

Appendix G: Supplemental Water Supply Information

- DWR Groundwater Bulletin 118



BULLETIN 118 · UPDATE 2003

CALIFORNIA'S GROUNDWATER

Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region



Figure 37 Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region

Basins and Subbasins of Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region

Basin/subbasin	Basin name
5-22	San Joaquin Valley
5-22.08	Kings
5-22.09	Westside
5-22.10	Pleasant Valley
5-22.11	Kaweah
5-22.12	Tulare Lake
5-22.13	Tule
5-22.14	Kern County
5-23	Panoche Valley
5-25	Kern River Valley
5-26	Walker Basin Creek Valley
5-27	Cummings Valley
5-28	Tehachapi Valley West
5-29	Castaic Lake Valley
5-71	Vallecitos Creek Valley
5-80	Brite Valley
5-82	Cuddy Canyon Valley
5-83	Cuddy Ranch Area
5-84	Cuddy Valley
5-85	Mil Potrero Area

Description of the Region

The Tulare Lake HR covers approximately 10.9 million acres (17,000 square miles) and includes all of Kings and Tulare counties and most of Fresno and Kern counties (Figure 37). The region corresponds to approximately the southern one-third of RWQCB 5. Significant geographic features include the southern half of the San Joaquin Valley, the Temblor Range to the west, the Tehachapi Mountains to the south, and the southern Sierra Nevada to the east. The region is home to more than 1.7 million people as of 1995 (DWR, 1998). Major population centers include Fresno, Bakersfield, and Visalia. The cities of Fresno and Visalia are entirely dependent on groundwater for their supply, with Fresno being the second largest city in the United States reliant solely on groundwater.

Groundwater Development

The region has 12 distinct groundwater basins and 7 subbasins of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin, which crosses north into the San Joaquin River HR. These basins underlie approximately 5.33 million acres (8,330 square miles) or 49 percent of the entire HR area.

Groundwater has historically been important to both urban and agricultural uses, accounting for 41 percent of the region's total annual supply and 35 percent of all groundwater use in the State. Groundwater use in the region represents about 10 percent of the State's overall supply for agricultural and urban uses (DWR 1998).

The aquifers are generally quite thick in the San Joaquin Valley subbasins with groundwater wells commonly exceeding 1,000 feet in depth. The maximum thickness of freshwater-bearing deposits (4,400 feet) occurs at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley. Typical well yields in the San Joaquin Valley range from 300 gpm to 2,000 gpm with yields of 4,000 gpm possible. The smaller basins in the mountains surrounding the San Joaquin Valley have thinner aquifers and generally lower well yields averaging less than 500 gpm.

The cities of Fresno, Bakersfield, and Visalia have groundwater recharge programs to ensure that groundwater will continue to be a viable water supply in the future. Extensive groundwater recharge programs are also in place in the south valley where water districts have recharged several million acre-feet for future use and transfer through water banking programs.

The extensive use of groundwater in the San Joaquin Valley has historically caused subsidence of the land surface primarily along the west side and south end of the valley.

Groundwater Quality

In general, groundwater quality throughout the region is suitable for most urban and agricultural uses with only local impairments. The primary constituents of concern are high TDS, nitrate, arsenic, and organic compounds.

The areas of high TDS content are primarily along the west side of the San Joaquin Valley and in the trough of the valley. High TDS content of west-side water is due to recharge of stream flow originating from marine sediments in the Coast Range. High TDS content in the trough of the valley is the result of concentration of salts because of evaporation and poor drainage. In the central and west-side portions of the valley, where the Corcoran Clay confining layer exists, water quality is generally better beneath the clay than above it. Nitrates may occur naturally or as a result of disposal of human and animal waste products and fertilizer. Areas of high nitrate concentrations are known to exist near the town of Shafter and other isolated areas in the San Joaquin Valley. High levels of arsenic occur locally and appear to be associated with lakebed areas. Elevated arsenic levels have been reported in the Tulare Lake, Kern Lake and Buena Vista Lake bed areas. Organic contaminants can be broken into two categories, agricultural and industrial. Agricultural pesticides and herbicides have been detected throughout the valley, but primarily along the east side where soil permeability is higher and depth to groundwater is shallower. The most notable agricultural contaminant is DBCP, a now-banned soil fumigant and known carcinogen once used extensively on grapes. Industrial organic contaminants include TCE, DCE, and other solvents. They are found in groundwater near airports, industrial areas, and landfills.

Water Quality in Public Supply Wells

From 1994 through 2000, 1,476 public supply water wells were sampled in 14 of the 19 groundwater basins and subbasins in the Tulare Lake HR. Evaluation of analyzed samples shows that 1,049 of the wells, or 71 percent, met the state primary MCLs for drinking water. Four-hundred-twenty-seven wells, or 29 percent, exceeded one or more MCL. Figure 38 shows the percentages of each contaminant group that exceeded MCLs in the 427 wells.

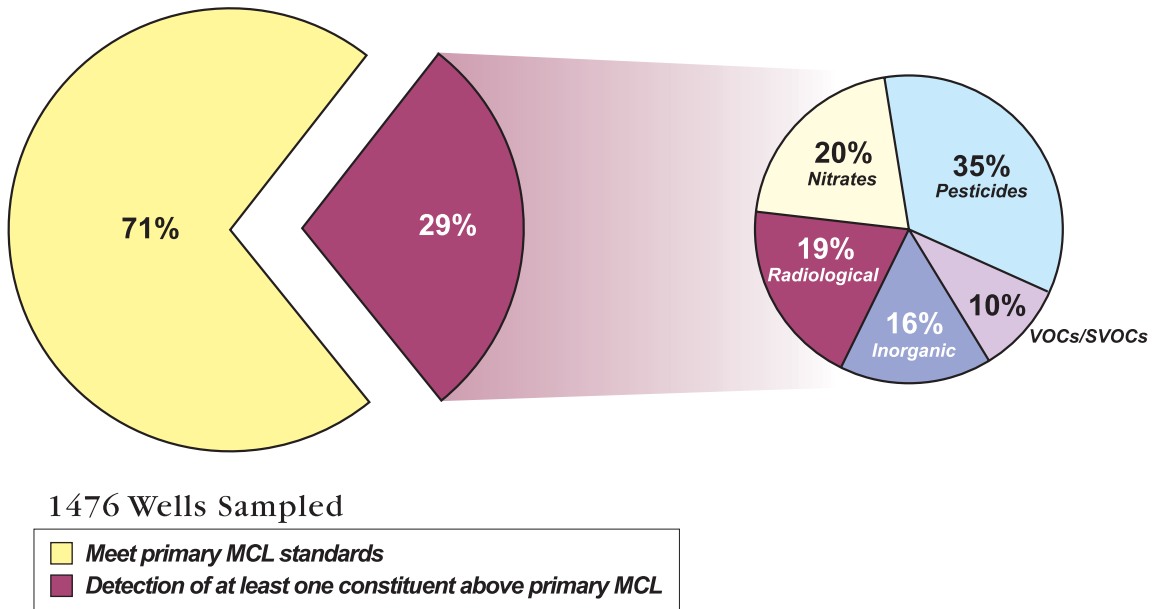


Figure 38 MCL exceedances by contaminant group in public supply wells in the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region

Table 31 lists the three most frequently occurring contaminants in each of the six contaminant groups and shows the number of wells in the HR that exceeded the MCL for those contaminants.

Table 31 Most frequently occurring contaminants by contaminant group in the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region

Contaminant group	Contaminant - # of wells	Contaminant - # of wells	Contaminant - # of wells
Inorganics - Primary	Fluoride – 32	Arsenic – 16	Aluminum – 13
Inorganics - Secondary	Iron – 155	Manganese – 82	TDS – 9
Radiological	Gross Alpha – 74	Uranium – 24	Radium 228 – 8
Nitrates	Nitrate(as NO ₃) – 83	Nitrate + Nitrite – 14	Nitrite(as N) – 3
Pesticides	DBCP – 130	EDB – 24	Di(2-Ethylhexyl)phthalate – 7
VOCs/SVOCs	TCE – 17	PCE – 16	Benzene – 6 MTBE – 6

DBCP = Dibromochloropropane
 EDB = Ethylenedibromide
 TCE = Trichloroethylene
 PCE = Tetrachloroethylene
 VOC = Volatile organic compound
 SVOC = Semivolatile organic compound

Changes from Bulletin 118-80

There are no newly defined basins since Bulletin 118-80. However, the subbasins of the San Joaquin Valley, which were delineated as part of the 118-80 update, are given their first numeric designation in this report (Table 32).

Table 32 Modifications since Bulletin 118-80 of groundwater basins and subbasins in Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region

Subbasin name	New number	Old number
Kings	5-22.08	5-22
Westside	5-22.09	5-22
Pleasant Valley	5-22.10	5-22
Kaweah	5-22.11	5-22
Tulare Lake	5-22.12	5-22
Tule	5-22.13	5-22
Kern County	5-22.14	5-22
Squaw Valley	deleted	5-24
Cedar Grove Area	deleted	5-72
Three Rivers Area	deleted	5-73
Springville Area	deleted	5-74
Templeton Mountain Area	deleted	5-75
Manache Meadow Area	deleted	5-76
Sacator Canyon Valley	deleted	5-77
Rockhouse Meadows Valley	deleted	5-78
Inns Valley	deleted	5-79
Bear Valley	deleted	5-81

Several basins have been deleted from the Bulletin 118-80 report. In Squaw Valley (5-24) all 118 wells are completed in hard rock. Cedar Grove Area (5-72) is a narrow river valley in Kings Canyon National Park with no wells. Three Rivers Area (5-73) has a thin alluvial terrace deposit but 128 of 130 wells are completed in hard rock. Springville Area (5-74) is this strip of alluvium adjacent to Tule River and all wells are completed in hard rock. Templeton Mountain Area (5-75), Manache Meadow Area (5-76), and Sacator Canyon Valley (5-77) are all at the crest of mountains with no wells. Rockhouse Meadows Valley (5-78) is in wilderness with no wells. Inns Valley (5-79) and Bear Valley (5-81) both have all wells completed in hard rock.

Table 33 Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region groundwater data

Basin/Subbasin	Basin Name	Area (acres)	Groundwater Budget Type	Well Yields (gpm)		Types of Monitoring			TDS (mg/L)	
				Maximum	Average	Levels	Quality	Title 22	Average	Range
5-22	SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY									
5-22.08	KINGS	976,000	C	3,000	500-1,500	909	-	722	200-700	40-2000
5-22.09	WESTSIDE	640,000	C	2,000	1,100	960	-	50	520	220-35,000
5-22.10	PLEASANT VALLEY	146,000	B	3,300	-	151	-	2	1,500	1000-3000
5-22.11	KAWEAH	446,000	B	2,500	1,000-2,000	568	-	270	189	35-580
5-22.12	TULARE LAKE	524,000	B	3,000	300-1,000	241	-	86	200-600	200-40,000
5-22.13	TULE	467,000	B	3,000	-	459	-	150	256	200-30,000
5-22.14	KERN COUNTY	1,950,000	A	4,000	1,200-1,500	2,258	249	476	400-450	150-5000
5-23	PANOCH VALLEY	33,100	C	-	-	48	-	-	1,300	394-3530
5-25	KERN RIVER VALLEY	74,000	C	3,650	350	-	-	92	378	253-480
5-26	WALKER BASIN CREEK VALLEY	7,670	C	650	-	-	-	1	-	-
5-27	CUMMINGS VALLEY	10,000	A	150	56	51	-	15	344	-
5-28	TEHACHAPI VALLEY WEST	14,800	A	1,500	454	64	-	19	315	280-365
5-29	CASTAC LAKE VALLEY	3,600	C	400	375	-	-	3	583	570-605
5-71	VALLECITOS CREEK VALLEY	15,100	C	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
5-80	BRITE VALLEY	3,170	A	500	50	-	-	-	-	-
5-82	CUDDY CANYON VALLEY	3,300	C	500	400	-	-	3	693	695
5-83	CUDDY RANCH AREA	4,200	C	300	180	-	-	4	550	480-645
5-84	CUDDY VALLEY	3,500	A	160	135	3	-	3	407	325-645
5-85	MIL POTRERO AREA	2,300	C	3,200	240	7	-	7	460	372-657

gpm - gallons per minute
 mg/L - milligram per liter
 TDS -total dissolved solids

