

Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Technical Advisory Committee



Aquilologic has been appointed to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to the Indian Wells Valley (IWV) Cooperative Groundwater Management Group (IWVCGMG). The Groundwater Group was created to foster cooperative management of groundwater in this desert basin. The group includes the County, a City, the Indian Wells Valley Water District (IWWVD), other public agencies, a minerals company, and the largest agricultural interest in the IWV – Mojave Pistachios. **Aquilologic** represents Mojave Pistachios on the TAC.

Groundwater was first pumped in IWV in the late 1800s to meet agricultural needs. In 1912, the small agricultural community of Crumville (later Ridgecrest) was established. In 1914, the predecessor company to Searles Valley Minerals (SVM) was formed. It is understood that by 1930, SVM was pumping groundwater from IWV to meet domestic and industrial needs. In 1943, the Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS), now Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS), was established at China Lake. This led to a dramatic expansion of the town of Ridgecrest, which incorporated in 1963. In 1955, the Ridgecrest County Water District (later named the IWWVD) was formed by consolidating several smaller water companies serving the Ridgecrest area with domestic water.

By 2014, agricultural, minerals, military, and domestic pumping of groundwater totaled almost 30,000 acre-feet per year (AFY). Estimates for the safe yield from the basin range from 8,000 to 15,000 AFY. Groundwater levels have been declining in IWV between 1 to 2 feet/year. In August 2015, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) designated IWV as being a critically overdrafted basin. It is clear that the basin faces substantial challenges regarding available groundwater resources.

Under the Sustainable Groundwater Act (SGMA) of 2014, the IWVCGMG is looking to become the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the IWV. The GSA would then develop the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the basin.