



YOLO SUBBASIN FEE STUDY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) – Updated March 2026

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is the Yolo Subbasin Groundwater Agency?

The Yolo Subbasin Groundwater Agency (YSGA/Agency) was created in 2017 by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to serve as the official groundwater management agency for the Yolo Subbasin as required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014. The Agency consists of 26 member agencies, all with representatives on the Board of Directors. As a local entity, the YSGA directly serves the community by safeguarding groundwater resources for future generations.

How is the YSGA currently funded?

The YSGA has been solely funded by state grants and contributions from the 26 member agencies. Funds have supported agency operations and management, Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) development and management of grant-funded projects identified in the GSP.

Why is it important for YSGA to establish a fee for a state mandate?

SGMA requires all groundwater sustainability agencies to be self-funded for administrative and reporting duties, management activities, and activities that contribute to an overall understanding of groundwater management.

What benefits do payers and the broader community receive from the YSGA fee?

The YSGA fee supports long-term, sustainable groundwater management that benefits both individual payers and the community. Because the subbasin is designated by the state as a high-priority basin, proactive management today is critical to securing future groundwater supplies. The fee also ensures that all beneficiaries contribute fairly to the cost of sustainable groundwater management, which is essential to the long-term prosperity and security of everyone who relies on groundwater supplies in the subbasin.

Why not require the 26 member agencies to continue supporting YSGA?

Member agencies' contributions were not intended to be permanent. The contributions were to fund the initial work and monetary needs of the YSGA until a permanent funding mechanism could be identified.

FEE STUDY INFORMATION

What is the Fee Study?

The Agency commissioned a fee study in June 2025 to develop a funding mechanism that will allow YSGA to remain financially self-sufficient and to distribute costs among all beneficiaries of the Agency's management activities. The fee consultant is examining YSGA's operations and budgets; available and reliable data to confidently calculate a fee; demographic and geographic data; and the different types of groundwater use in the Yolo Subbasin.

What is the purpose of collecting a fee?

The new funding mechanism will pay for YSGA governance and administration costs, GSP implementation by conducting investigative and feasibility studies that advance the understanding of the groundwater subbasin,

annual reporting, periodic updates to the GSP, and agency operations. Fee revenues will be used to plan and implement management actions that protect local water supplies, maintain groundwater levels, and preserve the productivity of groundwater wells in the subbasin. The fee also covers the cost to monitor groundwater levels, which is needed to understand the effects of groundwater pumping and mitigate potential issues before creating an undesirable result, as defined by the Yolo Subbasin GSP.

PROPOSED FEE

How was the proposed fee determined?

The fee study analyzed the diverse range of groundwater users and beneficiaries of sustainable groundwater supplies in the Yolo Subbasin in the context of total water use, land uses, and community characteristics. Input received from stakeholders, representatives of beneficiaries of groundwater sustainability, YSGA Financial Committee and YSGA Board of Directors contributed to the development of the proposed fee methodology.

Who will be charged the fee?

All water users will be subject to the fee, including residential, agricultural, industrial, and commercial users. Only Federally owned lands, including Tribal lands held in trust by the Federal government, are exempt under SGMA.

What is the proposed fee methodology?

The proposed **annual** fee has two parts:

Tier 1 will apply to all parcels within the Subbasin.

Tier 2 will apply to all water users in three categories:

- Domestic (Residential and Commercial) Users
- Agricultural Users (per cropped acre or managed wetlands acre)
- Vacant and Rangeland Parcels and the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

What is the annual operating budget of the YSGA?

YSGA's current fiscal year 2026 budget is approximately \$2.6M, which includes approximately \$2.23M of grant-funded activities. The budget for fiscal year 2027, which the fee is based on, is \$1.6 million, not including grants.

The budget covers two main areas:

- **Tier 1 – Keeping the Agency Operational (28% - \$441,000)**
Covers administration, governance, public oversight, and required reporting to the State.
- **Tier 2 – GSP Activities to Reach Sustainability (72% - \$1,159,000)**
Funds monitoring improvements, groundwater modeling updates, subsidence tracking, developments in groundwater accounting, and projects that protect groundwater levels. Tier 2 activities support YSGA's Fundamental Actions.

What is the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 annual fee?

Tier 1 – Applies to All Parcels

- \$1.50 billing fee per parcel plus
- \$0.76 per acre

Tier 2 – Applies to Water Users

Domestic (Residential and Commercial) Users:

- \$1.36 per developed parcel for unregulated users (such as a private household well)
- \$0.40 per state small water system connection
- \$0.80 per community water system connection
- \$0.32 per person served by a non-community water system

Scan to read newsletter and see example fee calculations.



Agricultural Users (per cropped acre or managed wetlands acre*):

- \$2.78 per acre in Districted Areas (parcels within the service territory of a YSGA member irrigation or reclamation district)
- \$7.94 per acre in Undistricted Areas (parcels NOT within the service territory of a YSGA member irrigation or reclamation district)

Vacant and Rangeland Parcels and the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area:

- No Tier 2 fee

How will be the annual fee be collected?

Parcels that pay property taxes will have the fee placed on their property tax bill *except those who receive drinking water from a community water provider - the fee will be paid for by the water provider.*

- If you use a private well, the fee will appear on your property tax bill.
- Tax-exempt parcels and water systems will receive a direct bill from YSGA. *Yoche Dehe Wintun Nation will receive a bill from YSGA for lands not held in Federal Trust per SGMA law.*

GENERAL FAQS

Will the YSGA fee be used for projects?

The regulatory fee will be used to implement and manage Subbasin-wide projects and management actions outlined in the GSP. Project implementation costs include investigative and feasibility studies that advance the understanding of the groundwater subbasin. The fee will not be used for constructing infrastructure projects.

What if parcels or geographic areas within the subbasin only use surface water, not groundwater?

All water sources in the subbasin are “connected” as groundwater use affects surface water use, and vice versa. The Sacramento River and its tributaries, Putah Creek, and Cache Creek replenish underground aquifers where water is drawn and stored which makes the delineation between surface and groundwater sources contributing to groundwater withdrawals difficult to separate. Additionally, in some Subbasin locations, surface water users benefit from groundwater sustainability because the supply of surface water is not depleted if the Subbasin is in balance. Surface and groundwater management must be mutually inclusive in the Subbasin to achieve groundwater sustainability.

Are there State grants available to cover costs since this is a state-mandated requirement?

YSGA has received grants to assist with various efforts beneficial to the Agency including developing the GSP and the initiation of groundwater recharge projects throughout the subbasin. YSGA will continue to actively seek grants for projects; however, the Agency is required to self-fund activities including administration, monitoring and reporting, and project development and implementation.

LEARN MORE

Where can more information be found?

Information about the YSGA and fee development process is located at <https://www.yologroundwater.org/fee-study>.