

Groundwater Banking

Storing Water in Underground Aquifers

Q. How can Santa Cruz store more water for droughts?

A. In the aquifers underground.

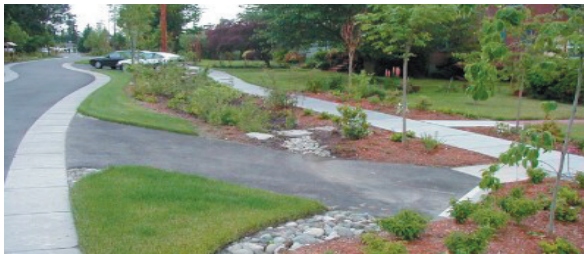
Damming streams is no longer allowed. Surface reservoirs lose water to evaporation. Keeping groundwater in the aquifers full is good drought insurance. It also keeps seawater from moving inland and raises stream flow in the dry season, improving habitat for juvenile salmon.



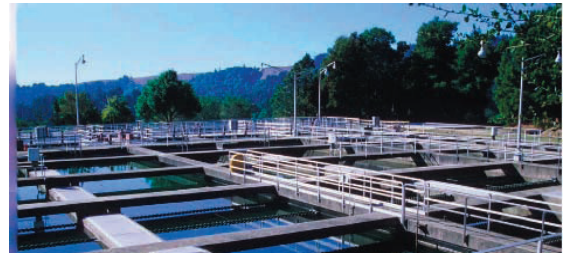
Q. How can we recharge our aquifers?

A. With surface water in winter months.

Top four groundwater recharge strategies recommended in a study commissioned by Santa Cruz County (Kennedy/Jenks, 2011, <http://santacruzirwmp.org/>):



1. Design streets and parking lots to allow storm water to soak down. (Known as "Low-impact development")



2. Treat river water at Graham Hill Plant for consumption during winter months in Scotts Valley, SLV & Soquel Creek Water districts.



3. Recharge via ponds and/or injection wells at Hanson Quarry on Mt. Hermon Rd.



4. Use of the City's Felton Diversion to supply Scotts Valley & SLV in winter months.

Q. How soon can Santa Cruz benefit from groundwater banking?

A. Within two years.

The County's draft work plan includes:

- "Consider a short term urgent transfer permit to immediately begin transferring water from Santa Cruz to Soquel using existing infrastructure."
- "Provide water back to Santa Cruz during drought periods...on an immediate limited basis, with an increased potential as groundwater levels recover."

Q. How can citizens support groundwater banking?

A. Advocacy

In order to implement these strategies, the neighboring water agencies need to install the needed infrastructure. So far the Santa Cruz Water Dept. has spent no funds on this plan. The County budget for planning these strategies, \$114,000, will expire soon. Advocate that the City Council invest in groundwater banking for drought security.