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Contact:
Jim Nickles, 916/278-3016, cell-916/715-2253, jnickles@usgs.gov

Learn about groundwater-testing program in the western San Joaquin Valley
State Water Board, USGS to discuss well-sampling at meeting Thursday in Los Banos, CA

The State Water Resources Control Board and the U.S. Geological Survey will present information Thursday on a large-scale study of groundwater-quality they are launching across the western San Joaquin Valley. The study area will extend from Stanislaus to Kings counties and include the cities of Patterson, Newman, Los Banos, Mendota and Firebaugh, among others.

The meeting, conducted by the State Water Resources Control Board and the USGS, is set for 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday, February 18th, at the Los Banos City Hall, 520 J St., Los Banos, CA.

Maps, an agenda and other information are available at the State Water Board's Web site at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/gama/>.

The Water Board's Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA) Program is collaborating with the USGS and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories (LLNL) to conduct the Priority Basin Project. The main goals of GAMA are to improve comprehensive statewide groundwater monitoring and to increase the availability of groundwater-quality information to the public.

The USGS California Water Science Center is the project lead for the Priority Basin Project. With the voluntary cooperation of local water agencies and well owners, USGS is testing water in California groundwater basins over a 10-year period.

The Western San Joaquin Valley study unit is one of 35 GAMA study units across the state. It includes the state Department of Water Resources-defined groundwater subbasins of Delta-Mendota and Westside, within portions of Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno and Kings counties.

Starting March 1 and continuing for about six weeks, USGS scientists will collect water-quality samples from 60 wells. A report on the data is expected to be available in about a year.

The GAMA Priority Basin Project is designed to characterize water quality in groundwater basins. GAMA does not evaluate the quality of water delivered to consumers. After withdrawal from the ground, water for public systems is typically treated or mixed to maintain water quality before consumers receive it.

More information on the GAMA program is available at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/gama/> and <http://ca.water.usgs.gov/gama/>.

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