

WHAT PUBLIC TECHNICAL AND FUNDING ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO HELP ME ENSURE THE RELIABILITY OF MY WATER SUPPLY?

This year's extraordinary rainfall greened up our Nicasio hills and blanketed them with wildflowers. As we enjoy a verdant spring, it is important to remember that we need to prepare for the dry years that will inevitably return.

A recent [Marin Sonoma Resilience Report](#),¹ entitled *Agricultural Resilience in the Face of the Extra Dry Conditions: A Marin and Sonoma Partnership Response and Recommendations*, describes the actions taken between 2019-2022 that successfully helped our rural communities during the drought as well as the additional actions that are needed to further improve our drought resiliency.

Permanent Potable Water Hauling Service Is Now Available in West Marin

Our West Marin concerns about domestic wells potentially going dry is called out in the Resilience Report. It describes the residential potable water hauling program created under the leadership of Marin County Supervisor Dennis Rodoni.

The Marin Agricultural Department collaborated with Marin Water to make potable water from a metered hydrant available in San Geronimo Valley (located on the south side of San Geronimo Valley Road and Meadow Way). The hydrant is equipped with fittings that allow a water hauling truck to fill its tank.

To date, no residents have requested to take part in the County's program. However, the infrastructure is in place and will be available to help provide backup water services to our communities in future years. Residents who need water would be billed directly by the water hauling company. The County also approved provisions to share costs with residents who need financial assistance.

Technical and Funding Support Is Available for Rainwater and Graywater Capture and Other Water Efficiency Improvements During the Drought

The Resilience Report calls out the increased interest expressed by Sonoma and Marin landowners and tenants in rainwater harvesting systems that complement the use of graywater and improved water efficiency. The Report expressly recognizes the success of rainwater

¹ Use ctrl + mouse click to open this link to the report

harvesting initiatives and the value of incorporating them into water security² plans by landowners and residential homeowners, writing “With minimal to low infrastructural investment necessary, rainwater harvesting, and rain catchment systems have a huge potential to directly augment ongoing drought resilient measures for operations of any size...”. [See Water Security Infographic at the end of this article]

A number of special technical and funding assistance programs were created during the drought, such as the Marin Agricultural Land Trust’s Drought Resilience and Water Security ([DRAWS](#)) that helped West Marin farmers and ranchers implement water enhancement measures such as re-developing springs, adding water storage systems, and improving soil capacity to hold water.

In addition, in Sonoma County, a group of partners including the Gold Ridge Resources Conservation District, Sonoma Water, Daily Acts, and cities launched the [Sonoma County Rain Water Catchment Rebate Program](#). This initiative enabled Sonoma County to offer rural and city landowners technical and funding assistance to install these rainwater systems, including opportunities to build larger catchment systems.

West Marin’s Voice Is Needed to Expand and Develop New Technical Assistance and Funding for Rural Drought Resilience Programs!

The Resilience Partnership formed by Sonoma and Marin County with water agencies, Resources Conservation Districts, the University of California Cooperative Extension, and many others during the drought enabled these agencies to offer a greater array of technical assistance and funding programs that helped our communities cope with the extraordinary dry conditions.

Despite this success, one of the key lessons identified in the Resilience Report is that we must do more than plan for the next emergency. We need to have water resiliency programs and measures in place ahead of the next drought. And to do that we need more help – both technical assistance and outside funding.

One way our Nicasio community can make this happen for West Marin is by reaching out to the [Marin Resources Conservation District](#). The mission of the Marin Resource Conservation District (Marin RCD) is to conserve and enhance Marin’s natural resources, including its soil, water, vegetation, and wildlife.

² *“The capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability.”* [UN-Water, 2013]

Marin RCD started as a Soil Conservation District following the dust bowl. Its current focus is on the health of the county's natural landscape through preservation of our agricultural heritage and agricultural productivity.

Marin RCD has programs that work with all landowners, not only farmers and ranchers, to improve the health of West Marin's lands and watersheds. The District is funded primarily by federal, state and local grants and Measure A sales tax revenue garnered to offer both technical and funding assistance to landowners. Marin RCD's [urban streams program](#) provides support and assistance to all residents who live along Marin County's creeks.

Marin RCD's assistance programs require voluntary involvement by landowners (and sometimes matching funding), so it helps the District to help us by knowing the types of services we need and want in West Marin. Some programs that have been offered at nearby RCDs include the following:

- *Water Well Depth Monitoring Service.* This service could be a confidential biannual (spring/fall) monitoring program for residential and commercial wells, similar to one being developed by the Gold Ridge Resources Conservation District for Sonoma County ([Water Well Depth Monitoring Service](#)).
- *Rainwater/Alternative Source Systems Program.* This program could offer individual site evaluations, recommendations for appropriate systems, professional referrals, design assistance and possibly grant funding to help install rainwater catchment systems, similar to the existing program provided by the Gold Ridge Resources Conservation District ([Rainwater systems](#)).
- *Managing Stormwater Program.* Marin RCD currently has programs that support urban stream restoration, rural road mitigation, soil health improvement, and installation of pollinator habitats. Additional programs could address identification and implementation of landowner projects to attenuate stormwater runoff, avoid erosion, and enhance groundwater recharge similar to the [stormwater programs](#) under development by the Gold Ridge Resources Conservation District.

If any of these potential drought resilience programs sound like a good idea – or you have ideas of your own – please email Simone Albuquerque, Conservation Manager for the Marin Resources Conservation District at simone@marinrcd.org.

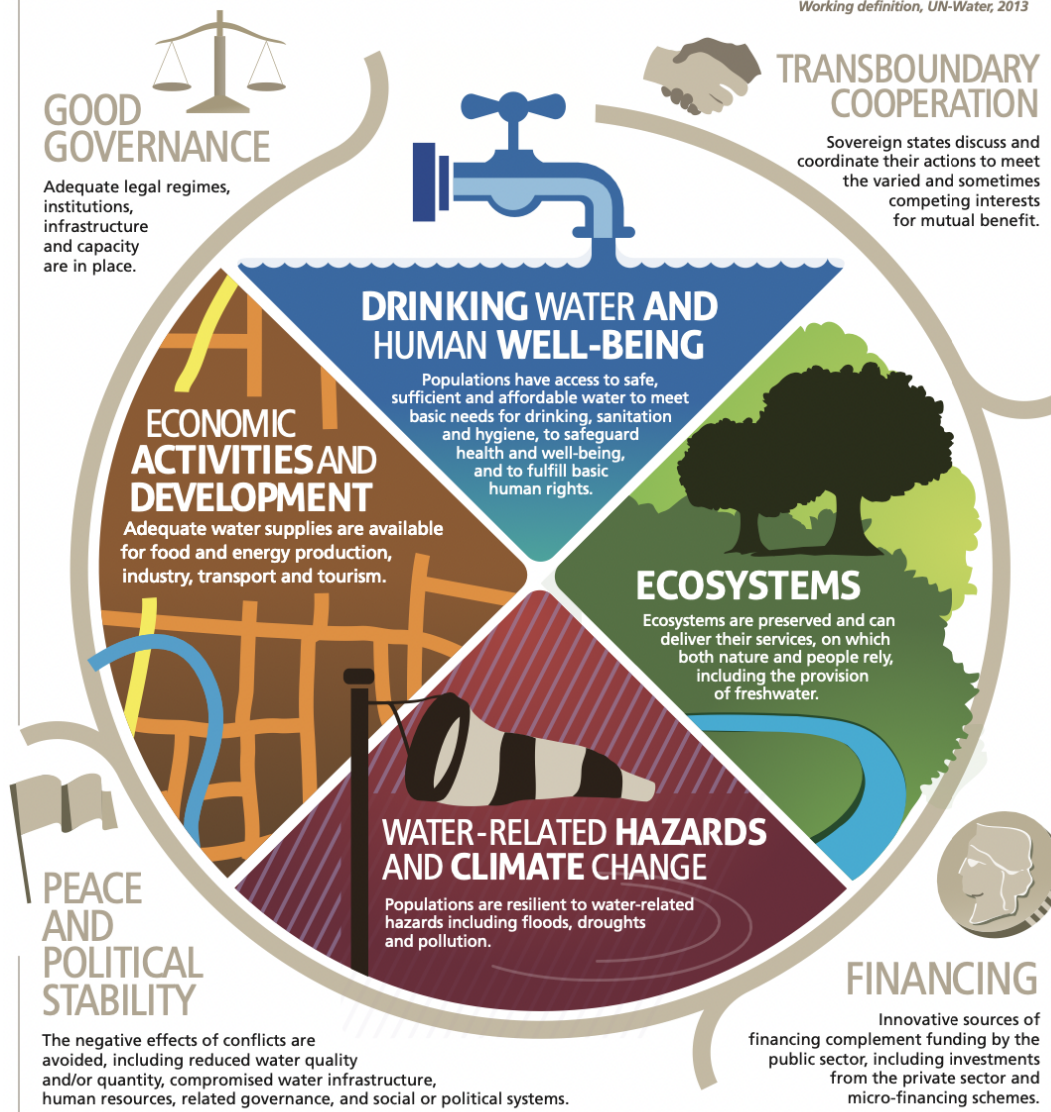
The more Marin RCD hears from West Marin residents requesting assistance, the more they can do to help us secure technical assistance and funding in the years ahead!

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What is Water Security?

"The capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability."

Working definition, UN-Water, 2013



Water is central to achieving a larger sense of security, sustainability, development and human well-being. UN-water supports the inclusion of water security in the post-2015 development agenda as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Achieving water security requires collaboration across sectors, communities, disciplines and political borders, to reduce the risk of potential conflicts over water resources, between sectors and between water users or states.



www.watercooperation2013.org

www.unwater.org

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