

NITRATE IN GROUNDWATER OF CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL REGIONS: ASSESSMENT AND SOLUTIONS

University of California Los Angeles
May 21, 2015

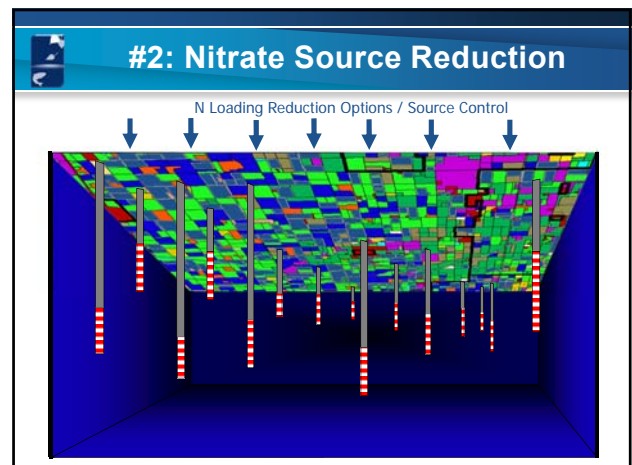
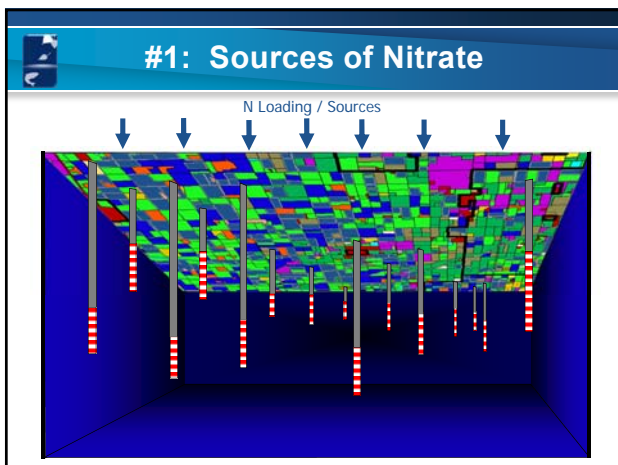
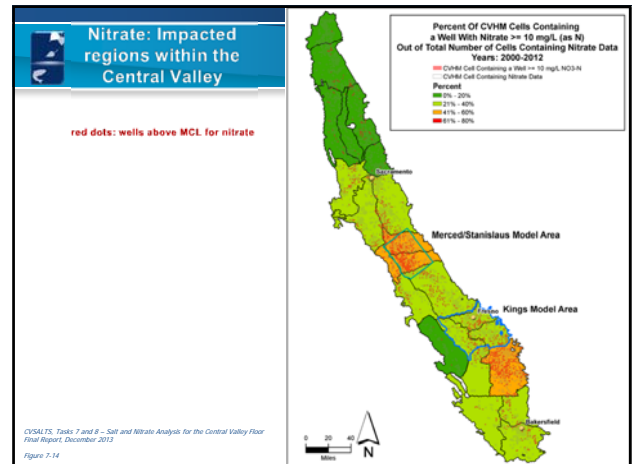
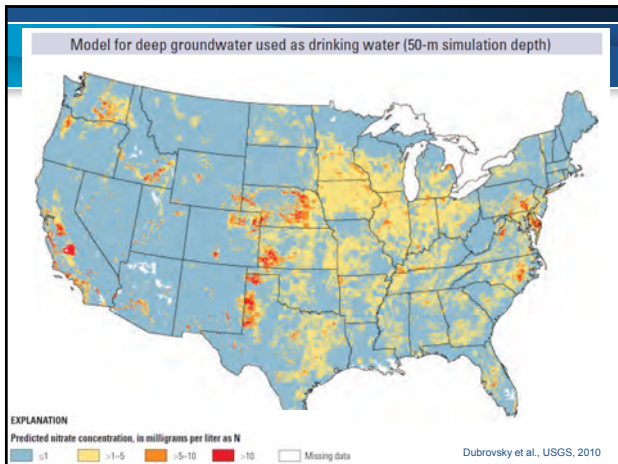
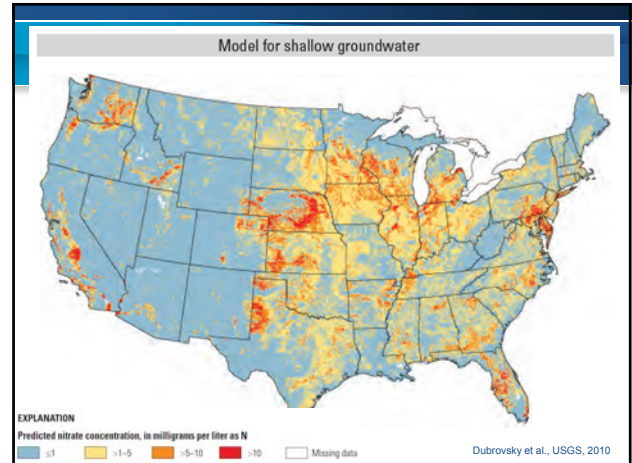
Thomas Harter & Jay Lund, *Principal Investigators*

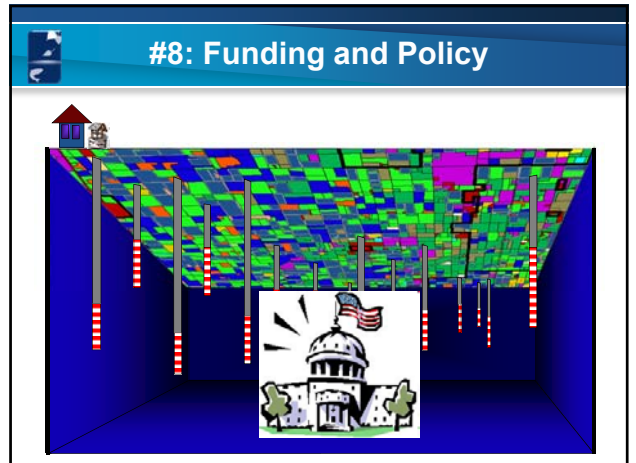
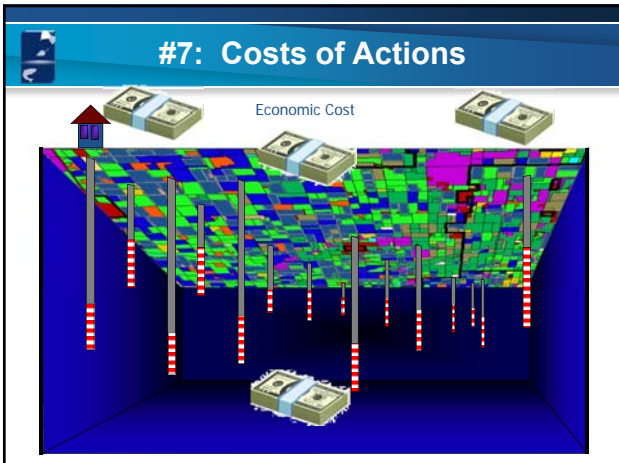
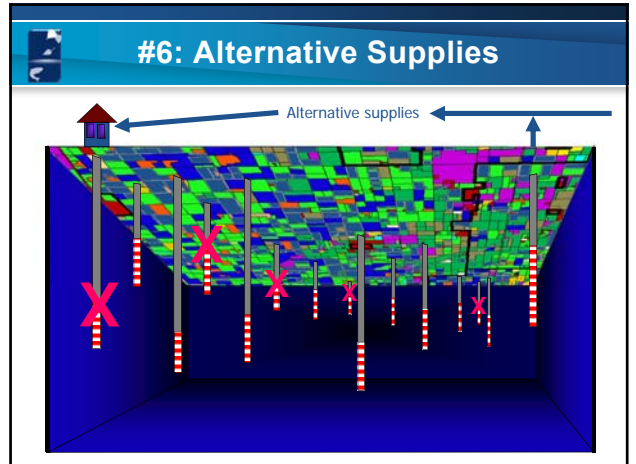
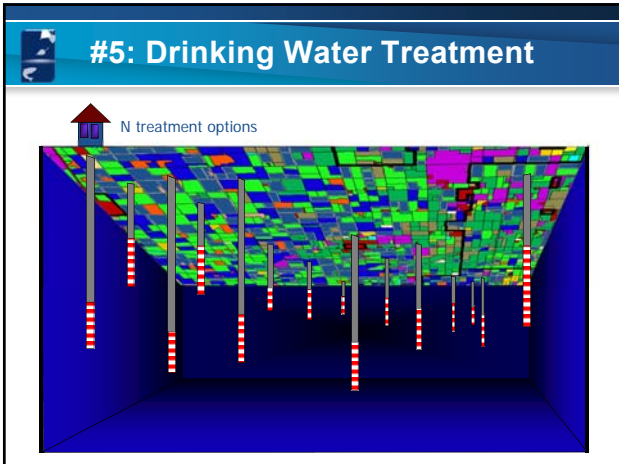
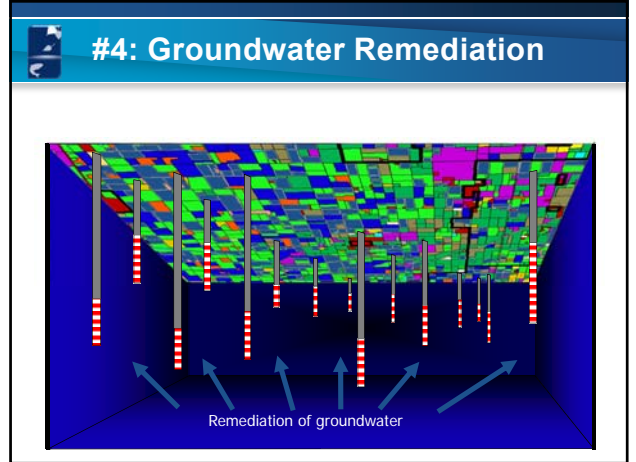
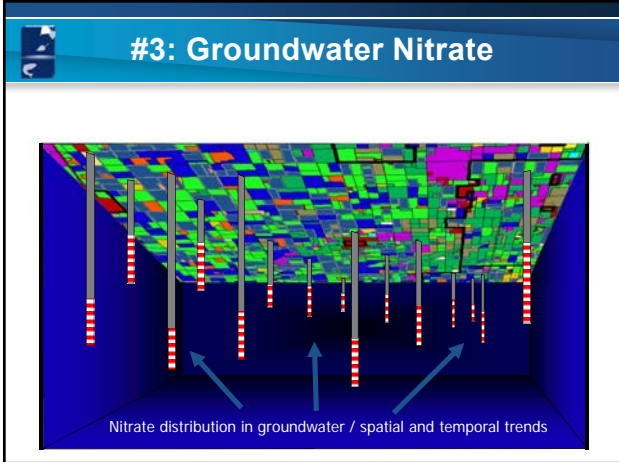
Jeannie Darby, Graham Fogg, Richard Howitt, Katrina Jessoe, Jim Quinn, Stu Pettygrove, Joshua Viers, *Co-Investigators*

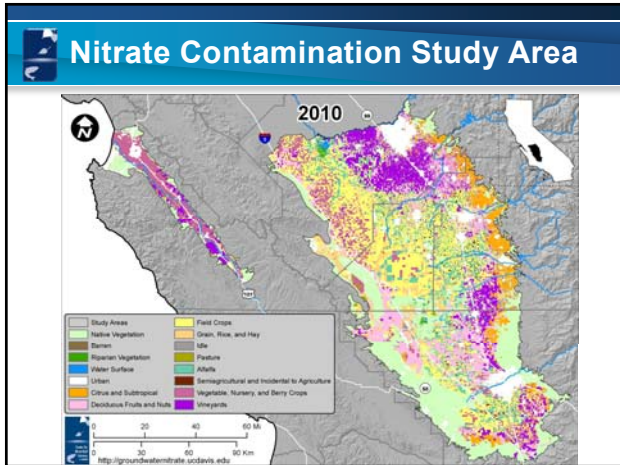
Aaron King, Allan Hollander, Alison McNally, Anna Fryloff-Hung, Cathryn Lawrence, Daniel Liptzin, Danielle Dolan, Dylan Boyle, Elena Lopez, Giorgos Kourakos, Holly Canada, Josue Medellin-Azuara, Kristin Dzurella, Kristin Honeycutt, Megan Mayzelle, Mimi Jenkins, Nicole de la Mora, Todd Rosenstock, Vivian Jensen, *Researchers*

Watershed Science Center
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<http://groundwaternitrate.ucdavis.edu>

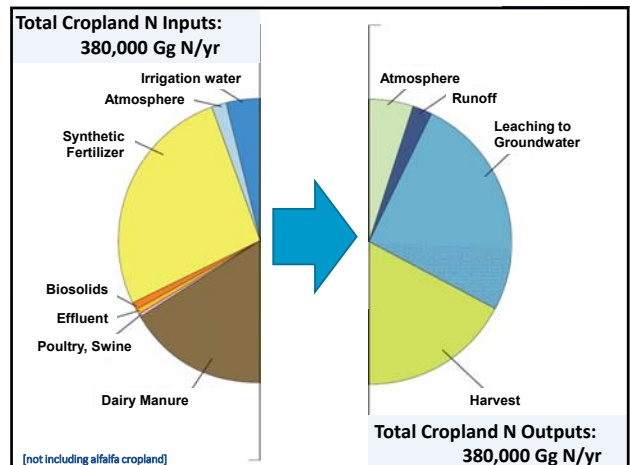
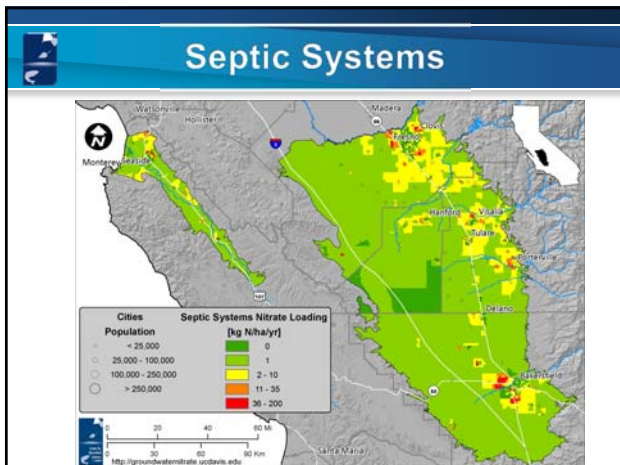
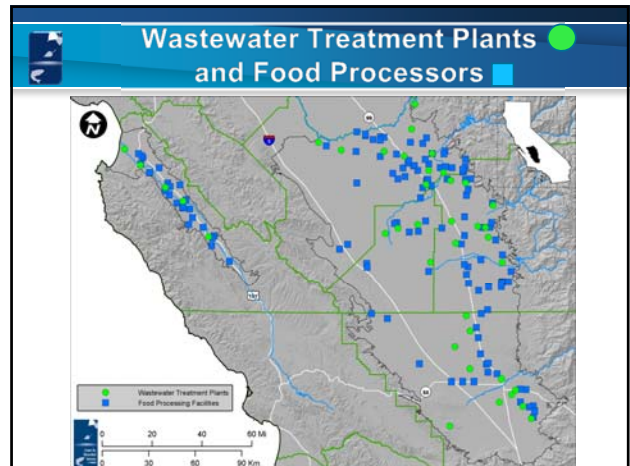
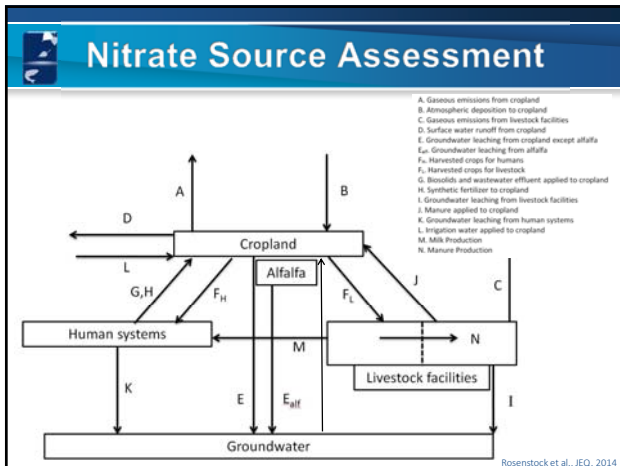


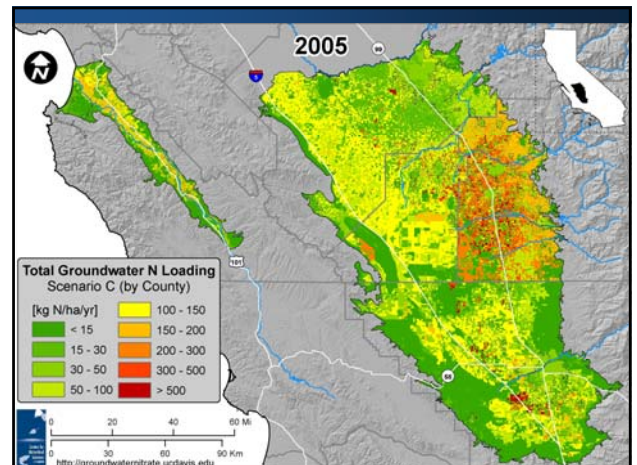
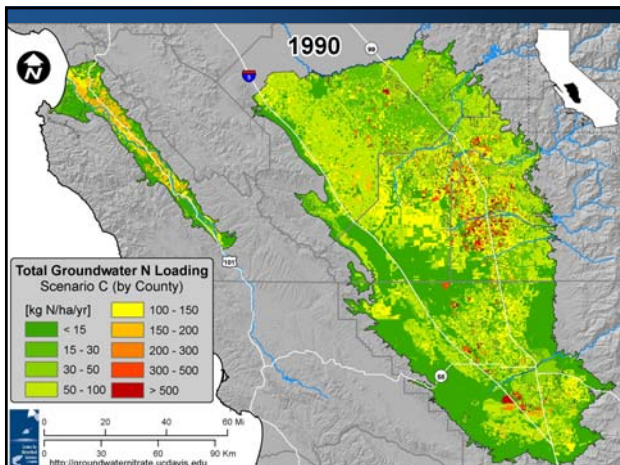
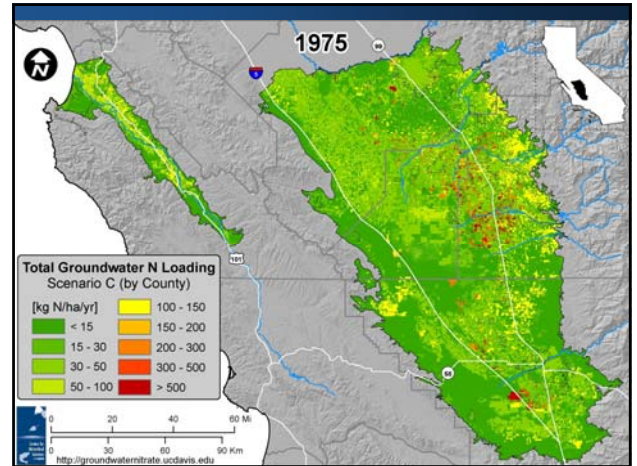
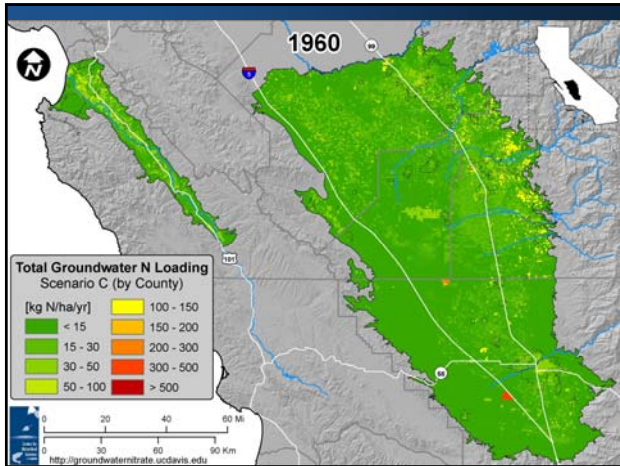
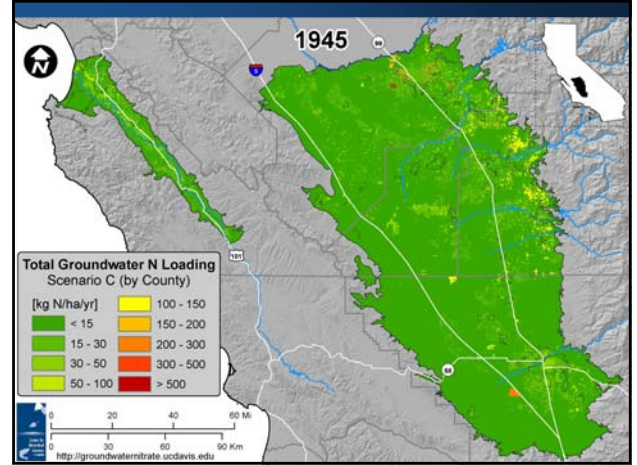
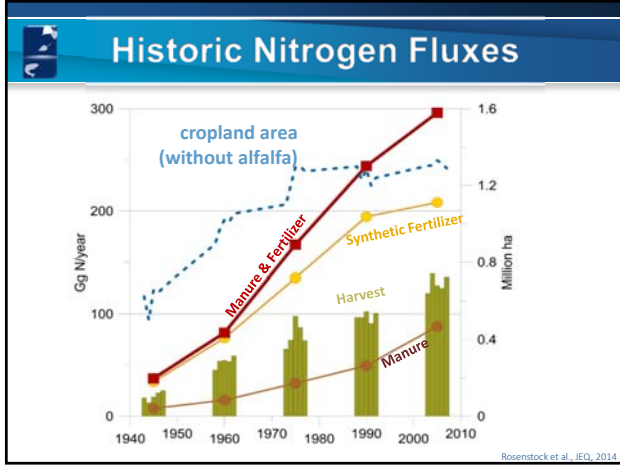


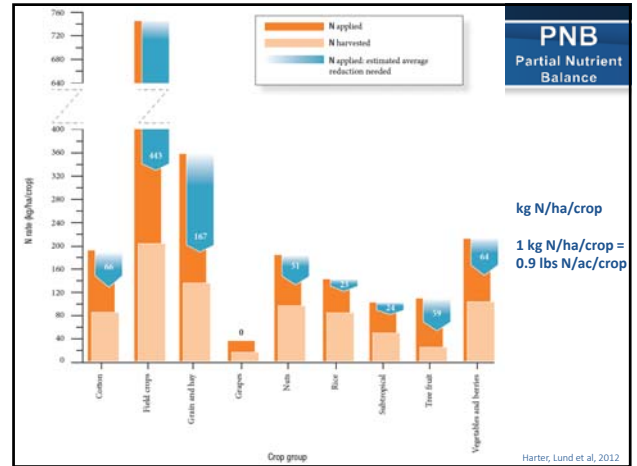
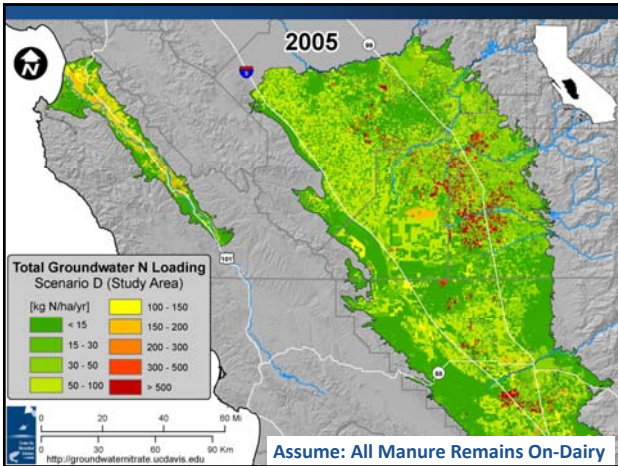
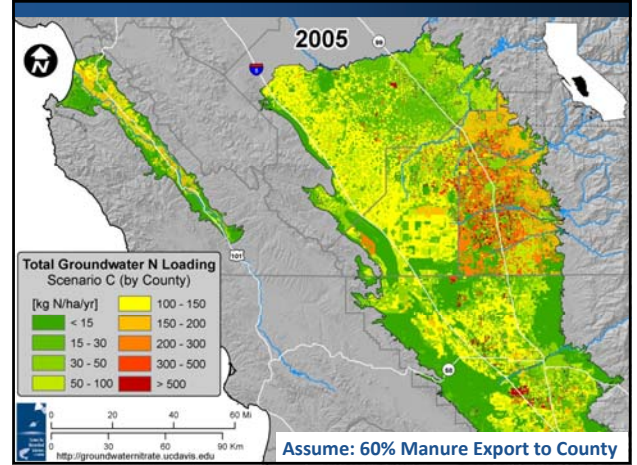
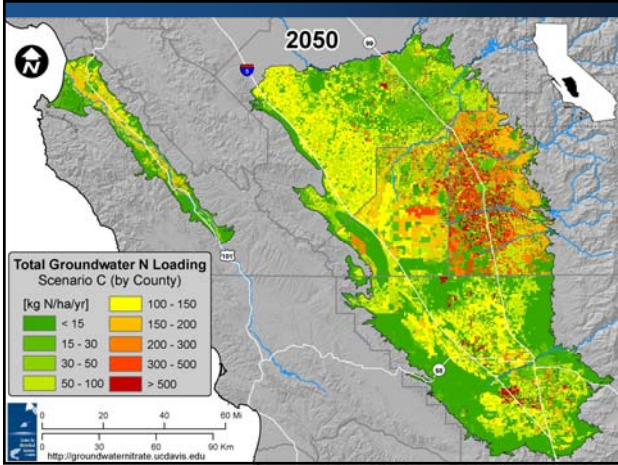


Source of Nitrate in Groundwater

Joshua H. Viers, Daniel Liptzin, Todd S. Rosenstock, Vivian B. Jensen, Allan D. Hollander, Alison McNally, Aaron M. King, Giorgos Kourakos, Elena M. Lopez, Nicole De La Mora, Anna Fryjoff-Hung, Kristin N. Dzurella, Holly Canada, Sarah Laybourne, Chiara McKenney, Jeannie Darby, James F. Quinn and Thomas Harter





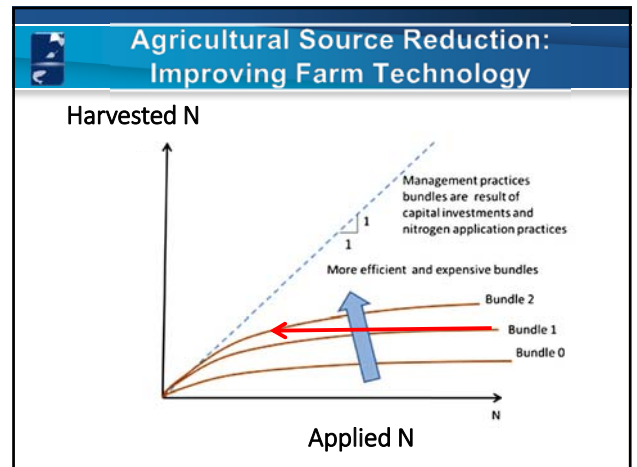


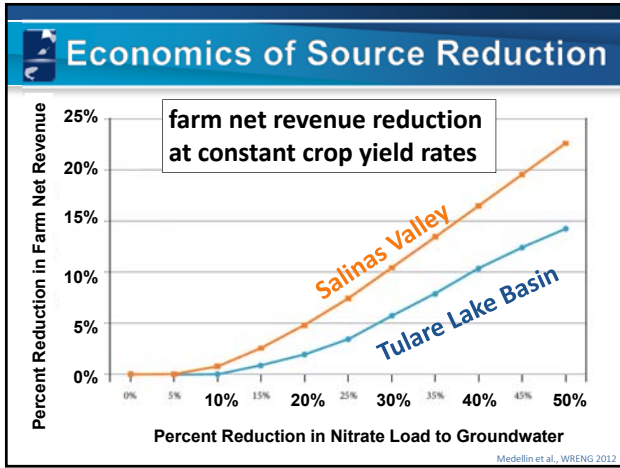
Agricultural Source Reduction

Increase crop N-use efficiency -- Decrease deep percolation

Basic Components	Management Measures	50 Practices
Improve irrigation and drainage systems	✓ Perform system evaluation and monitoring	3
	✓ Improve Irrigation scheduling	4
	✓ Improve irrigation system design and operation	13
	✓ Other irrigation infrastructure improvements	2
Improve fertilizer and manure use	✓ Improve rate, timing, and placement	15
Change crop rotation	✓ Modify crop rotation or grow cover crops	4
Improve storage and handling	✓ Avoid fertilizer material and manure spills during transport, storage and application	9

Dzurella and Pettygrove, 2014

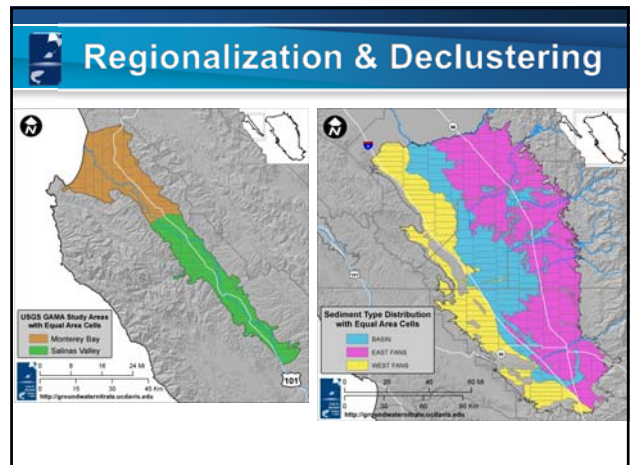
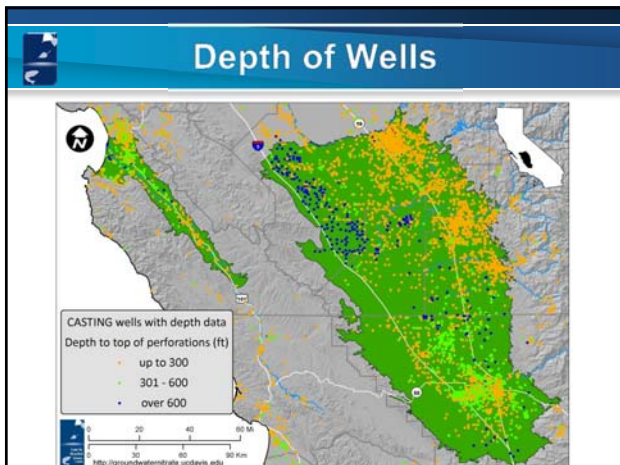
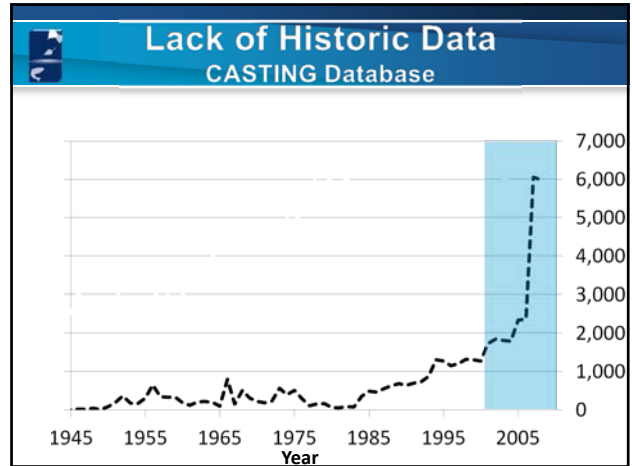
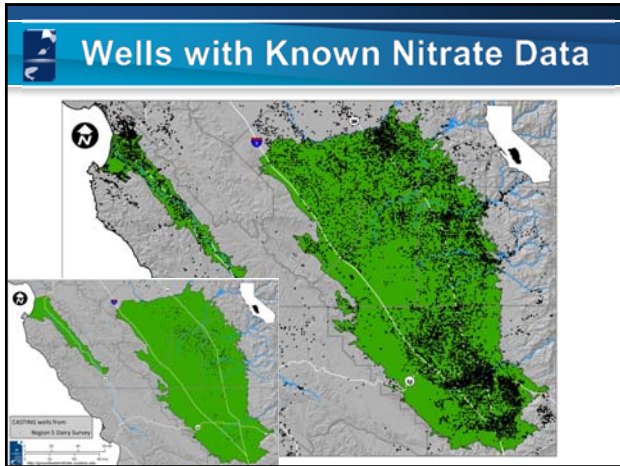


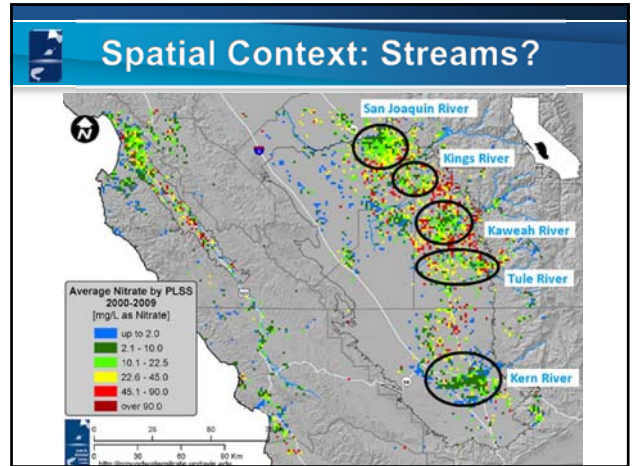
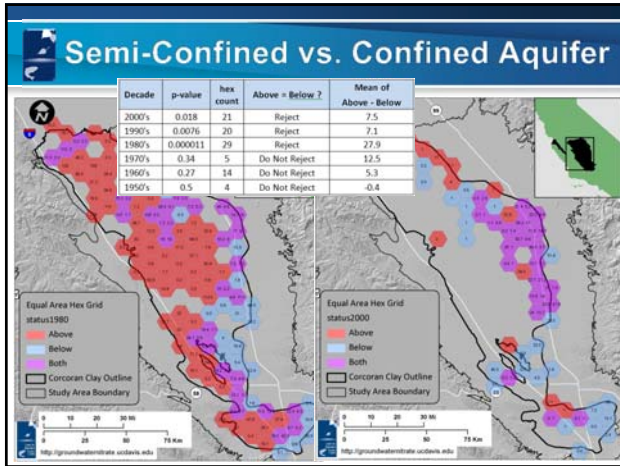
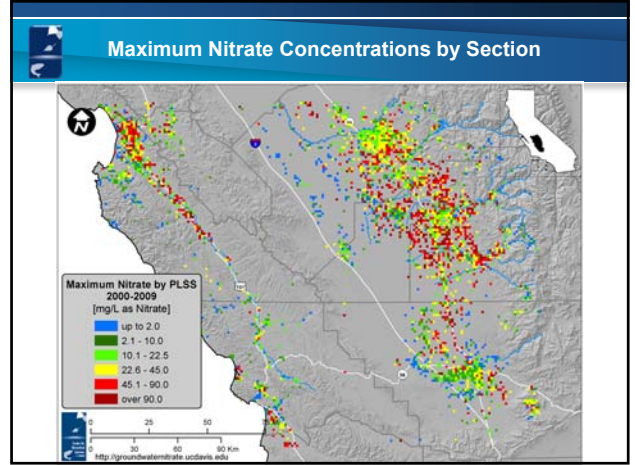
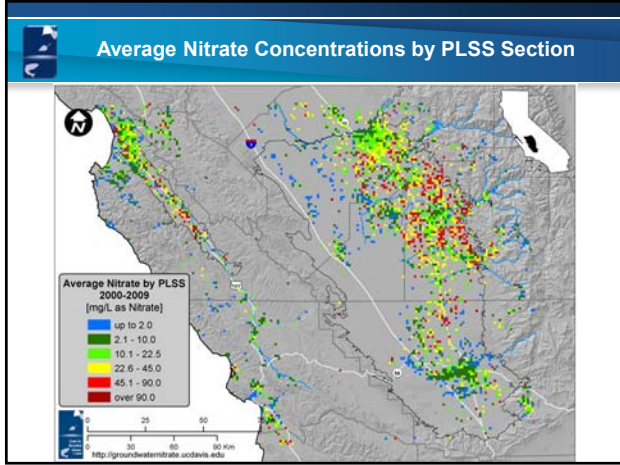


Focus: Water Quality

Past and Current: DATA

Dylan Boyle, Aaron King, Giorgos Kourakos, Katherine Lockhart, Megan Mayzelle, Graham E. Fogg and Thomas Harter





Depth to Water Table & Soil Type

Region	DPR Groundwater Protection Zone	# of Wells	# Well-Years	Median	> 9 mg/L	> 22.5 mg/L	> 45 mg/L	> 90 mg/L
TLB Eastside Fans	(Outside)	6,661	17,770	13.3	61.4%	33.9%	15.7%	5.0%
	Leaching	647	2,330	16.6	69.4%	40.4%	14.0%	3.8%
	Runoff	814	2,626	32.3	86.3%	64.0%	35.3%	9.7%
TLB Central Basin	Runoff or Leaching	40	140	20.9	86.4%	45.7%	21.4%	10.0%
	(Outside)	903	2,013	6.0	41.6%	24.3%	11.5%	2.8%
	Leaching	7	23	17.0	82.6%	39.1%	39.1%	17.4%
TLB Westside Fans	Runoff	390	800	33.1	88.0%	60.8%	37.5%	13.1%
	Runoff or Leaching	8	19	50.0	89.5%	57.9%	57.9%	26.3%
	(Outside)	89	201	1.8	29.4%	9.0%	2.0%	1.5%
SV-Pressure Aquifer, Eastside, and Monterey Bay	(Outside)	1091	4,716	14.0	61.2%	35.0%	11.0%	1.6%
	Leaching	21	73	12.0	61.6%	27.4%	9.6%	0.0%
	Runoff	4	15	5.0	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SV-Forebay and Upper Valley	(Outside)	160	508	10.0	53.5%	34.1%	20.9%	10.6%
	Leaching	15	39	12.0	59.0%	38.5%	20.5%	10.3%

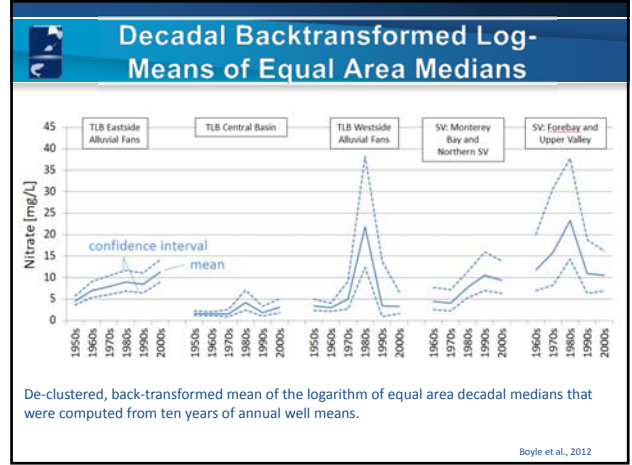
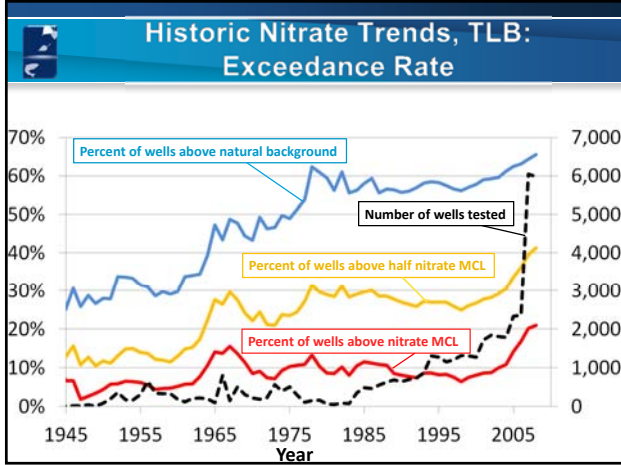
Boyle et al., 2012

Depth of Well Screen

Region	Well Depth Category	# of Wells	# Well-Years	Median	> 9 mg/L	> 22.5 mg/L	> 45 mg/L	> 90 mg/L
TLB Eastside Fans	Monitoring	298	553	53.8	77.0%	66.0%	52.8%	37.6%
	Domestic	1,749	2,879	27.4	75.3%	55.9%	33.0%	9.6%
	<200' priv.	785	1,143	27.2	78.8%	56.6%	31.7%	7.5%
	<200' all public	1,241	4,682	16.5	69.1%	38.1%	15.4%	2.8%
TLB Central Basin	Monitoring	1,597	11,862	12.5	62.0%	36.3%	5.7%	0.8%
	Domestic	114	321	122.2	74.0%	64.6%	43.3%	56.7%
	Domestic	257	387	21.3	63.8%	47.8%	26.9%	8.0%
	<200' priv.	70	71	19.0	67.6%	42.3%	23.9%	4.2%
TLB Westside Fans	<200' all public	118	404	16.5	67.3%	34.2%	14.6%	3.7%
	Monitoring	148	913	8.0	47.0%	17.1%	6.7%	1.5%
	Monitoring	29	61	62.0	62.3%	59.0%	52.5%	45.9%
	<200' priv.	2	2	24.1	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SV-Pressure Aquifer, Eastside, and Monterey Bay	<200' all public	3	9	1.5	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	Monitoring	77	189	1.5	28.0%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	Monitoring	170	570	25.6	60.0%	51.2%	43.0%	27.0%
	Domestic	530	1,970	16.0	65.0%	38.3%	14.0%	2.0%
SV-Forebay and Upper Valley	<200' priv.	108	458	16.0	65.3%	37.6%	13.1%	2.2%
	<200' all public	146	678	14.6	63.6%	36.3%	30.0%	1.5%
	Monitoring	270	1,531	8.1	48.6%	21.6%	4.6%	0.8%
	Monitoring	10	22	77.2	81.8%	72.7%	59.1%	45.5%
SV-Forebay and Upper Valley	Domestic	33	105	22.0	67.6%	49.5%	40.0%	22.9%
	<200' priv.	62	84	36.3	61.9%	56.6%	42.9%	21.4%
	<200' all public	79	393	10.0	52.8%	34.2%	22.3%	9.8%
	Monitoring	57	296	7.0	62.9%	38.9%	4.6%	0.3%

Median and exceedance probability obtained from annual well means, 2000-2010 (temporally de-clustered, spatially not de-clustered).

Boyle et al., 2012



Moments of Well Trends

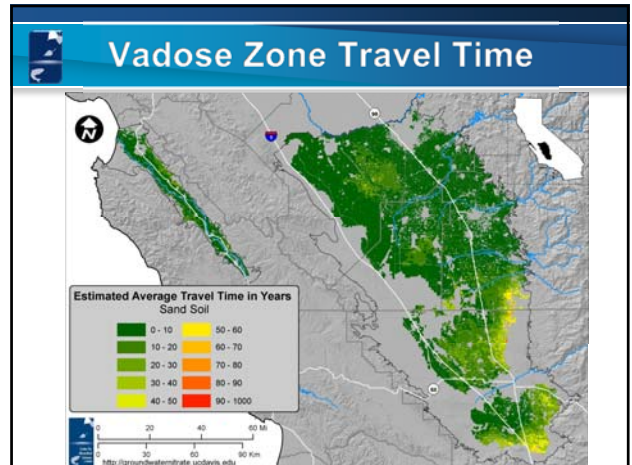
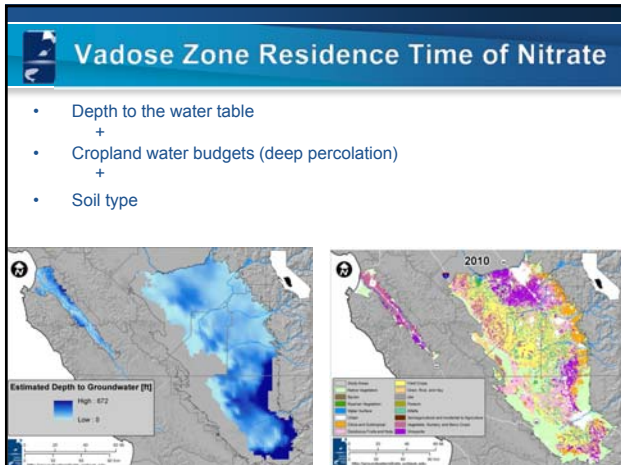
Data Source / Collection Program	Period	Number of Slopes	CI -95%	Mean Slope	CI +95%	Median Slope	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile
Public Supply Wells (CADWSAP)	total period	2,190	0.18	0.27	0.35	0.08	-0.14	0.54
	1980s	558	-0.20	0.11	0.41	0.02	-0.92	1.24
	1990s	1,311	-0.10	0.04	0.18	0.00	-0.56	0.50
	2000s	1,927	0.21	0.31	0.41	0.11	-0.18	0.66
MCWRA Monitoring Program	total period	206	-0.57	0.41	1.38	0.07	-2.67	3.32
	1990s	171	-0.06	1.12	2.30	0.55	-2.12	5.14
	2000s	59	-2.62	-0.64	1.35	0.00	-5.89	2.77
DPR Domestic Wells – all	total period	69	-0.91	-0.27	0.38	-0.32	-1.46	1.08
	DPR - Leaching zones only	2000s	30	-1.33	-0.20	0.92	-0.47	-1.17
DPR - Runoff zones only	2000s	39	-1.12	-0.32	0.48	-0.31	-1.49	1.12
Dairy General Order	2000s	2,600	0.17	0.45	0.73	0.11	-2.35	3.78

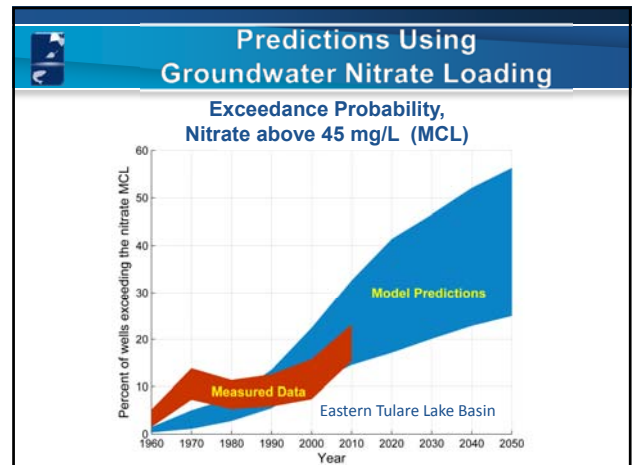
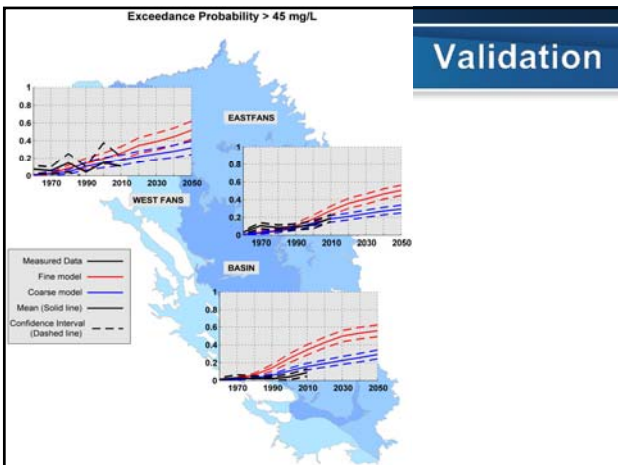
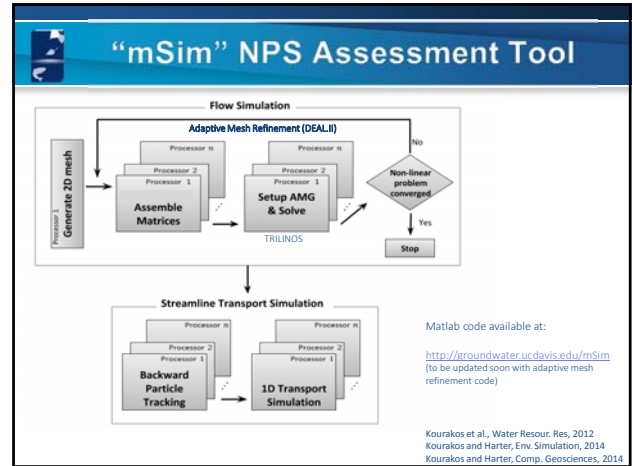
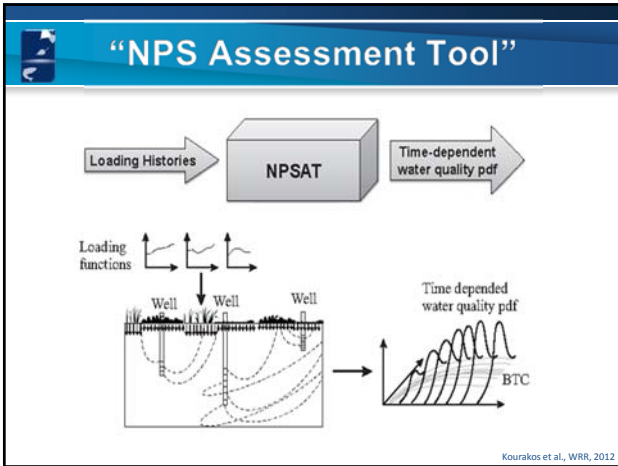
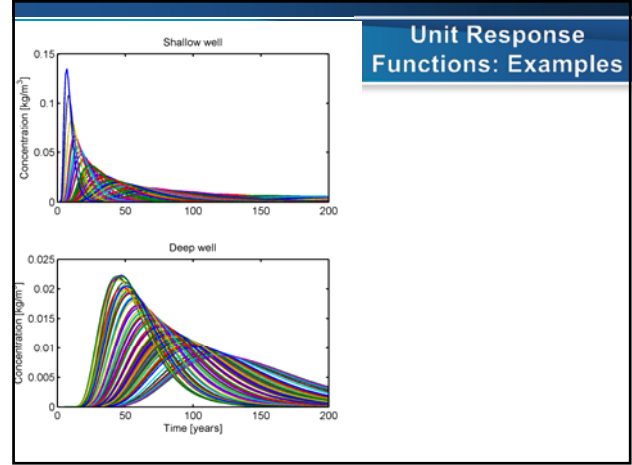
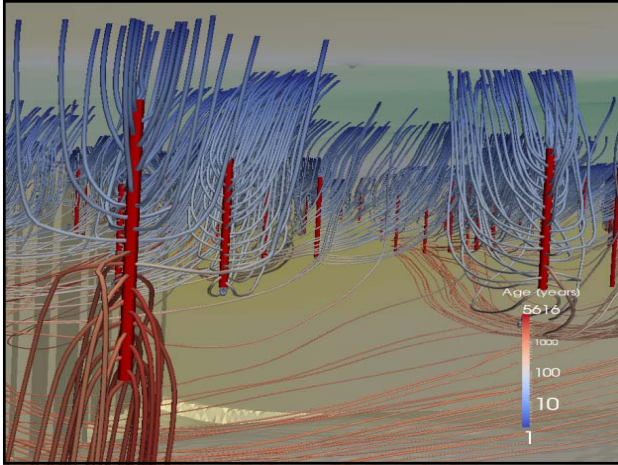
1 Regression slopes for each well are computed for the entire period of records ("total period") and, separately, for each decade with at least two measurements on one well. Environmental monitoring wells are excluded.

Focus: Water Quality

Past, Current, and Future: Modeling


Dylan Boyle, Aaron King, Giorgos Kourakos, Katherine Lockhart, Megan Mayzelle, Graham E. Fogg and Thomas Harter



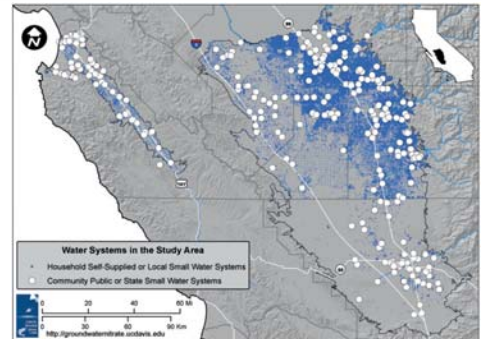


Focus: Safe Drinking Water

Vivian Jensen, Kristin Honeycutt, Holly Canada, Aaron King,
Anna Fryjoff-Hung, Mimi Jenkins, Katrina Jessoe, Jeannie
Darby, Thomas Harter, Jim Quinn, Jay Lund

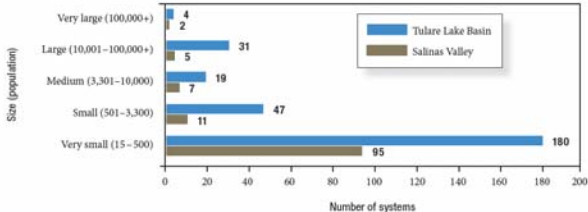


All Water Systems



Estimated locations of the area's roughly 400 regulated community public and state-documented state small water systems and of 74,000 unregulated self-supplied water systems. Source: Honeycutt et al. 2012; CDPH PICME 2010.

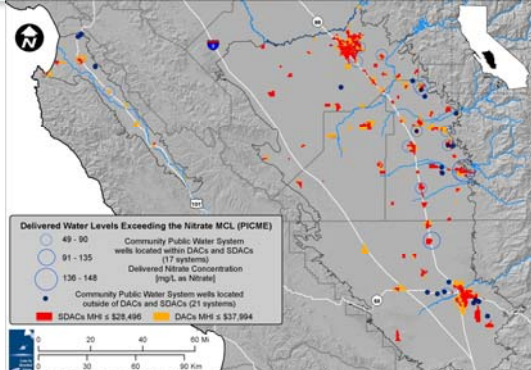
Community Public & State Small Water Systems



Size (population)	Tulare Lake Basin	Salinas Valley
Very large (100,000+)	4	2
Large (10,001-100,000+)	31	5
Medium (3,301-10,000)	19	7
Small (501-3,300)	47	11
Very small (15-500)	180	95

Community public and state-documented state small water systems of the Tulare Lake Basin and Salinas Valley. Source: CDPH 2010.

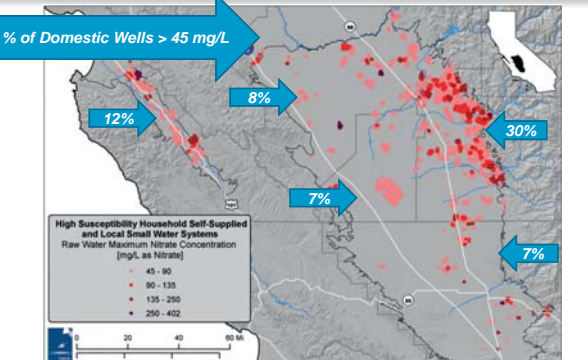
DACs and Delivered Water Quality



Delivered Water Levels Exceeding the Nitrate MCL (PICME)

- 49 - 90 Community Public Water System wells located within DACs and SDACs (17 systems)
- 91 - 135 Delivered Nitrate Concentration (mg/L as Nitrate)
- 136 - 148 Community Public Water System wells located outside of DACs and SDACs (21 systems)
- SDACs MDE ≤ \$28,496 DACs MDE ≤ \$37,994

10,000 Affected Private Wells



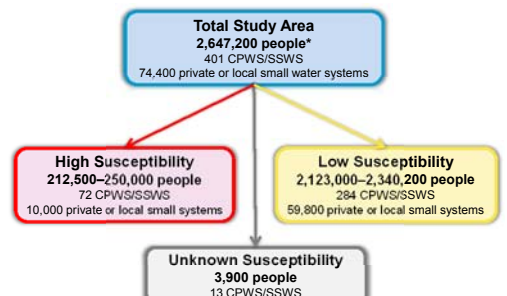
% of Domestic Wells > 45 mg/L

- 12%
- 8%
- 30%
- 7%
- 7%

High Susceptibility Household Self-Supplied and Local Small Water Systems Raw Water Maximum Nitrate Concentration (mg/L as Nitrate)

- 45 - 90
- 90 - 135
- 135 - 250
- 250 - 402

Susceptible Population



```

graph TD
    A["Total Study Area  
2,647,200 people*  
401 CPWS/SSWS  
74,400 private or local small water systems"]
    B["High Susceptibility  
212,500-250,000 people  
72 CPWS/SSWS  
10,000 private or local small systems"]
    C["Low Susceptibility  
2,123,000-2,340,200 people  
284 CPWS/SSWS  
59,800 private or local small systems"]
    D["Unknown Susceptibility  
3,900 people  
13 CPWS/SSWS"]
    A --> B
    A --> C
    A --> D
    
```

*Total study area population includes population served by surface water systems which is not susceptible to groundwater nitrate contamination and is not included in the subsequent susceptibility classifications.


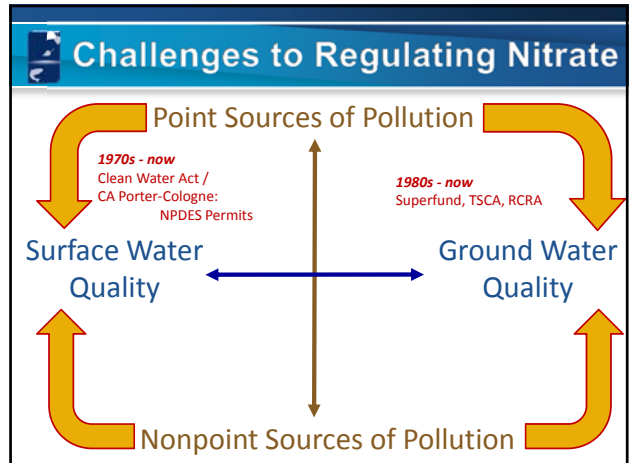
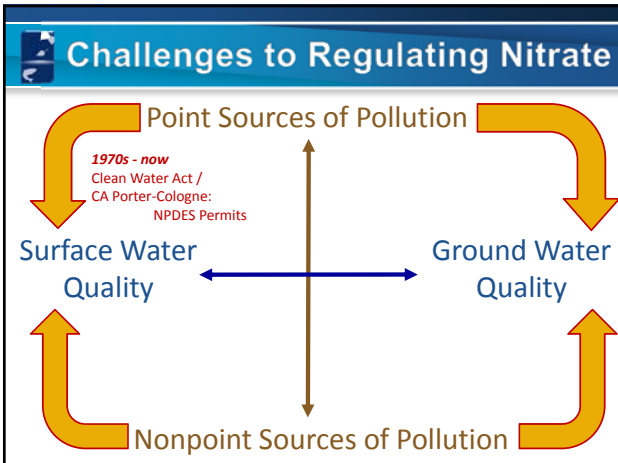
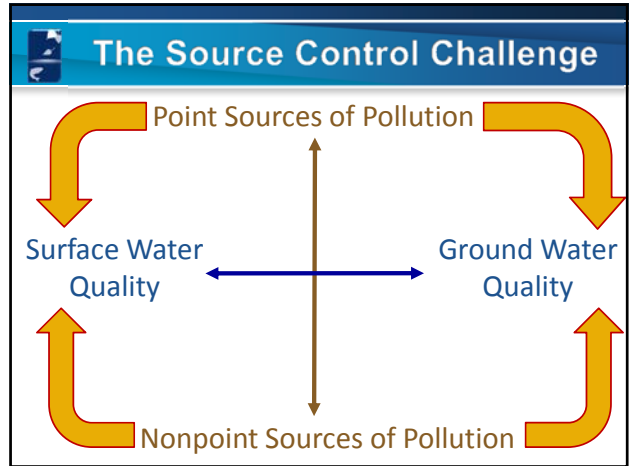
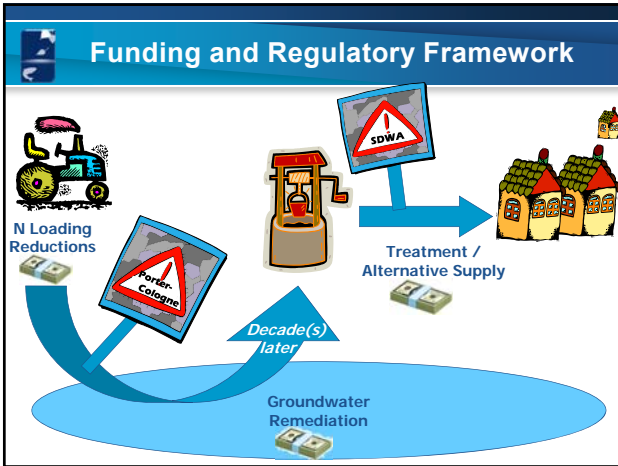
Cost of Safe Drinking Water: \$20 - \$36 Million / Year (Study Area)

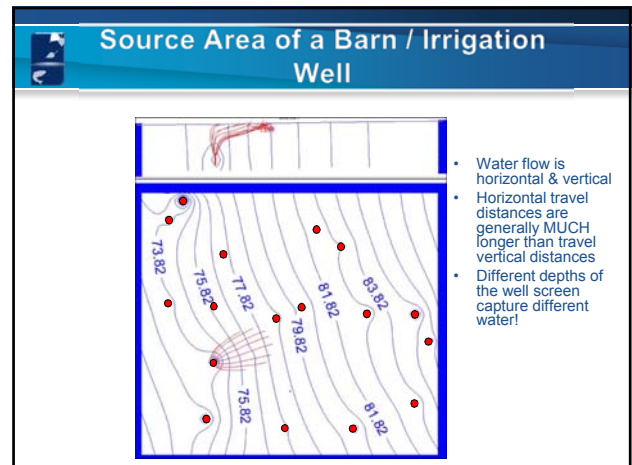
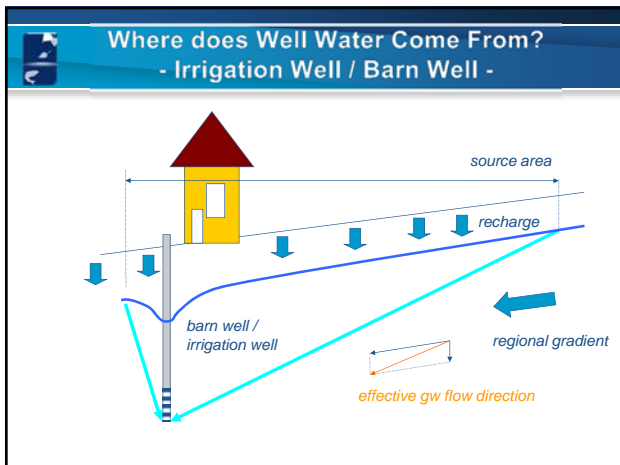
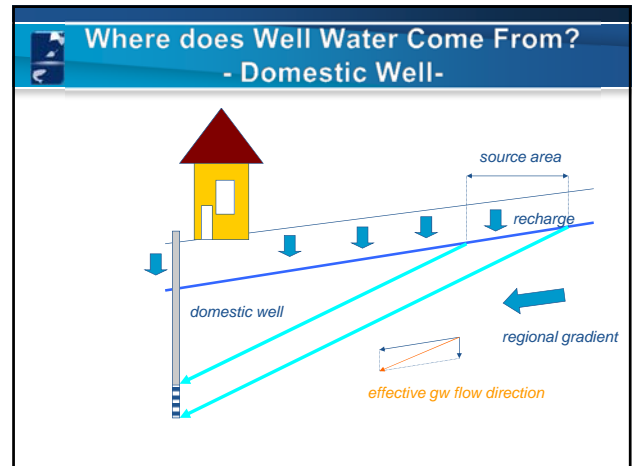
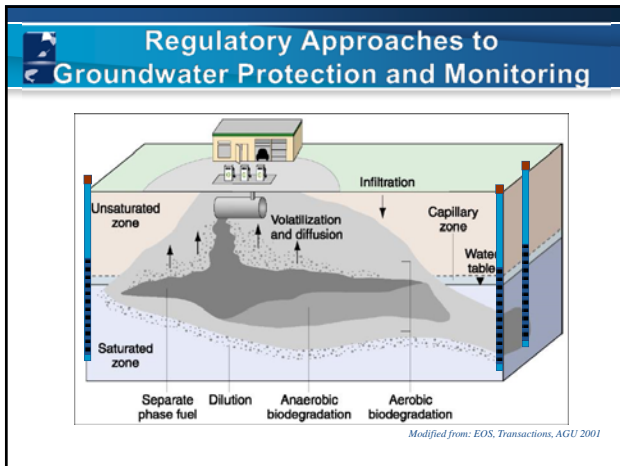
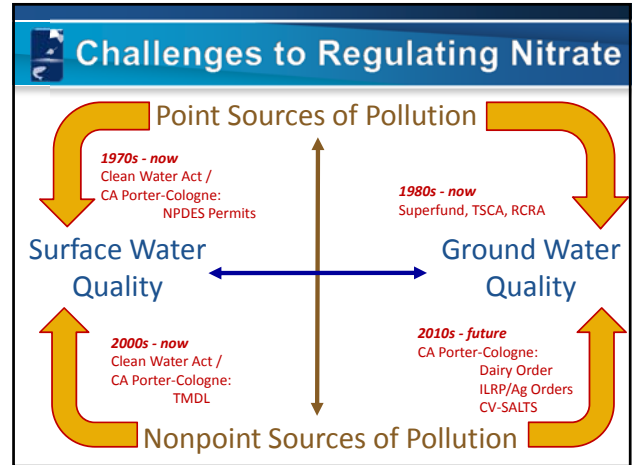
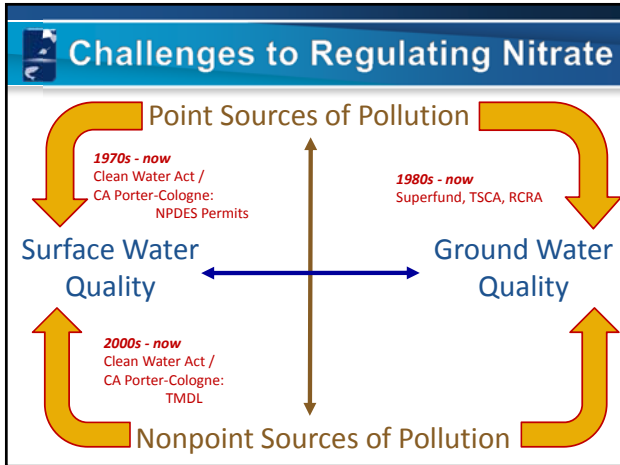
- **Most cost-effective drinking water supply actions:**
 - Blending
 - Treatment (community, point-of-use)
 - Consolidation/regionalization
 - Other alternative supplies
- **Affordability difficult for small communities**
- **Promising revenue sources:**
 - Fee on nitrogen fertilizer use
 - Fee on water use
 - Local compensation under Section 13304 of CA Water Code

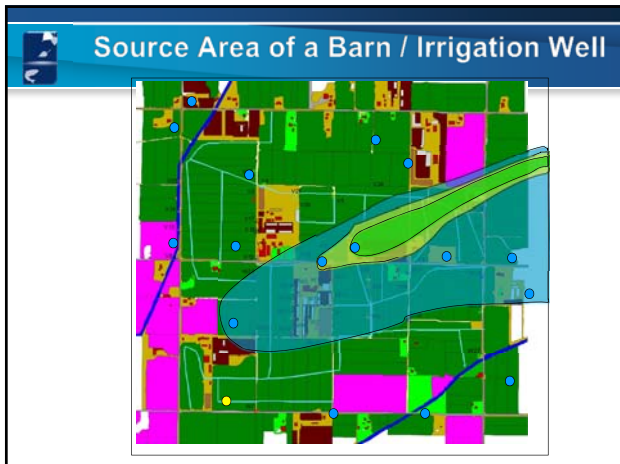
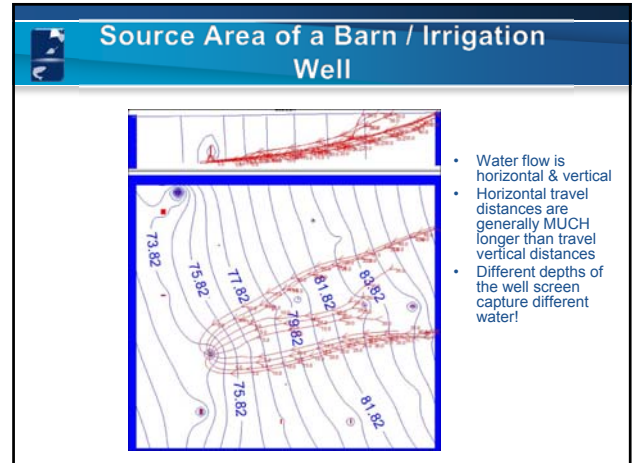
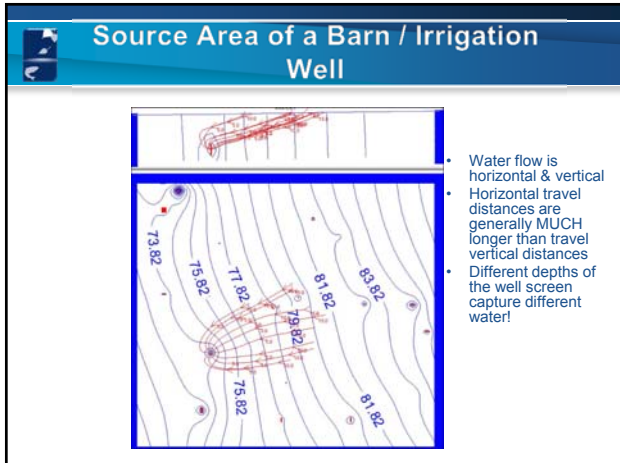


Focus: Policy Options

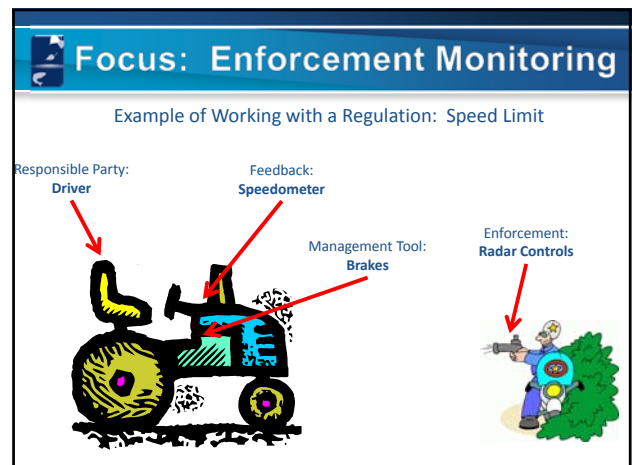
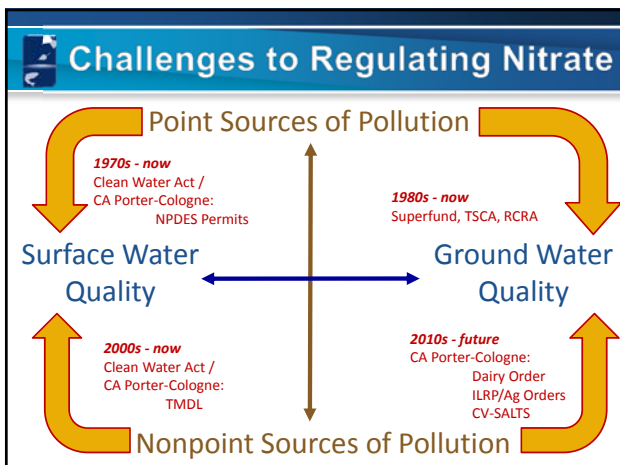
Holly Canada, Katrina Jessoe, Thomas Harter, Jay Lund

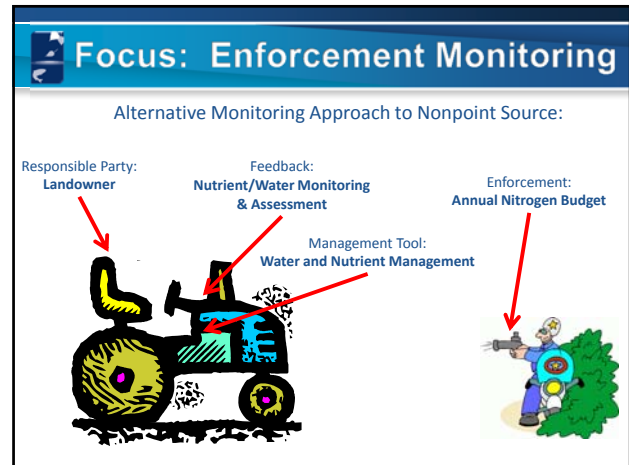
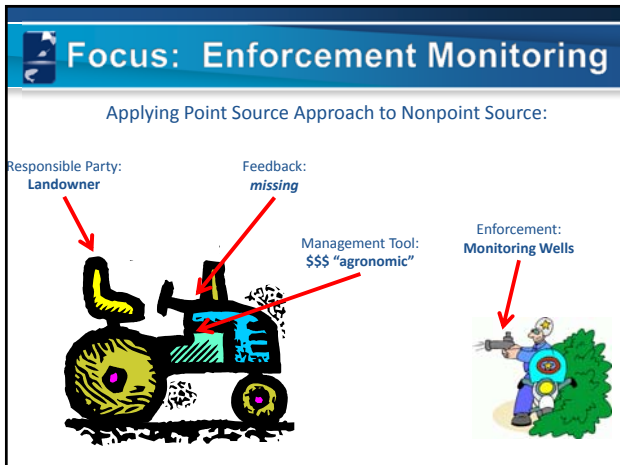







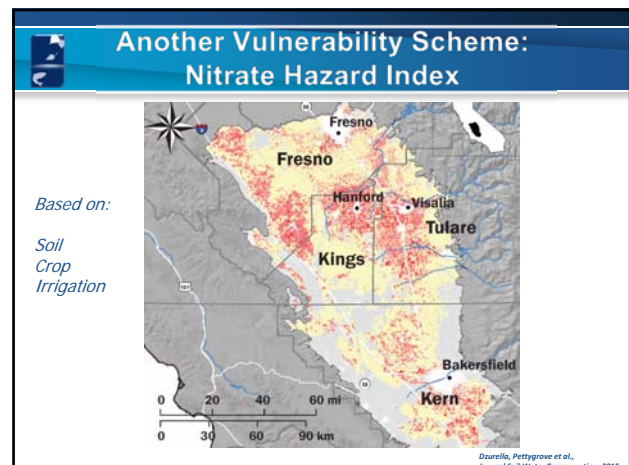
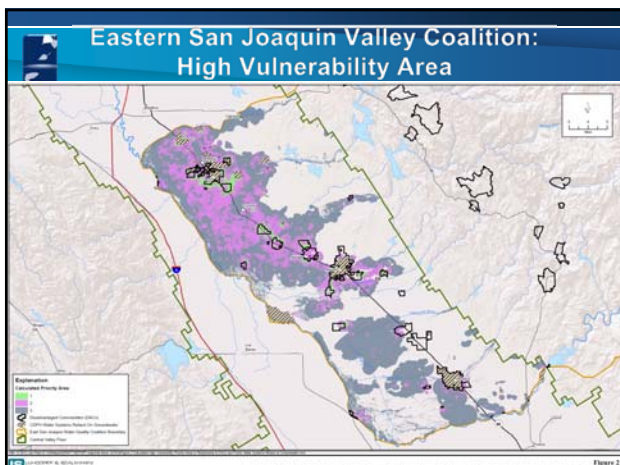
- ### Why is Nonpoint Source Pollution Different from Point Source Pollution of Groundwater?
- Scale
 - Millions of acres vs. 1-10 acres
 - Intensity
 - Within ~1 order magnitude above MCL vs. many orders of magnitude above MCL
 - Hydrologic Function
 - Recharge vs. non-leaky
 - Frequency
 - Ongoing/seasonally repeated vs. incidental
 - Heterogeneity & Adjacency





- ### Key Elements to Future "Groundwater" Monitoring of NPS
- Three-track monitoring:
 - Enforcement: Monitor/report key outcomes of farm management practices, e.g., **annual nitrogen budgets** – "proxy" for measuring "groundwater discharge"
 - Research: link "proxy monitoring" to actual groundwater discharge at intensely monitored sites & using models (**mgmt practice evaluation**)
 - Assurance: **Regional trend monitoring network** (e.g., GAMA)

- ### STEP 1: GROUNDWATER ASSESSMENT
- High Vulnerability Areas: Key Criteria (ESJV Coalition)
- Hydrogeologically high vulnerability
 - statistical analysis of groundwater nitrate occurrence based on hydrogeology, soils, depth to groundwater, landscape slope, recharge
 - Further prioritization (high – 1, medium – 2, low – 3):
 - Exceedances of water quality objectives,
 - Proximity to areas contributing recharge to urban and rural communities that rely on groundwater as a source of supply,
 - Existing field and operational practices that are possibly the cause or source of groundwater quality degradation,
 - The largest acreage commodity types comprising up to at least 80 percent of irrigated agriculture in the high vulnerability areas,
 - Legacy or ambient groundwater conditions,



STEP 2: MONITORING (three-pronged)

A: PROXY MONITORING: FARM NITROGEN FLUXES Eastern San Joaquin Valley

Focus: Enforcement Monitoring

Alternative Monitoring Approach to Nonpoint Source:

Enforcement: Annual Nitrogen Budget + Management Practice Assessment + Regional Trend Monitoring

Responsible Party: Landowner

Feedback: Nutrient/Water Monitoring & Assessment

Management Tool: Water and Nutrient Management

Challenges to Regulating Nitrate

Point Sources of Pollution

1970s - now: Clean Water Act / CA Porter-Cologne: NPDES Permits

1980s - now: Superfund, TSCA, RCRA

2000s - now: Clean Water Act / CA Porter-Cologne: TMDL

2010s - future: Dairy Order ILRP/Ag Orders CV-SALTS

Surface Water Quality ↔ Ground Water Quality

Nonpoint Sources of Pollution

Addressing Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS)

Conceptual Model

Net Salt Flux in Each IAZ → Ambient TDS Concentrations in Groundwater (Impaired Areas) → Groundwater (Feed Water) Chemistry

Mass to be Extracted → Volume to be Extracted → Treatment Technologies/ Number of Facilities

Disposal/Storage Options

CV Salinity Coalition - SSALTS 2 Final Report, 9/2014

Salt removal needed in the Central Valley 2009 Recycled Water Policy, 1968 Antidegradation Policy

Central Valley Zone	IAZ	Acres	Square Miles	TDS Loading for IAZ (Zons)			GW (TDS) mg/L	Percent of GW (TDS)	TDS Removed from each IAZ (Zons)			Volume Needed to be Removed (MGD)			Volume Concentration: 90% Efficiency (MGD)	Brine (TDS) mg/L
				50%	Original	200%			50%	Original	200%	50%	Original	200%		
Total/Average																
Northern CV 1,179,800																
Middle CV 2,152,825																
Southern CV 1,726,375																

Pump 4,620 MGD => brine disposal 462 MGD with 11,000 mg/L

CV Salinity Coalition - SSALTS 2 Final Report, 9/2014

Salt removal needed in the Central Valley 2009 Recycled Water Policy, 1968 Antidegradation Policy: Salinity degraded areas only


Central Valley Zone	IAZ	Acres	Square Miles	TDS Loading for IAZ (Zons)			GW (TDS) mg/L	Percent of GW (TDS)	TDS Removed from each IAZ (Zons)			Volume Needed to be Removed (MGD)			Volume Concentration: 90% Efficiency (MGD)	Brine (TDS) mg/L
				50%	Original	200%			50%	Original	200%	50%	Original	200%		
Total/Average																
Northern CV 1,179,800																
Middle CV 2,152,825																
Southern CV 1,726,375																

Pump 920 MGD => brine disposal 92 MGD with 25,000 mg/L

CV Salinity Coalition - SSALTS 2 Final Report, 9/2014

Costs of Alternatives

- No action: \$6 - \$10 billion annually
 - Direct costs: \$1 - 1.5 billion/a
 - Production in goods and services reduced by \$5 - \$9 billion/a (27,000 - 53,000 jobs)
- Alternatives
 - Wells, desalters, brine line for 1.2 MAF/a of salty gw
 - Brine disposal:
 - Treatment in EBMUD WWTP or others
 - New ocean outfall
 - Deep injection / hydraulic fracturing
 - Salt accumulation areas (TLB)
 - Source control
 - Land management
 - ISMPs in food processing, industry, urban
- Net cost: \$1.7 billion annually
 - Actual cost: \$1,400 - \$2,200 / af of product water
 - Potential revenue: \$ 650 / af of product water
 - Net cost, capital, O&M: \$50 billion / 30 years



CV Salinity Coalition - SSALTS 2 Final Report, 9/2014

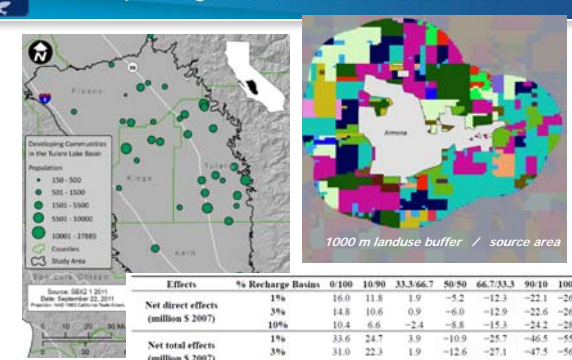
Future of Groundwater Management in Agricultural Regions:

Opportunity for creative solutions to **simultaneously** address

- groundwater supply enhancement
- groundwater quality improvement
- drinking water protection
- economic viability of agriculture

High irrigation efficiency + High nutrient use efficiency + CLEAN groundwater recharge

Example: Agricultural Landuse Buffers



Effects	% Recharge Basins	0-10%	10-90%	33.3, 66.7	50-90%	66.7, 33.3	90-100%	100%
Net direct effects (million \$ 2007)	1%	16.0	11.8	1.9	-5.2	-12.3	-22.1	-26.4
	3%	14.8	10.6	0.9	-6.0	-12.9	-22.6	-26.8
	10%	10.4	6.6	-2.4	-8.8	-15.3	-24.2	-28.1
Net total effects (million \$ 2007)	1%	33.6	24.7	3.9	-10.9	-25.7	-46.5	-55.4
	3%	31.0	22.3	1.9	-12.6	-27.1	-47.5	-56.2
	10%	21.9	13.8	-5.1	-18.5	-32.0	-50.9	-59.0

Mayzelle et al. J. of Water, 2015

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014

SEC. 2.
Section 113 is added to the Water Code, to read:

113.

It is the policy of the state that **groundwater resources be managed sustainably for long-term reliability and multiple economic, social, and environmental benefits** for current and future beneficial uses. Sustainable groundwater **management is best achieved locally** through the development, implementation, and updating of plans and programs based on the best available science.

[emphasis added]

Sustainability = No "Undesirable Results"

10721. Unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions govern the construction of this part:

(i) "Sustainable groundwater management" means the management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon **without causing undesirable results**.

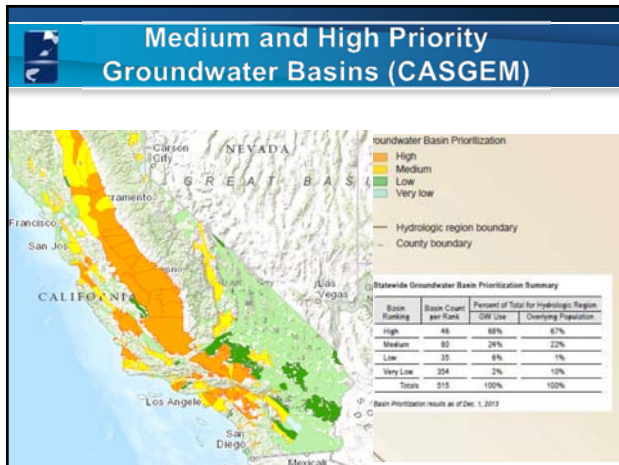
(ii) "Undesirable result" means one or more of the following effects caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the basin (Section 10721 (w)):

- (1) **Chronic lowering of groundwater levels** indicating a significant and unreasonable depletion of supply if continued over the planning and implementation horizon. Overtail during a period of drought is not sufficient to establish a chronic lowering of groundwater levels if extractions and recharge are managed as necessary to ensure that reductions in groundwater levels or storage during a period of drought are offset by increases in groundwater levels or storage during other periods.
- (2) Significant and unreasonable **reduction of groundwater storage**
- (3) Significant and unreasonable **seawater intrusion**
- (4) Significant and unreasonable **degraded water quality**, including the migration of contaminant plumes that impair water supplies.
- (5) Significant and unreasonable **land subsidence** that substantially interferes with surface land uses.
- (6) **Surface water depletions** that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of the surface water.

[emphasis added]

Implementation of SGMA

- Establishment of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs)
 - by June 2017
- Preparation of Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)
 - by June 2022 (critically overdrafted basins: 2020)
- Implementation of GSP
 - reach goals by 2042
- Review, technical assistance, and funding by DWR (5 yearly)
- Enforcement by SWRCB



Groundwater Management Tools

- Data collection, monitoring, modeling, assessment
- Supply management
- Demand management
- Stakeholder management

Challenges for Regulating Nonpoint Sources of Groundwater

- **SCIENCE NEEDS**
 - NPS source control methods
 - NPS pollution soil/groundwater fate, transport
 - NPS pollution assessment, monitoring tools
- **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**
 - Enforcement: Paradigm shift in monitoring approaches
- **AGRICULTURE (largest NPS)**
 - Socio-cultural change needed to work within new regulatory framework

