



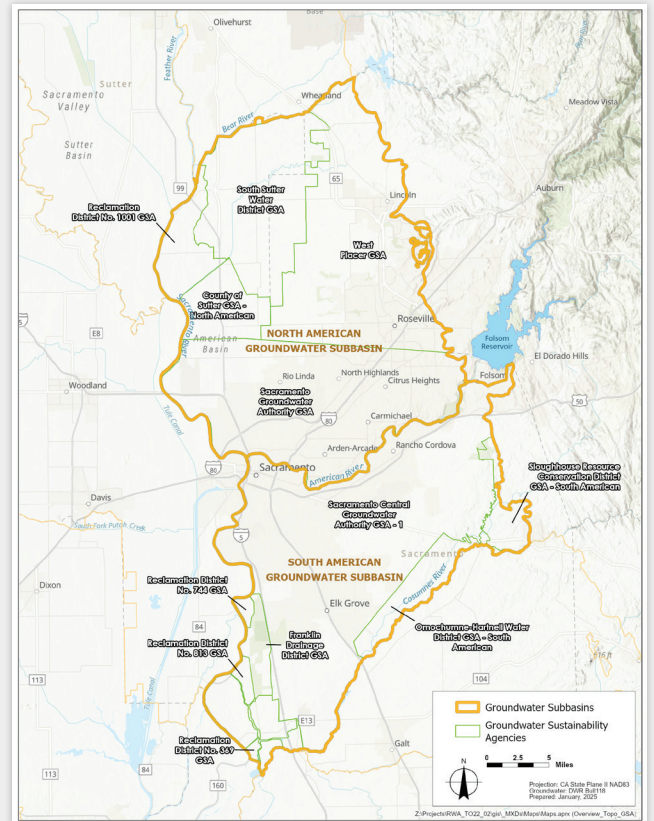
A Framework for Transparent and Sustainable Groundwater Banking

The Water Accounting System (WAS) is a structured approach for tracking how water moves into and out of the Sacramento Regional Water Bank (Water Bank). It provides specific justification and detail as to how participating water agencies will transparently manage and account for Water Bank recharge, recovery, and storage activities.

Developed by the Regional Water Authority (RWA) and participating water agencies in coordination with Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) and other partners, the WAS supports basin-wide coordination and regulatory compliance under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

The Water Bank builds on the region's long-standing successful conjunctive use program, which predominantly uses in-lieu recharge—the combined management of both surface water and groundwater use, resulting in the replenishment of groundwater supplies within the aquifers. The Water Bank is an expansion of this program, now incorporating requirements of the SGMA, providing a more robust process for defining an operational baseline and losses, and providing for the inclusion of all banking activities within the North and South American Groundwater Subbasins.

The Water Bank has been listed in both subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) as a Project and Management Action, which will aid in the ability of both subbasins to maintain groundwater sustainability in the future.



Key Functions and Benefits of the Water Accounting System

TRACKS recharge, recovery, storage balances, and losses

DEFINES roles, responsibilities, and standardized processes

FACILITATES effective adaptive management

ALIGNS with adopted GSPs and SGMA requirements

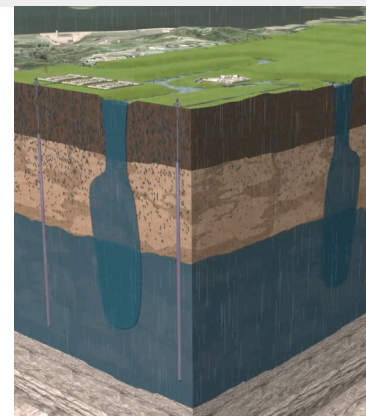
PROVIDES transparent, reliable records

SUPPORTS compliance with state and federal mandates

Support for In-Lieu Recharge

In-lieu recharge requires accurate tracking to distinguish between normal water use and banked water, otherwise referred to as an operational baseline. In addition, the WAS defines:

- **Recharge and recovery**
- **Leave-behind volumes and banking losses**
- **Forgone surface water**
- **Storage rights and accounting protocols**



SGMA Integration and Coordination with GSPs

The WAS aligns with local GSPs and supports SGMA compliance by incorporating:

- **Operational baselines consistent with GSP water budgets**
- **Defined assumptions for recharge and loss**
- **Coordination with GSAs to optimize Water Banking operations**
- **An adaptive framework and dispute resolution process**

Water Accounting Components at a Glance

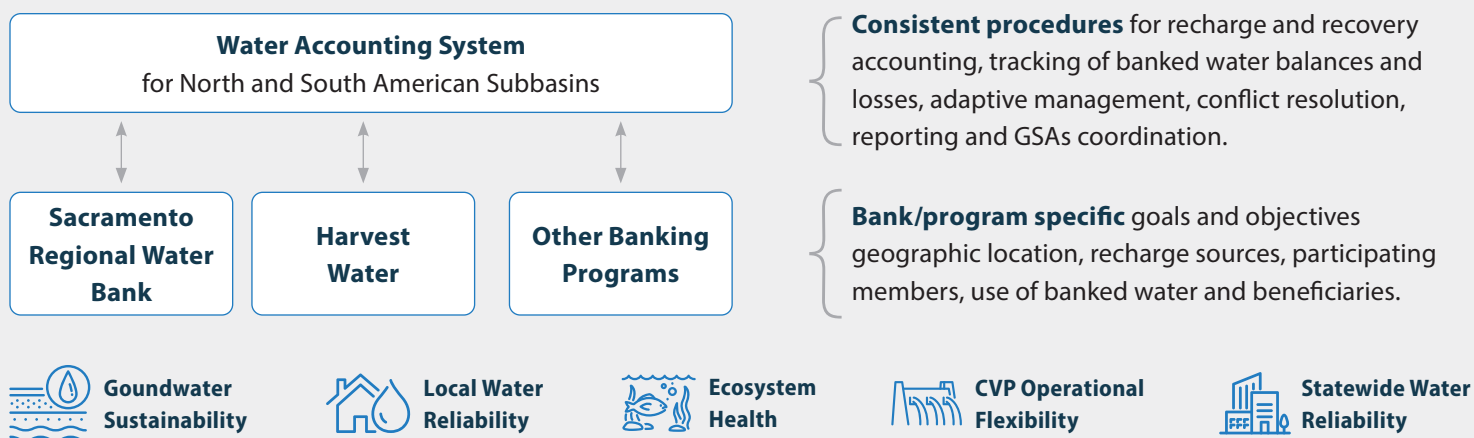
COMPONENT	PURPOSE
Recharge	Deposits made directly or indirectly into the groundwater basin
Recovery	Withdrawals of stored (banked) groundwater for beneficial use
Banking Balance	Remaining banked water available for recovery after losses and leave-behind
Banking Losses	Banked water that becomes unrecoverable due to migration or seepage
Leave-Behind	Portion of banked water intentionally left to support groundwater sustainability
Operational Baseline	Benchmark of typical water use without banking; used to calculate recharge and recovery
Forgone Surface Water	Surface water intentionally not used due to substitution with banked groundwater
Groundwater Storage Rights	Legal entitlements defining how, when, and what type of water can be stored and recovered

System Oversight and Reporting

RWA will administer the WAS and maintain a centralized Data Management System. Participating agencies will submit annual reports documenting recharge, recovery, and water balances. These reports will align with GSP reporting timelines and support coordinated basin management.

Adaptive Management and Dispute Resolution

The WAS incorporates adaptive management, allowing programs to respond to monitoring data, drought conditions, and site-specific considerations. A dispute resolution process is also outlined to address operational concerns and maintain coordination with GSAs.



Learn More

Access the WAS concept paper at www.SacWaterBank.com, by scanning the QR code, or by contacting Trevor Joseph, RWA Manager of Technical Services, at tjoseph@rwah2o.org or (916) 990-3035.

For more information about the Sacramento Regional Water Bank visit SacWaterBank.com.

2295 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 100 | Sacramento, CA 95833