

Nipomo Mesa Management Area Key Wells Index

2015 Status: Severe Water Shortage Conditions

The Nipomo Mesa Management Area ("NMMA") Technical Group ("TG") established groundwater level and groundwater quality criteria to track overall basin conditions within the NMMA. The criteria include the Key Wells Index ("KWI"), which combines groundwater level data from eight selected wells distributed throughout the inland portion of the Management Area. Water level measurements are made in NMMA groundwater wells representing the principal producing aquifer and are used to compute the KWI during the spring of each year.

The TG uses the KWI to help identify trends in basin groundwater levels and has compiled KWI data for the period from 1975 to the present. Groundwater levels have changed in the NMMA over time, and are now at an overall level that is lower than at any other time from 1975 to the present (Figure 1).

One of the NMMA TG's court-required duties is to determine when conditions of "Potentially Severe Water Shortage Conditions" and "Severe Water Shortage Conditions" have been reached. The 2015 KWI value (10.0 ft msl) has decreased from the previous year (18.5 ft msl) and is within the Severe Water Shortage Condition (16.5 ft msl). The Severe Water Shortage Condition signifies a Stage III NMMA Water Shortage Response.

Details of the KWI, as well as the agreed upon responses to Potentially Severe Water Shortage Condition and Severe Water Shortage Condition, are explained in further detail in the NMMA TG's annual report of groundwater conditions. The report's attachments include a response plan to groundwater shortage and an associated well management plan, including the NMMA Water Shortage Response Stages. The NMMA annual report for calendar year 2014, including these attachments, is available as a digital document at

http://www.scefiling.org/filingdocs/19902/83876/endorse_130081_report.pdf

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