the uppermost 200 feet of the groundwater basin (Kennedy/Jenks, 2003). Safe yield estimates, or the amount of groundwater that can be continually withdrawn without adverse impacts, are often used to gauge the sustainability of groundwater pumping. Previous estimates of the yield of the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin range from 40,000 to 54,000 AFY (Kennedy/Jenks 2003).

Groundwater pumping from this basin is estimated to have ranged between 25,000 and 51,000 AFY, averaging in the range of 38,000 between 1996 and 2011. Groundwater levels have been stable or rising through this period. Declines in water levels were observed during drought periods, but water levels have generally recovered quickly. Declines in water levels have also been observed during the recent multi-year drought period which began in 2012, and represents one of the most severe droughts on record. Nevertheless, water levels are well above historical lows in most of the subbasins and should recover over time with continued management that has provided a long-term sustainable supply through integrated planning and conjunctive use of surface water, groundwater, and recycled water plus conservation.

Groundwater in the Gilroy-Hollister basin had been depleted historically by over-pumping. However, management and use of local surface water supplies for percolation and importation of CVP water resulted in decreased pumping. This decreased pumping, along with significant managed recharge, achieved groundwater level recovery across much of Zone 6. With the exception of a few areas of persistent low water levels (for example, in Bolsa Southeast), groundwater levels had recovered close to the historic highs by 1998 and remained at or near historic highs until the most recent drought.

A groundwater pumping depression (i.e., a localized area of lower groundwater levels) persists along the southern edge of the Bolsa subbasin near its border with the Bolsa Southeast subbasin, reflecting the absence of CVP supplies in the Bolsa subbasin, reliance on groundwater pumping, and effects of basin boundaries. However, average groundwater levels within the Bolsa subbasin have remained stable or increased over the last 20 years, as demonstrated in subbasin average water level hydrographs included in SBCWD annual groundwater reports, demonstrating that inflows have, on average, matched outflows from this subbasin. Significant declines in groundwater levels were; however, observed in this area at the end of water year 2014.

Continued monitoring will need to be conducted in this area to ascertain if groundwater levels recover as they have in the past. Artesian conditions (i.e., where groundwater levels are higher than the land surface elevation) continue to exist during winter months in the northern portion of the Bolsa subbasin.

Between 2009 and 2011, groundwater was extracted from the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister basin at an average rate of 30,000 or more AFY and water levels continued to remain stable or increasing in the basin even though CVP deliveries were reduced due to environmental, regulatory, and legal constraints in the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta (Delta) which were imposed beginning in 2007. Information presented in the SBCWD 2014 Annual Groundwater Report, indicates that calculated water demands based on crop reports are significantly greater than reported groundwater use and CVP delivery data. Because the reported groundwater use is based on estimated power use and appears to be far lower than the water demand for the reported crops, the actual groundwater use may be significantly greater than the values reported. Moreover, average rainfall (11.7 inches) was slightly below the historic average of 13 inches during this period. Many of the subbasins within the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister Basin were essentially full through this period and rejecting natural recharge. These data indicate that the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister Basin can sustain a long-term pumping rate over 30,000 AFY, even with reduced CVP deliveries such as those which began in 2008, which will likely persist into the future.

### **Current Drought**

In water year 2014, California experienced the third year of a multi-year state-wide drought. Locally, rainfall was less than half the long-term average, for the third year in a row. Regionally, low precipitation and snowmelt in the Sierra Nevada reduced imported water supplies. The allocation for SBCWD was zero percent of its agricultural supply under its CVP contract and 50 percent of its historical municipal and industrial (M&I) use. Nonetheless, through transfers, exchanges, and reservoir storage, SBCWD was able to deliver 8,000 AF of CVP imported water to its customers. With limited imported water, water users continued to rely on groundwater. Groundwater use increased above average levels to compensate for reduced CVP supplies. However, water use in 2014 was lower than in 2013, reflecting lower agriculture water use and slightly higher M&I use. While SBCWD was able to procure additional imported water supplies, many growers made planting and water use decisions based on the zero CVP allocation, thereby reducing the overall draw on the basin (SBCWD, 2014). Such reductions in overall water use during periods when CVP supplies are curtailed has occurred historically and will likely occur in the future, as growers that are dependent upon higher quality CVP supplies may not switch to groundwater even in times of drought.

Increased groundwater use during the drought has resulted in groundwater declines of 10 to 20 feet within the majority of the subbasins in the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin. Water levels in the Bolsa subbasin appear to have dropped further between July 2014 and October 2014. However, this conclusion is based on water levels measured in only a few wells and those wells may be subject to localized effects, and additional data are needed to confirm this decline. Much of the San Benito-Gilroy Hollister basin remains above historic lows and groundwater storage appears to be available for short term use. If dry conditions persist, either the basin must be replenished with natural or imported water, or water demand must be decreased to prevent additional declines. The need for conservation during such drought periods is true throughout California. Numerous policies are proposed to address such drought periods, including but not limited to PFS-3.1 through PFS-3.9.

### **Subbasin Water Balances for the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin**

Water balances and hydrographs for each of the sub-basins in the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin are presented in the WSE and are updated in SBCWD's *Annual Groundwater Report for Water Year 2014* (SBCWD 2014). Inflows (sources of recharge) to the subbasins include subsurface inflow from adjacent subbasins, reclaimed water percolation, deep percolation of irrigation water, deep percolation of rainfall, reservoir releases, and percolation of natural streamflow. The magnitudes of the various inflows vary with wet and dry years, depth to groundwater, and management operations. Subsurface flows between subbasins are relatively uncertain, particularly between subbasins separated by fault zones with poorly understood capacities to transmit water. Inflows that derive from rainfall (rainfall percolation, reservoir releases, stream percolation) vary from year to year, but are critical to basin recovery from drought and other shortages. The importance of stream channels to recharge is noteworthy. In normal and wet years, and in years when groundwater levels are relatively low, natural stream percolation is a major inflow. Stream channels (e.g., San Benito River) are also the sites for managed recharge by SBCWD. Agricultural areas are significant to deep percolation of rainfall and water applied for irrigation. In Zone 6, applied water for irrigation includes both groundwater and imported CVP water; in areas outside of Zone 6, applied water for irrigation comes solely from groundwater.

### **San Benito Countywide Groundwater Use**

Groundwater pumping in the County outside of the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin has not been documented. For the purposes of this evaluation, this pumping is computed as the residual of total water use and known supplies. Total water use in the County was estimated at 70,047 AF for 2010. During a recent normal year (2011), CVP water supplied 18,667 AF, estimated groundwater pumping from the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister basin supplied at least 25,211 AF, and recycled water provided 230 AF, leaving an estimated 25,939 AF as pumping from other portions of the County. This value appears high; and may indicate that

higher groundwater use occurred in the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister Basin during this period. Potential underestimation of groundwater use in the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister basin is identified in WSE for the Bolsa subbasin during this period and in 2014 SBCWD Annual Groundwater Report for Zone 6. Table 7 of the WSE notes that water supply/use values for the Bolsa Subbasin and other basins outside of Zone 6 were estimated on the basis of a water balance model that incorporates cropping information derived from 1997 and 2002 California Department of Water Resources land use maps and climate data. Based on an updated 2010 land use map water use estimates for the Bolsa Subbasin are much higher (i.e., 9,308 AFY in 2010 and approximately 9,000 AFY in 2012 (Todd, December 2012)).

If this is true, a larger percentage of County wide groundwater water use occurred and was sustained from the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister Basin during this period. However, rates of groundwater extraction in the County outside of the Gilroy-Hollister Subbasin cannot be verified with the limited available data. Nonetheless, it is sufficient for this analysis, as it indicates that sustainable rates of groundwater extraction estimated for the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister basin where growth is most likely to occur are conservative, and overall water demand and use beyond the San Benito Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin is not expected to change significantly between 2010 and 2035.AFY

Normal year countywide groundwater use, which includes water use from the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin and the other groundwater basins in the southern portion of the County, was estimated to be over 51,000 AFY (Table 8 of SBCWD 2014) based on water year 2011. Groundwater use during single dry years, based on water year 2007, was estimated to be approximately 57,000 AFY, and in multiple dry years, based on water years 2007 through 2009, was estimated to be over 58,000 AFY. These estimates were based on reported municipal, industrial and county-wide agricultural production (USDA 2009) and represent groundwater use within both the Gilroy Hollister groundwater basin and other portions of the County. The 2009 through 2011 period is considered representative of current pumping and CVP delivery conditions (i.e., post 2007, when CVP supply limitations were imposed by environmental, regulatory, and legal constraints in the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta), with near-average (or slightly below average) rainfall. Utilizing a period of below average rainfall as a representative period is conservative from a water supply standpoint, as pumping during slightly dry years would be expected to be somewhat greater than during an average rainfall year. A relatively small amount of recycled water (230 AFY) is currently being used for irrigation in the Hollister urban area. Plans for increased recycled water use are ongoing, including for agricultural uses beyond the Hollister urban area.

The WSE analyzes water supply in single-year and multi-year drought periods. This analysis shows that the availability of imported CVP water will be reduced during drought years. However, sufficient groundwater is available to compensate without risking long-term overdraft. In addition, recycled water is a reliable supply and would not be reduced during drought.

## Water Supply and Demand

Overall as shown in Table 20-4, future supplies will meet demands in normal and drought years. Groundwater pumping from the San Benito County portion of the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin, which has been sustained at higher rates in the past, can increase in times of drought to account for foreseeable shortfalls in CVP supply. Specifically, in multiple dry years, even though more groundwater than the estimated sustainable yield of 54,000 AFY may be pumped to meet demand, the pumping will not irreparably damage the system and the basin would recover during wet years.

**Table 20-4 Water Supply and Demand in Normal and Drought Years, San Benito County  
2035**

Water Source	Normal Year Amount <sup>1</sup>		Single Dry Year <sup>1</sup>		Multiple Dry Years <sup>1</sup>	
	Supply	Demand	Supply	Demand	Supply	Demand <sup>3</sup>
Groundwater <sup>2</sup>	54,560	54,560	65,210	65,210	67,022	67,022
CVP Water <sup>4</sup>	24,484	24,484	13,834	13,834	12,022	12,022
Recycled Water	1,091	1,091	1,091	1,091	1,091	1,091
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,135</b>	<b>80,135</b>	<b>80,135</b>	<b>80,135</b>	<b>80,135</b>	<b>80,135</b>

*Source:* SBCWD 2014.

*Notes:* <sup>1</sup>In acre-feet per year.

<sup>2</sup> Groundwater supply from all basins in the County.

<sup>3</sup> Demand may decrease in multiple dry years due to conservation measures, but to be conservative, the analysis does not account for such conservation measures.

<sup>4</sup> CVP allocates water for agricultural and municipal and industrial uses. This table does reflect the ability of SBCWD to obtain CVP water outside its contract allocations on the spot market during multiple dry years as it has done in 2009, 2012, and 2014.

See Tables 9 and 10 in Appendix C. Groundwater can be pumped to meet demands. Additional groundwater supply may be available.

On a subbasin basis, the Hollister West and Tres Pinos subbasins have recovered quickly from historic low groundwater levels while others (Bolsa and Bolsa Southeast) have taken longer to recover. The Bolsa and Bolsa Southeast subbasins have more limited recharge; however, water levels in these subbasins have remained stable over the last 20 years, demonstrating that inflows have, on average, matched outflows in these subbasins during this period, and that these subbasins are currently not in overdraft. Water levels in the Bolsa subbasin declined during the recent drought, and continued monitoring is needed to assess the extent of these declines and to



verify that water levels recover. Available information indicates that increased development in this area is not anticipated to increase rates of groundwater extraction, as conversion of irrigated agricultural land to urban use typically is not associated with an increase in groundwater pumping on a per acre basis (see discussion in Chapter 13, Hydrology and Water Resources, of this RDEIR).

A basic factor in the availability of water supply to meet demand is the active, ongoing management of available water resources in the San Benito County portion of the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin. Important management plans and programs include (but are not limited to) the following:

- The 2007 Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (by SBCWD, SCVWD and PVWMA), which is currently being updated, including a salt and nutrient management plan.
- The Groundwater Management Plan for the San Benito County Part of the Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin, first prepared in 1998 by the Agency Advisory Group, and updated in 2003 by the San Benito County Water Resources Association (WRASBC), which is composed of the following agencies: SBCWD, City of San Juan Bautista, City of Hollister, SSCWD (Agency Advisory Group 1998, WRASBC 2003).
- Hollister Area Urban Water and Wastewater Master Plan by SBCWD, SSCWD and City of Hollister, which provides an integrated approach to water supply, wastewater treatment and wastewater disposal (City of Hollister 2008).
- WRASBC that provides ongoing water conservation programs for agricultural and municipal and industrial water users.
- Ongoing water resource monitoring and groundwater replenishment by SBCWD with regular updates in the annual groundwater report (SBCWD 2013).

These management activities, while involving different agencies and objectives, represent an ongoing and collaborative approach to water resources management with a general goal of providing long-term sustainable supply through integrated planning and conjunctive use of surface water, groundwater, and recycled water plus conservation.

As reflected by the goals and policies of the 2035 General Plan, water is a valuable resource in the County. For example, Policy PFS-3.9 requires applicants for new development to show adequate water supplies are available to serve the proposed use. Policy PFS-3.5 specifically targets an increase in supply by supporting other entities in expanding surface water storage, conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater, and extension of water conservation and recycling actions. These and other policies in Table 20-2 will provide opportunities for water

conservation for new development, resulting in lower future groundwater demand than has been conservatively assumed in the WSE.

The WSE determined that overall future water supplies available within the County from various sources would meet residential, municipal and industrial demands in normal and drought years, and states,

Continued management will help maintain adequate water supply from both imported water, groundwater, and other sources. The current 2012 through 2014 drought has reduced CVP availability, with allocations for agriculture down to 0 percent of contract and municipal and industrial allocations reduced to 50 percent of historic use. More variable CVP allocations may continue to occur in the future due to climate change or other factors affecting this source of supply. However, SBCWD continues to manage available water supplies in the basin to maximize CVP supplies when available and maximize groundwater availability for periods of decreased imported water delivery. Projects like the North County Groundwater Bank, West Hills Water Treatment Plant, and Lessalt Plant Expansions will allow SBCWD to take advantage of years with surplus supply (Todd, 2013). In addition, SBCWD is actively pursuing alternative water supply sources including recycled water for agricultural irrigation to offset CVP reliance. SBCWD also purchases surplus imported water when available for groundwater recharge or banking facility storage. SBCWD also works closely with both agricultural and urban water users to encourage water conservation through a variety of programs.

The WSE acknowledges that California is currently in the midst of another multiple year drought (2014) that could be more severe. It goes on to state that the effects of this drought have not yet fully occurred and the observation data resulting from these effects (such as water levels, stream flow, etc.) continue to be collected and analyzed. The drought of the 2014 water year, which ended September 30, 2014, is the third driest in 119 years of record based on statewide precipitation. In response to the extremity of this drought, state and federal agencies have developed an interagency drought strategy and contingency plan for 2015 operations and lessons learned from 2014, which includes the CVP project (DWR 2014). This is one example of larger-scale efforts being undertaken by agencies to address the protection of adequate water supply.

At the local level the County's 2035 General Plan policies shown in [Table 20-2](#) seek to ensure reliable supplies of water for unincorporated areas to meet the needs of existing and future agriculture and development, while promoting conservation and the use of sustainable water supply sources.

In the Public Facilities and Services Element, Policies PFS-3.1 through PFS-3.9 do so by supporting the SBCWD in ensuring that adequate high-quality water supplies are available, cooperating in interagency coordination to address water needs, supporting the protection of water rights, encouraging agencies to develop and maintain drought response plans, supporting plans to develop new reliable future sources of water supply, supporting the conjunctive use of groundwater and surface water to improve water supply reliability, supporting groundwater management planning, supporting and participating in the integrated management of water resources, requiring water supply assessments for new development in compliance with SB 610 and Title 22.

Policy PFS-4.8 encourages water purveyors to develop plans for responding to droughts and the effects of global climate change, including contingency plan prove overall water supply reliability, and the allocation of water supply to priority users. Program PFS-F requires the County to participate in regional water, wastewater, and watershed planning groups designed to discuss and solve water supply, water quality, watershed, and other water/wastewater-related issues within the county, and to identify and pursue alternative funding sources for future projects.

In the Natural and Cultural Resources Element, Policy NCR-4.6 ensures an adequate water supply, large-scale development projects that meet the criteria in California Water Code section 10912 shall prepare an analysis of the sufficiency of the groundwater from the basin or basins from which the proposed project will be supplied to meet the projected water demand associated with the proposed project in accordance with SB 610.

For all of the above reasons, this impact would be less than significant.

***Impact USS-2: Substantially deplete groundwater supplies. (XVII.d)***

**Significance of Impact:** Less than significant, no mitigation required.

Implementation of the 2035 General Plan would lead to agricultural and urban development that could entail increased groundwater use during drought and in areas where imported water is not available. This could cause a localized long-term decrease in stored groundwater or a lowering of groundwater levels that could decrease the production rate of pre-existing wells to a level that does not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted. However, existing and planned groundwater recharge programs in the County, coupled with the policies contained within the 2035 General Plan would substantially reduce this potential effect. Thus, the impact would be less than significant.

Implementation of the 2035 General Plan would result in increased population, causing increased development, including uses that rely on local groundwater for supply. Most of this growth is expected to occur within the unincorporated areas of the County. Some of the growth

in water demand would be offset by conversion of agricultural land uses to urban land uses, which typically use less water per acre although for the purposes of this evaluation no offset in agricultural demand was assumed. The WSE concludes that future supplies will meet demands in normal and drought years. Although on a local or subbasin basis, a significant increase in groundwater use for a development could result in local groundwater declines with adverse impacts on existing wells; urban development uses less water than historical agricultural uses and would not be expected to cause a decrease in groundwater levels.

In addition to urban development, 2035 General Plan Goal ED-4 encourages the County's wine and hospitality industries, and identifies areas appropriate for additional wineries and winery-related tourist facilities; these include the Cienega and Paicines valleys, historical centers of viticulture in the County. Consistent with the WSE, it is assumed that about 1,000 acres of additional vineyards would be planted as part of this development and irrigated with groundwater. The 2013 County Crop Report indicates 3,885 acres of vineyards; so the addition of about 1,000 acres of vineyards would increase the total acreage to 4,885 acres (San Benito County 2014b). This is slightly higher than the historical peak vineyard area of about 4,500 acres, which occurred in 1980 in the Cienega-Paicines area. According to the WSE, sufficient groundwater is available for urban, rural, and agricultural water demands, including new irrigation from new vineyards, in 2035.

During public outreach for the 2035 General Plan, the community identified the importance of protecting water resources and conserving water for future generations. [Table 20-2](#) includes goals and policies from the 2035 General Plan that, along with existing goals and policies, will support maintenance of a sustainable groundwater supply. Prominent among these is Goal PFS-3, which aims to ensure reliable supplies of water for unincorporated areas to meet the needs of existing and future agriculture and development, while promoting water conservation and the use of sustainable water supply sources. Specific policies supporting this over-arching goal are listed in [Table 20-2](#). Other policies require new development to demonstrate a long-term supply; support close collaboration among the County, SBCWD and other water agencies; commit the County to support integrated water planning and conjunctive use; and protect groundwater recharge. 2035 General Plan Goal LU-2, which seeks to protect agriculture and rangeland, also helps to protect groundwater supply by maintaining agricultural areas (e.g., areas irrigated with CVP water) that can provide deep percolation to groundwater. Furthermore, any future development in New Community Study Areas would require preparation of both a specific plan subject to approval by the County and a water supply assessment prepared by the water supplier or the County, pursuant to Senate Bill 610, evaluating the availability of water to meet current and future demands associated with the project. For these reasons, this is a less-than-significant impact.

***Impact USS-3: Require or result in the new construction of water treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. (XVII.b)***

**Significance of Impact:** Less than significant, no mitigation required.

Several water treatment facilities serve the County. Most development in the County, both incorporated and unincorporated, is served by various public and private water purveyors, with nearly three-quarters of these purveyors only having one or two wells and most rural communities still relying on individual wells. Water treatment for some municipal and industrial supplies within the County is provided by the Lessalt WTP. The Lessalt WTP began operations in January 2003 and is designed to treat imported CVP water using microfiltration and chlorine disinfection for distribution to the City of Hollister and SSCWD customers in order to provide a source of water to replace groundwater use and improve water quality by supplementing the existing groundwater supply with higher quality surface water. The Lessalt WTP is undergoing an upgrade and expansion that is anticipated to be completed in late 2014.

There are approximately 116 domestic water purveyors in the County, with 73 percent having only one or two groundwater wells. These systems provide water to communities such as mobile home parks and homeowner associations and to transient populations at schools, parks, and businesses. The three largest water system purveyors for unincorporated County are listed below.

- **San Benito County Water District.** The SBCWD manages the water resources for the 47,000 acres of San Benito County. SBCWD is a California Special District that was formed in 1953 by the San Benito County Water Conservation and Flood Control Act. SBCWD has jurisdiction throughout San Benito County and has formed three zones of benefit to obtain funds to support surface water management and groundwater replenishment activities. Zone 1 covers the entire County and provides the funding base for certain SBCWD administrative expenses. Zone 3 generally covers the San Benito River Valley to the confluence with the Pajaro River, from the State Route 25 bridge nine miles south of the town of Paicines to San Juan Bautista, and the Tres Pinos Creek Valley from Paicines to the San Benito River. Zone 3 provides the funding base for operation of Hernandez and Paicines Reservoirs and related percolation and groundwater management activities. Zone 6 includes six major delineated subbasins that are within the northern part of the County and in the southern portion of the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin. Zone 6 provides the funding base for importation and distribution of CVP water and related groundwater management activities (City of Hollister 2008).
- **Sunnyslope County Water District.** The SSCWD is a water purveyor whose service area includes part of Hollister and unincorporated areas of the County near the city. SSCWD serves over 5,200 connections. It operates four active wells located in the Hollister West

and Tres Pinos subbasins. In 2009, the SSCWD produced 2,251 acre feet of groundwater and supplied additional imported CVP water from the Lessalt WTP (SSCWD 2010).

- **Aromas Water District.** Aromas Water District supplies water to approximately 2,700 residents in and around the community of Aromas (east of Chittenden Gap). In 2009 the Aromas Water District extracted 350 acre feet of groundwater from three wells located outside the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin. The water system includes an iron and manganese removal plant that came on line in 2009.

In addition, both the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista purvey water to incorporated County; and in certain development agreements, may provide water services to development in unincorporated County lands, mostly lands that are within either jurisdiction's sphere of influence. This may occur for an agreed amount of time prior to eventual annexation, or indefinitely depending on the agreement between the County and cities:

- **City of Hollister.** The City of Hollister is the largest incorporated city in San Benito County. Its service area includes much of the city and serves a population of over 23,000. The City has eight groundwater wells: Wells 1 through 6 are located in the Northern Hollister East and Hollister West subbasins and Cullum Wells 1 and 2 are in Cienega Valley (located outside of the subbasins). In 2009 the City of Hollister produced 2,626 acre feet from the groundwater wells. The City, along with SSCWD, delivered 1,338 acre feet of treated imported CVP water (through Lessalt WTP). The City is currently working to increase the use of CVP imported water through upgrades to the Lessalt WTP and planned construction of the West Hills WTP.
- **City of San Juan Bautista.** The City of San Juan Bautista is located in the San Juan subbasin and serves water to a population of around 1,700 residents. The City operates two active wells and maintains an additional inactive well, all of which are located within city limits. In 2009 the City supplied 372 acre feet of water from groundwater to its residents.

As stated above, implementation of the 2035 General Plan could lead to as much as 7,786 AFY of increased potable water demand in the unincorporated portions of the County due to the increase in population and 2,302 AFY of increased potable water demand in the incorporated portions of the County. It is likely that new water treatment or distribution facilities would be built to accommodate roughly 10,000 AFY of increased demand, to meet future federal and state water quality requirements for potable water or to replace/upgrade existing facilities. In addition, 2035 General Plan policies require that new development be served by adequate water treatment facilities without adverse effects to existing customers.

New or expanded infrastructure needed by any one of the current water purveyors or a new purveyor may include new groundwater wells, raw water storage reservoirs, storage tanks, pump stations, conveyance piping, or treatment facilities. Construction of new and expanded water treatment and distribution systems could result in potential short-term noise, air quality, biological resource, cultural resource, traffic, and water quality impacts from construction activities, including excavation, stockpiling, hauling, and pipe flushing. Long-term impacts could include the loss or degradation of agricultural, biological, and cultural resources, use of hazardous substances for water treatment, and increased use of surface water and groundwater supplies. While this list is not exhaustive, a number of potential effects are detailed in [Table 20-5](#).

**Table 20-5 Potential Effects of Constructing & Operating Water Treatment/Distribution, Wastewater Collection/Treatment/Disposal and Stormwater Drainage Projects**

Resources	Potential Effects
Aesthetics/Visual Resources	The addition of new project facilities could affect the visual environment. New pipelines, pumping stations, or transmission lines near or in residential areas or highly visible areas could cause negative impacts.
Agriculture	Some irrigated land or grazing land could be taken out of production where collection, treatment, and distribution facilities could be located.
Air Quality and Odors	Air emissions from construction equipment and traffic could occur during the construction phase of new projects. New wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal facilities could cause adverse odor impacts for nearby residents and recreationists.
Biological Resources (Fisheries), including Special Status Species	Change in the amount and quality of fishery habitat in affected streams and rivers from increased diversions of surface waters or discharges of treated wastewater.
Biological Resources (Wetlands and Riparian Habitat)	Changes in the amount or functions and values of various types of wetlands from the construction of new facilities, or in riparian areas from changes in stream flows. Riparian habitat could be affected by hydrology changes or new construction.
Biological Resources (Botanical), including Special Status Species	Disturbance to rare plants and their habitat and other types of vegetation from construction activities or changes in hydrology along streams and rivers.
Biological Resources (Wildlife), including Special Status Species	Changes in the amount and quality of wildlife habitat near affected streams and where collection, treatment, and distribution facilities would be located.

Resources	Potential Effects
Cultural Resources	Historic, prehistoric, and ethnographic resources could be affected by the construction and operation of new facilities
Geology and Soils	Increase in erosion and sedimentation from construction activities; change in sediment transport in streams; geologic hazards could cause problems for new facilities if not sited carefully.
Mineral Resources	New project facilities could interfere with the extraction of minerals at known or yet-to-be discovered mineral sites.
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Construction of new facilities would involve the use of hazardous materials. Both water and wastewater treatment plants use hazardous materials in their respective treatment processes
Surface Water Hydrology	Changes in the magnitude and timing of flows in affected streams and other water bodies.
Groundwater	Adverse and/or beneficial changes in levels of groundwater within the various subbasins in the County.
Water Quality	Changes in stream temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, total suspended solids and other water quality parameters of concern during construction and operation of new facilities.
Compatibility with Existing Land Uses and Other Policies and Plans	Some new project facilities may not be compatible with surrounding land uses, or may be inconsistent with related federal, State, and local plans and policies.
Noise	Air emissions from construction equipment and traffic and loud noises could occur during the construction phase of new projects. New pumping stations could cause adverse noise impacts for nearby residents and recreationists.
Recreation	Changes in the quantity or quality of recreation opportunities in affected streams; some impacts could also occur during construction and operation of new conveyance, treatment, storage, and distribution facilities.
Transportation	Local roads would experience traffic increases during construction of new facilities.
Utilities and Service Systems	The routing and siting of new facilities could interfere with the operation or maintenance of existing or planned public utilities, including communication and energy infrastructure.

*Source:* Napa County 2007.

*Note:* Adapted from Napa County General Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Report.



Although the 2035 General Plan would result in future development leading to increased demands and upgrades to water treatment and distribution infrastructure, the exact amount, location, and type of infrastructure needed cannot be not known at this time. For example, development within a New Community Study Area may require construction of new water treatment facilities, but the exact location of such development cannot be known at this time. Further, future facility construction plans would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and undergo project-level environmental review, which would ensure additional compliance with specific federal, state, and local regulations designed to avoid or reduce environmental effects. The potential environmental effects of constructing and operating new and expanded potable water utility infrastructure to support development identified in the 2035 General Plan are evaluated in Chapters 5 through 22 of this RDEIR. There would be no additional impacts beyond those identified in those chapters. This impact would be less than significant, and there would be no need for additional program-level mitigation measures not identified elsewhere in this RDEIR.

***Impact USS-4: Exceed the wastewater treatment requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board (XVII.a); require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities, or expansion of existing facilities , the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects (XVII.b); or result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments (XVII.e).***

**Significance of Impact:** Less than significant, no mitigation required.

Increased population and associated urban and other growth under the 2035 General Plan would result in increased wastewater treatment and disposal demand that could tax existing wastewater treatment systems, and potentially impact existing users. It is expected there would be roughly a 70 percent increase in countywide population under the 2035 General Plan, including a nine percent increase in the population of the incorporated urban centers of Hollister and San Juan Bautista. This population increase would lead to increased demand to collect and treat wastewater from urban development, and increased demand for individual septic systems in the more remote areas. Existing wastewater treatment facilities in the County currently meet demand, but would likely be unable to service future growth without some expansion or new construction of collection, treatment, or disposal facilities.

The majority of unincorporated areas, most particularly in the western and southern portions of the County lack public sewer infrastructure and instead rely on community or individual septic systems. Unincorporated areas are serviced by public wastewater agencies including the SSCWD and City of Hollister serving areas around Hollister, the Tres Pinos Water and Sewer District

serving Tres Pinos, or by one of the four CSAs that include CSA #22 Cielo Vista, CSA #51 Comstock Estates, CSA #54 Pacheco Creek Estates, and CSA #45 Rancho Larios serving those respective subdivisions (LAFCo 2007).

Potential water quality effects from the disposal of treated wastewater are comprehensively regulated by the state. With implementation of the 2035 General Plan wastewater policies, the potential effects of increased population growth and associated urban development on wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal capacity would be avoided. The 2035 General Plan includes policies (see [Table 20-2](#)) to ensure compliance with RWQCB wastewater treatment requirements and that there are sufficient and capable wastewater treatment facilities and septic systems available to collect, treat, store and safely dispose of all wastewater produced in the County.

For example, Policy PFS-5.1 would help alleviate this by establishing a directive to encourage and support various districts in implementing expanded and new wastewater facilities. Even more essential to negating potential impacts are Policies PFS-5.2, PFS-5.3, and PFS-5.4 that would prevent over-extending existing wastewater systems and impacting users by requiring development project applicants to provide proof that wastewater needs can be met during the design review process and that they have prior approval from the relevant sewer service provider for additional service prior to receiving project approval.

Nevertheless, the 2035 General Plan likely will require the construction or enlargement of wastewater facilities to ensure waste is sufficiently treated and to have adequate capacity. Needed infrastructure may include new pump stations, collection piping, and treatment disposal facilities and/or the expansion of existing facilities. Construction of new and expanded wastewater treatment, collection, and disposal systems could result in potential short-term noise, air quality, biological resource, cultural resource, traffic, and water quality impacts from construction activities including excavation, stockpiling, hauling, and pipe flushing. Long-term impacts could include the loss or degradation of agricultural, biological, and cultural resources, use of hazardous substances for water treatment, and potential contamination of surface water and groundwater supplies. See [Table 20-5](#) for a listing of potential effects by environmental issue area.

Prior to construction and activation of any new or expanded wastewater treatment facility, a wastewater permit must be applied for and obtained through the Central Coast RWQCB. Such a permit is required to avoid the potential contamination of surface water and groundwater from the operation of a wastewater treatment plant. Once approved, operation of the wastewater facilities under such a permit requires that certain discharge and contaminant limits must be met, and monitoring is required to ensure compliance. Should violations of the wastewater permit occur, wastewater treatment plant operators must revise plant operations, processes, or equipment to assure that permit requirements are met.

As population increases in the more rural areas, the influx of applications for the installation and operation of individual and community septic systems would likely continue since large, multi-user wastewater collection and treatment facilities tend to be too expensive to construct and maintain relative to the number of users. Several thousand individual septic systems already exist throughout the County, and the County reviews and issues roughly 67 new septic system permits and 45 replacement permits a year. Prior to issuing permits for such systems, the County assesses whether soil and site conditions are favorable, whether maintenance of the system will be adequate, and whether or not a septic system can provide satisfactory service. Soil conditions in the County then pose one of the key limiting factors on the location and extent of septic systems that can be built. Table 20-6 shows the area and percentages of soil types in the County that are more compatible for septic system operation with only slight to moderate limitations. These soil type areas amount to roughly 11 percent of the County, leaving a large majority of land, 89 percent, with soil types that present severe limitations. In acknowledgement of this, the 2035 General Plan includes Policies PFS-5.5 and PFS-5.7, and NCR-4.15 and NCR-4.16 that discourage the use of septic systems when existing sewer systems or the potential for alternative treatment systems are available and encourage new developments to locate and tie into areas that already have operational wastewater treatment facilities.

**Table 20-6 Soil Types with Slight To Moderate Limitations for Septic Disposal within San Benito County**

Soil Type	Acres	Percent of Land in County
<b>Slight to Moderate Limitations</b>		
Carralitos	375	--
Hanford	4,970	0.56
Yolo	5,560	0.60
<b>Moderate Limitations</b>		
Docas	5,920	0.66
Kettleman	43,265	4.80
Metz	3,105	0.40
Mocho	3,585	0.40
Panhill	3,615	0.40
Panoche	13,560	1.50
Reiff	2,095	0.20
Sorrento	14,200	1.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,250</b>	<b>11.28</b>

*Source:* San Benito County 1994, USDA 1969.

Although the 2035 General Plan would result in future development leading to increased demands for wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal infrastructure, the exact amount, location, and type of infrastructure needed cannot be known at this time. For example, development within a New Community Study Area may require construction of new wastewater treatment facilities, but the exact location of such development cannot be known at this time. Further, future facility construction plans would need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and undergo project-level environmental review, which would ensure additional compliance with specific federal, state, and local regulations designed to avoid or reduce environmental effects. The potential environmental effects of constructing and operating new and expanded utility infrastructure to support development identified in the 2035 General Plan within urban, rural and agricultural areas, are listed in [Table 20-5](#) and evaluated in Chapters 5 through 22 of this RDEIR. There would be no additional impacts beyond those identified for unincorporated area development in general.

For the reasons stated above, the 2035 General Plan would not cause the County to exceed the wastewater treatment requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Although the 2035 General Plan would require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities, or expansion of existing facilities, the construction or expansion of those facilities would not have significant environmental effects not already accounted for in other chapters of this EIR. The construction and expansion of those facilities also ensures wastewater treatment providers have adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments. For these reasons, the potential impact on wastewater infrastructure would be less than significant.

*Impact USS-5: Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities which could cause significant environmental effects. (XVII.c)*

**Significance of Impact:** Less than significant, no mitigation required.

Urban development that could occur with implementation of the 2035 General Plan could result in an increased generation of stormwater, and increase the demand for stormwater treatment and drainage facilities. Existing wastewater treatment facilities in the County currently meet demand, but would likely be unable to service future growth without some expansion or new construction of collection, treatment, or disposal facilities. Nevertheless the 2035 General Plan has goals and policies that would prevent the construction or expansion of facilities from having a significant environmental effect not already accounted for by this RDEIR.

Most of San Benito County drains to the Pajaro River, with the exception of County areas to the south that drain to the Salinas River and Central Valley. There are a small number of stormwater drainage systems operated by the five main service providers and a few CSAs. To date there has

not been an official countywide inventory or assessment of these existing drainage systems. The large majority of County residents and businesses rely on individual or small scale drainage systems. The County does not yet have a comprehensive stormwater master plan or other standardized measures for proposed development drainage systems. However, stormwater quality measures that adhere to applicable performance standards are required as part of the development review process and private subdivisions are required to have a HOA, CSA, or other financing district created to maintain drainage systems. With the low intensity of development in the unincorporated areas, large stormwater drainage systems have not been necessary.

Continued urban development under the 2035 General Plan would lead to increased impervious surface areas, particularly in the urban settings near Hollister and San Juan Bautista, generating increased runoff that would require new or expanded stormwater facilities. The 2035 General Plan includes policies to manage stormwater from existing and future development that also encourage the incorporation of low impact development techniques to increase opportunities for infiltration, groundwater recharge and prevent flooding and downstream erosion (see [Table 20-2](#)).

Upgrades to existing stormwater infrastructure and construction of new stormwater facilities may include pervious pavement, culverts, pipes, drop inlets, detention and retention basins, and vegetated swales that could result in potential short- and long-term environmental impacts to water quality, air quality and others ([Table 20-5](#)).

The potential environmental effects of constructing and operating new and expanded stormwater drainage facilities to support development identified in the 2035 General Plan within designated urban areas and from the development of scattered residential uses are evaluated in Chapters 5 through 22 of this RDEIR. There would be no additional impacts beyond those identified in other chapters of this RDEIR. Further, future facility construction plans would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and undergo project-level environmental review, which would ensure additional compliance with specific federal, state, and local regulations designed to avoid or reduce environmental effects. This impact would be less than significant.

***Impact USS-6: Not be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate solid waste disposal needs of growth under the 2035 General Plan (XVII.f) or comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste (XVII.g).***

**Significance of Impact:** Less than significant, no mitigation required.

Implementation of the 2035 General Plan could result in an increased demand for solid waste handling and disposal facilities. Policies set forth in the 2035 General Plan would assure that adequate solid waste disposal facilities would be provided, such as Policies PFS-7.1 through PFS-7.7. Because adequate facilities would be provided, this would be a less-than-significant impact.

San Benito County administers a County-wide exclusive franchise contract to the private firm Recology for solid waste collection/operations. The firm operates 14 to 15 trucks per day in the unincorporated County areas hauling solid waste to the John Smith Road Landfill, the only operating active solid waste landfill within the County. There are no transfer stations in the County.

The John Smith Landfill receives on average 750 tons of waste per day. The landfill was reported as having a remaining capacity of 4,777,674 cubic yards). As of 2014, the landfill had approximately seven years of remaining life at 1,000 tons per day. However, Waste Connections Inc., the contract landfill operator will begin constructing a new landfill in 2016 under its Operating Agreement with the County, which will add 45 more years of capacity.

However, the County is working on expanding landfill capacity further and increasing waste diversion through the approval and development of the Resource Recovery Park project. The Resource Recovery Park project does not propose expansion of the existing John Smith Road Landfill, but would divert a portion of the waste currently disposed of at the John Smith Road Landfill for resource recovery and recycling efforts.

There are several privately owned and operated compost sites that process green agricultural waste and are operated by CalRecycle. Household hazardous waste, oil, and grease are stored in designated areas at the landfill for hauling to permitted recycling and disposal sites outside of the County.

Current and future use of solid waste disposal facilities and compost facilities under the 2035 General Plan would continue to be regulated by the CCRWQCB and CalRecycle, partnering with the SBIWM Department for enforcement. Permit requests and reports of waste discharge and disposal site information are required to be submitted to the agencies so that they may review, authorize, and monitor the site(s) operations for compliance. With the 2035 General Plan's solid waste goals and policies directed to ensure that there are adequate facilities to meet the County's needs through the 2035 General Plan buildout, this impact would be less than significant.