San Francisco Bay Hydrologic Region

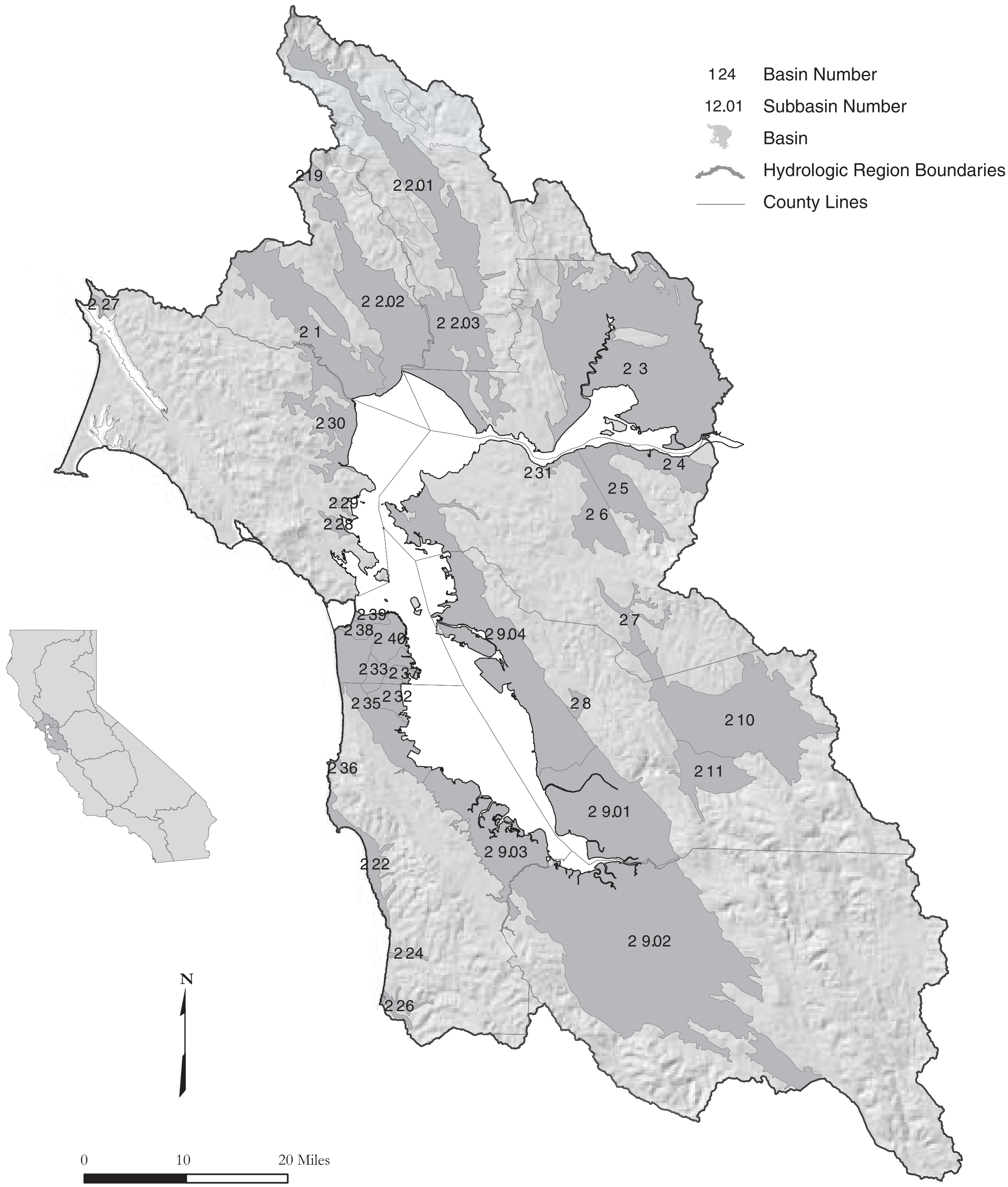

Figure 27 San Francisco Bay Hydrologic Region

Basins and Subbasins of the San Francisco Bay Hydrologic Region

Basin/subbasin	Basin name
2-1	Petaluma Valley
2-2	Napa-Sonoma Valley
2-2.01	Napa Valley
2-2.02	Sonoma Valley
2-2.03	Napa-Sonoma Lowlands
2-3	Suisun-Fairfield Valley
2-4	Pittsburg Plain
2-5	Clayton Valley
2-6	Ygnacio Valley
2-7	San Ramon Valley
2-8	Castro Valley
2-9	Santa Clara Valley
2-9.01	Niles Cone
2-9.02	Santa Clara
2-9.03	San Mateo Plain
2-9.04	East Bay Plain
2-10	Livermore Valley
2-11	Sunol Valley
2-19	Kenwood Valley
2-22	Half Moon Bay Terrace
2-24	San Gregorio Valley
2-26	Pescadero Valley
2-27	Sand Point Area
2-28	Ross Valley
2-29	San Rafael Valley
2-30	Novato Valley
2-31	Arroyo Del Hambre Valley
2-32	Visitacion Valley
2-33	Islais Valley
2-35	Merced Valley
2-36	San Pedro Valley
2-37	South San Francisco
2-38	Lobos
2-39	Marina
2-40	Downtown San Francisco

Description of the Region

The San Francisco Bay HR covers approximately 2.88 million acres (4,500 square miles) and includes all of San Francisco and portions of Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, and Alameda counties (Figure 27). The region corresponds to the boundary of RWQCB 2. Significant geographic features include the Santa Clara, Napa, Sonoma, Petaluma, Suisun-Fairfield, and Livermore valleys; the Marin and San Francisco peninsulas; San Francisco, Suisun, and San Pablo bays; and the Santa Cruz Mountains, Diablo Range, Bolinas Ridge, and Vaca Mountains of the Coast Range. While being the smallest in size of the 10 HRs, the region has the second largest population in the State at about 5.8 million in 1995 (DWR 1998). Major population centers include the cities of San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland.

Groundwater Development

The region has 28 identified groundwater basins. Two of those, the Napa-Sonoma Valley and Santa Clara Valley groundwater basins, are further divided into three and four subbasins, respectively. The groundwater basins underlie approximately 896,000 acres (1,400 square miles) or about 30 percent of the entire HR.

Despite the tremendous urban development in the region, groundwater use accounts for only about 5 percent (68,000 acre-feet) of the region's estimated average water supply for agricultural and urban uses, and accounts for less than one percent of statewide groundwater uses.

In general, the freshwater-bearing aquifers are relatively thin in the smaller basins and moderately thick in the more heavily utilized basins. The more heavily utilized basins in this region include the Santa Clara Valley, Napa-Sonoma Valley, and Petaluma Valley groundwater basins. In these basins, the municipal and irrigation wells have average depths ranging from about 200 to 500 feet. Well yields in these basins range from less than 50 gallons per minute (gpm) to approximately 3,000 gpm. In the smaller basins, most municipal and irrigation wells have average well depths in the 100- to 200-foot range. Well yields in the smaller and less utilized basins are typically less than 500 gpm.

Land subsidence has been a significant problem in the Santa Clara Valley Groundwater Basin in the past. An extensive annual monitoring program has been set up within the basin to evaluate changes in an effort to maintain land subsidence at less than 0.01 feet per year (SCVWD 2001). Additionally, groundwater recharge projects have been implemented in the Santa Clara Valley to ensure that groundwater will continue to be a viable water supply in the future.

Groundwater Quality

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

The areas of high TDS (and chloride) concentrations are typically found in the region's groundwater basins that are situated close to the San Francisco Bay, such as the northern Santa Clara, southern Sonoma, Petaluma, and Napa valleys. Elevated levels of nitrate have been detected in a large percentage of private wells tested within the Coyote Subbasin and Llagas Subbasin of the Gilroy-Hollister Valley Groundwater Basin (in the Central Coast HR) located to the south of the Santa Clara Valley (SCVWD 2001). The shallow aquifer zone within the Petaluma Valley also shows persistent nitrate contamination. Groundwater with high TDS, iron, and boron levels is present in the Calistoga area of Napa Valley, and elevated boron levels in other parts of Napa Valley make the water unfit for agricultural uses. Releases of fuel hydrocarbons from leaking underground storage tanks and spills/leaks of organic solvents at industrial sites have caused minor to significant groundwater impacts in many basins throughout the region. Methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE) and chlorinated solvent releases to soil and groundwater continue to be problematic. Environmental oversight for many of these sites is performed either by local city and county enforcement agencies, the RWQCB, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and/or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Water Quality in Public Supply Wells

From 1994 through 2000, 485 public supply water wells were sampled in 18 of the 33 basins and subbasins in the San Francisco Bay HR. Analyzed samples indicate that 410 wells, or 85 percent, met the state primary MCLs for drinking water standards. Seventy-five wells, or 15 percent, have constituents that exceed one or more MCL. Figure 28 shows the percentages of each contaminant group that exceeded MCLs in the 75 wells.

Table 16 lists the three most frequently occurring contaminants in each contaminant group and the number of wells in the HR that exceeded the MCL for those contaminants.

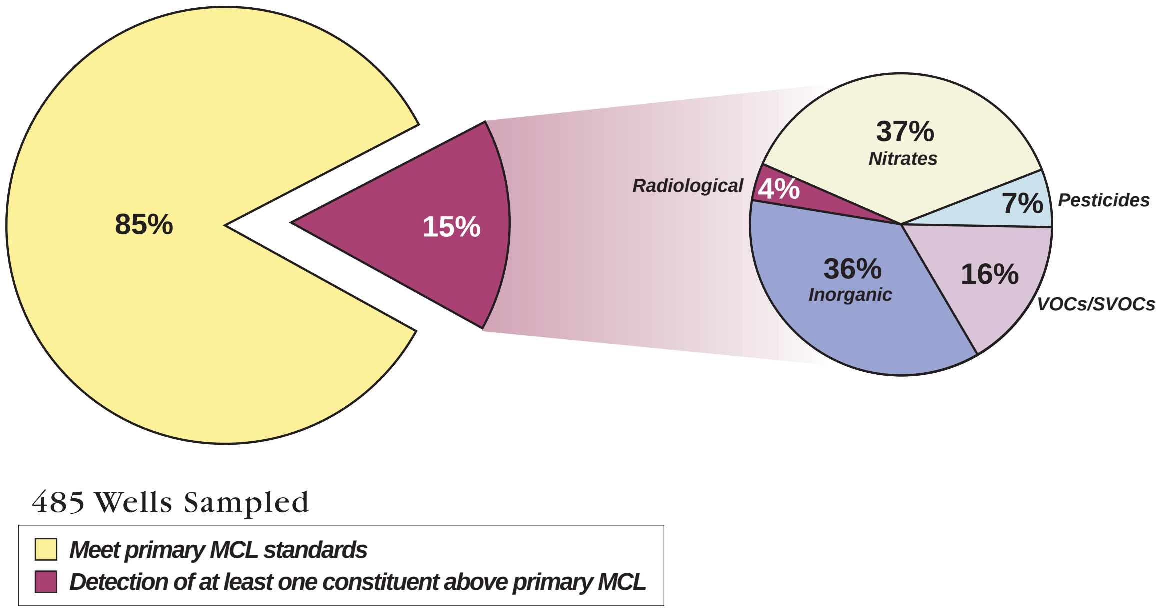

Figure 28 MCL exceedances in public supply wells in the San Francisco Bay Hydrologic Region

Table 16 Most frequently occurring contaminants by contaminant group in the San Francisco Bay Hydrologic Region

Contaminant group	Contaminant - # of wells	Contaminant - # of wells	Contaminant - # of wells
Inorganics	Iron – 57	Manganese – 57	Fluoride – 7
Radiological	Gross Alpha – 2	Radium 226 – 1	
Nitrates	Nitrate (as NO_3) – 27	Nitrate + Nitrite – 3	Nitrite (as N) – 1
Pesticides	Di(2-Ethylhexyl)phthalate – 4	Heptachlor – 1	
VOCs/SVOCs	PCE – 4	Dichloromethane – 3	TCE– 2 Vinyl Chloride – 2

TCE = Trichloroethylene
PCE = Tetrachloroethylene
VOC = Volatile Organic Compound
SVOC = Semivolatile Organic Coumpound

Changes from Bulletin 118-80

Since Bulletin 118-80 was published, RWQCB 2 boundary has been modified. This resulted in several basins being reassigned to RWQCB 1. These are listed in Table 17.

Table 17 Modifications since Bulletin 118-80 of groundwater basins in San Francisco Bay Hydrologic Region

Basin name	New number	Old number
McDowell Valley	1-56	2-12
Knights Valley	1-50	2-13
Potter Valley	1-51	2-14
Ukiah Valley	1-52	2-15
Sanel Valley	1-53	2-16
Alexander Valley	1-54	2-17
Santa Rosa Valley	1-55	2-18
Lower Russian River Valley	1-60	2-20
Bodega Bay Area	1-57	2-21

No additional basins were assigned to the San Francisco Bay HR in this revision. However, the Santa Clara Valley Groundwater Basin (2-9) has been subdivided into four subbasins instead of two, and the Napa-Sonoma Valley Groundwater Basin is now three subbasins instead of two.

There are several deletions of groundwater basins from Bulletin 118-80. The San Francisco Sand Dune Area (2-34) was deleted when the San Francisco groundwater basins were redefined in a USGS report in the early 1990s. The Napa-Sonoma Volcanic Highlands (2-23) is a volcanic aquifer and was not assigned a basin number in this bulletin. This is considered to be a groundwater source area as discussed in Chapter 6. Bulletin 118-80 identified seven groundwater basins that were stated to differ from 118-75: Sonoma County Basin, Napa County Basin, Santa Clara County Basin, San Mateo Basin, Alameda Bay Plain Basin, Niles Cone Basin, and Livermore Basin. They were created primarily by combining several smaller basins and subbasins within individual counties. This report does not consider these seven as basins. There is no change in numbering because the basins were never assigned a basin number.

Table 18 San Francisco Bay Hydrologic Region groundwater data

Basin/Subbasin	Basin Name	Area (acres)	Groundwater Budget Type	Well Yields (gpm)		Active Monitoring			TDS (mg/L)	
				Maximum	Average	Levels	Quality	Title 22	Average	Range
2-1	PETALUMA VALLEY	46,100	C	100	-	16	7	24	347	58-650
2-2	NAPA-SONOMA VALLEY									
2-2.01	NAPA VALLEY	45,900	A	3,000	223	19	10	23	272	150-370
2-2.02	SONOMA VALLEY	44,700	C	1,140	516	18	9	35	321	100-550
2-2.03	NAPA-SONOMA LOWLANDS	40,500	C	300	98	0	6	9	185	50-300
2-3	SUISUN-FAIRFIELD VALLEY	133,600	C	500	200	21	17	35	410	160-740
2-4	PITTSBURG PLAIN	11,600	C	-	-	-	-	9	-	-
2-5	CLAYTON VALLEY	17,800	C	-	-	-	-	48	-	-
2-6	YGNACIO VALLEY	15,500	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-7	SAN RAMON VALLEY	7,060	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-8	CASTRO VALLEY	1,820	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-9	SANTA CLARA VALLEY									
2-9.01	NILES CONE	57,900	A	3,000	2,000	350	120	20	-	-
2-9.02	SANTA CLARA	190,000	C	-	-	-	10	234	408	200-931
2-9.03	SAN MATEO PLAIN	48,100	C	-	-	-	2	14	407	300-480
2-9.04	EAST BAY PLAIN	77,400	A	1,000	UNK	29	16	7	638	364-1,420
2-10	LIVERMORE VALLEY	69,500	A	-	-	-	-	36	-	-
2-11	SUNOL VALLEY	16,600	C	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
2-19	KENWOOD VALLEY	3,170	C	-	-	-	-	13	-	-
2-22	HALF MOON BAY TERRACE	9,150	C	-	-	5	-	9	-	-
2-24	SAN GREGORIO VALLEY	1,070	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-26	PESCADERO VALLEY	2,900	C	-	-	3	-	4	-	-
2-27	SAND POINT AREA	1,400	C	-	-	-	-	6	-	-
2-28	ROSS VALLEY	1,770	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-29	SAN RAFAEL VALLEY	880	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-30	NOVATO VALLEY	20,500	C	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
2-31	ARROYO DEL HAMBRE VALLEY	790	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-32	VISITACION VALLEY	880	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-33	ISLAIS VALLEY	1,550	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-35	MERCED VALLEY	10,400	C	-	-	-	-	10	-	-
2-36	SAN PEDRO VALLEY	880	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-37	SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO	2,170	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-38	LOBOS	2,400	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-39	MARINA	220	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-40	DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO	7,600	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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

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Livermore Valley Groundwater Basin

- Groundwater Basin Number: 2-10
- Counties: Alameda and Contra Costa
- Surface Area: 69,600 acres (109 square miles)

Basin Boundaries and Hydrology

The Livermore Valley lies about 40 miles east of San Francisco and 30 miles southwest of Stockton within a structural trough of the Diablo Range. The groundwater basin extends from the Pleasonton Ridge east to the Altamont Hills (about 14 miles) and from the Livermore Upland north to the Orinda Upland (about 3 miles). Surface drainage features include Arroyo Valle, Arroyo Mocho, and Arroyo las Positas as principal streams, with Alamo Creek, South San Ramon Creek, and Tassajara Creek as minor streams. All streams converge on the west side of the basin to form Arroyo de la Laguna, which flows south and joins Alameda Creek in Sunol Valley. Some geologic structures restrict the lateral movement of groundwater, but the general groundwater gradient is to the west, then south towards Arroyo de la Laguna. Elevations within the basin range from about 600 ft in the east, near the Altamont Hills, to about 280 ft in the southwest, where Arroyo de la Laguna flows into Sunol Groundwater Basin. Average annual precipitation ranges from 16 inches on the valley floor to more than 20 inches along the southeast and northwest basin margins.

Hydrogeologic Information

Water Bearing Formations

The entire floor of Livermore Valley and portions of the upland areas on all sides of the valley overly groundwater-bearing materials. The materials are continental deposits from alluvial fans, outwash plains, and lakes. They include valley-fill materials, the Livermore Formation, and the Tassajara Formation. Under most conditions, the valley-fill and Livermore sediments yield adequate to large quantities of groundwater to all types of wells. The quality of water produced from these rocks ranges from poor to excellent, with most waters in the good to excellent range.

The following information on the water bearing units is from Bulletin 118-2 (DWR 1966, DWR 1974).

Valley-fill. The Holocene age surficial valley-fill materials range in thickness from a few tens of feet to nearly 400 feet. They occur as stream channel deposits, alluvium, alluvial fan deposits, and terrace deposits, and are composed of unconsolidated sand, gravel, silt, and clay. In the central and southern portions of the valley, 50 to 80 percent of the valley-fill is comprised of aquifer material that yields significant quantities of water to wells. Clay deposits up to 40 feet thick cap the valley-fill in the western part of the Basin; where deep wells draw groundwater from underlying aquifer material. (Zone 7, 2002) Several gravel extraction pits have been dug into the upper portions of the valley fill material near the central portion of the basin. Dewatering activities related to the mining change ground water flow patterns and locally limit the storage capacity of the basin. Mining activities are scheduled to cease by 2030.

Livermore Formation. The Plio-Pleistocene Livermore Formation is primarily exposed over the south and southwest regions of the Livermore Valley groundwater basin, but occurs almost everywhere beneath the surface at depths up to 400 ft. This formation is up to 4,000 feet thick and consists of unconsolidated to semi-consolidated beds of gravel, sand, silt, and clay. Limey concretions are fairly common in its lower portion, and tuffaceous beds are present at its base. Erosion of Jurassic and Cretacious rocks to the south of the basin produced the coarse-grained Livermore Formation. These grains consist of black to red chert, micaceous sandstone, black shale, and quartizite. (DWR, 1966) Deep wells in the eastern half of the basin produce from the Livermore Formation. Upland wells to the South have limited groundwater yields. (Zone 7, 2002) Generally, yields are adequate for most irrigation, industrial, or municipal purposes.

Tassajara Formation. The Pliocene-age Tassajara Formation surfaces in the uplands to the north of the Livermore Valley and occurs beneath the central portion of the valley at depths ranging from 200 to 750 feet. Beds of the Tassajara are composed of sandstone, siltstone, shale, conglomerate, and limestone. Coarse-grained beds typically contain tuff and clay particles, reducing their overall permeability. Wells tapping the Tassajara Formation yield only sufficient water for domestic or stock purposes. There is little hydrologic continuity between the Tassajara and overlying water-bearing units.

Restrictive Structures

Within the Livermore Valley groundwater basin, faults are the major structural features known to have marked affect on the movement of groundwater. Faults in this region tend to act as barriers to the lateral movement of groundwater. The resulting groundwater levels stand higher on the up-gradient side. The Livermore, Pleasanton and Parks faults act as such barriers, dividing the Quaternary Alluvium into 5 groundwater sub-basins.

Groundwater Level Trends

Groundwater Storage

Groundwater Storage Capacity. Total storage capacity of the basin is estimated at about 500,000 af. (Zone 7, 2002)

Groundwater in Storage. Groundwater in storage in 1999 is estimated at 219,000 af.

Groundwater Budget (Type A)

Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Zone 7 (Zone 7) has maintained an annual hydrologic inventory of supply and demand since 1974. The inventory describes the balance between groundwater supply and demand. Under average hydrologic conditions, the groundwater budget is essentially in balance. Groundwater budget inflow components include natural recharge of 10,000 af, artificial recharge of 10,900 af, applied water recharge of 1,740 af, and subsurface inflow of 1,000 af. Groundwater budget outflow components include urban extraction of

10,290 af, agricultural extraction of 190 af, other extraction and evaporation associated with gravel mining operations of 12,620 af, and subsurface outflow of 540 af.

Groundwater Quality

Characterization. Water chemistry is highly varied around the basin. Generally, the northern extent of the basin is dominated by a sodium cation water. Much of the water underlying the western part of the basin near Pleasanton has magnesium-sodium as the dominant cation. The area along the eastern portion of the basin beneath Livermore typically has magnesium as the dominant cation. Nearly the entire basin has bicarbonate as the dominant anion (Sorenson and others 1985). TDS ranges from 300 mg/L to 550 mg/L with an average of 450 mg/L based on analyses from 27 municipal wells.

Impairments. Some areas have boron concentrations exceeding 2 mg/L (16 wells of approximately 137 wells sampled in 1982). Boron is generally highest in shallow wells because of marine sediments adjacent to the basin. The most areally-extensive elevated boron concentrations occur in the northeast part of the basin (Sorenson and others 1985).

Water Quality in Public Supply Wells

Constituent Group[1]	Number of wells sampled[2]	Number of wells with a concentration above an MCL[3]
Inorganics – Primary	33	0
Radiological	24	0
Nitrates	33	5
Pesticides	31	1
VOCs and SVOCs	31	2
Inorganics – Secondary	33	5

[1] A description of each member in the constituent groups and a generalized discussion of the relevance of these groups are included in *California's Groundwater – Bulletin 118* by DWR (2003).
[2] Represents distinct number of wells sampled as required under DHS Title 22 program from 1994 through 2000.
[3] Each well reported with a concentration above an MCL was confirmed with a second detection above an MCL. This information is intended as an indicator of the types of activities that cause contamination in a given basin. It represents the water quality at the sample location. It does not indicate the water quality delivered to the consumer. More detailed drinking water quality information can be obtained from the local water purveyor and its annual Consumer Confidence Report.

Well Characteristics

	Well yields (gal/min)	
Municipal/Irrigation Main Basin: Valley Fill & Livermore Formation	Range: 500 – 4,500	Average: 1,500 (Well Completion Reports)
Irrigation: Fringe Sub-basins: Tassajara Formation	Range: 2 – 300	Average: 40 (Zone 7 Monitoring Data)
	Total depths (ft)	
Domestic	Range: 100 - 350	Average: 180 (Well Completion Reports)
Municipal/Irrigation	Range: 315 - 810	Average: 500 (Well Completion Reports)

Active Monitoring Data

Agency	Parameter	Number of wells /measurement frequency
Zone 7 Water Agency	Groundwater levels	210 wells annually
	Mineral, nutrient, & minor element.	50 wells monthly 10 wells continuously
DWR	Mineral, nutrient, & minor element.	27 wells every three years
Department of Health Services and cooperators	Coliform, nitrates, mineral, organic chemicals, and radiological.	36 wells as required in Title 22, Calif. Code of Regulations

Basin Management

Groundwater management:	Zone 7 manages groundwater in the basin under authority from California Water Code Section 30000 (County Water District). In 1995, Zone 7 created a Groundwater Management Advisory Committee comprised of 10 members of the public. The GMAC reviews groundwater-related issues and makes recommendations to the Zone 7 board and staff. Zone 7 adopted a groundwater management plan on September 21, 2005.
Water agencies	
Public	Zone 7, City of Pleasanton, City of Livermore, Dublin San Ramon CSD
Private	California Water Service Company

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Errata

Updated groundwater management information and added hotlinks to applicable websites. (1/20/06)