



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DWR to Use Innovative Airborne Technology to Map State's Groundwater Basins

Information Gathered Will Support Drought Response and Groundwater Recharge

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is using an innovative, helicopter-based technology to gather information about the state's groundwater aquifer structure to support drought response, groundwater recharge, and the implementation of the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act](#) (SGMA).

DWR's use of [airborne electromagnetic](#) (AEM) surveys advances Governor Newsom's [Water Resilience Portfolio](#) goal of using technology to support the State's understanding of groundwater resources.

"The data collected during these surveys provides a better understanding of California's groundwater systems to support more informed and sustainable groundwater management approaches," said Paul Gosselin, DWR Deputy Director of Sustainable Groundwater Management. "Among other benefits, this technology is helping local agencies identify optimal areas for groundwater recharge so they can take full advantage of high flow conditions when they occur to bolster groundwater supplies and protect communities from potential flood conditions."

Beginning November 7, 2023, DWR will conduct AEM surveys of groundwater basins in Kern, San Bernardino, Inyo, and Mono counties, specifically in portions of the Indian Wells Valley, Rose Valley, Owens Valley and Owens Valley - Fish Slough groundwater

subbasins. The survey schedule can be accessed from DWR's AEM webpage or directly from the following link: <https://gis.water.ca.gov/app/AEM-schedule>.

DWR's Statewide AEM Survey Project began in the summer of 2021 with a goal to collect AEM data in each of the State's high- and medium-priority groundwater basins, where feasible. The collection of AEM data this November completes the data collection effort for this Project in just two and a half years.

During the surveys, a low-flying helicopter tows a large hoop with scientific equipment approximately 100 feet above the ground surface. The helicopter, flown by experienced and licensed pilots, will make several passes over the survey areas and may be visible to residents.

Survey data creates an image of the subsurface down to a depth of about 1,000 feet below ground surface and provides information about large-scale aquifer structures and geology. Data already collected within the State can be viewed on the [AEM 3D Data Viewer](#). This information supports the implementation of local groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs), which can help local agencies sustainably manage and recharge groundwater in times of drought or flood. For more information, please watch DWR's [short 2-minute video](#) on the introduction to the AEM method, provided in both English and Spanish.

DWR encourages residents to get involved in their local groundwater management activities and GSP implementation through your groundwater sustainability agency (GSA). Information about local GSAs can be found on the [SGMA portal](#).

For more information about the AEM surveys, visit DWR's [AEM project website](#). For questions, please email AEM@water.ca.gov.

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