



## El Rio Groundwater Contaminant Elimination Project

### Fact Sheet

The Oxnard Forebay (Forebay) is vital area for groundwater recharge. Over 6,000 acres provide the primary area of recharge to an 11.0 million acre-foot aquifer; and over 200,000 people rely on this aquifer for drinking water. Existing beneficial uses of groundwater underlying the Oxnard Forebay include: Commercial, Institutional, and Industrial supply; Agricultural supply; and Municipal and Domestic supply.

Over 15,000 people reside in the Forebay in areas that encompass approximately 800 acres, including incorporated areas of the City of Oxnard, and the unincorporated **El Rio/Strickland Tract (El Rio Community) area**. There are approximately 1400 residential and 200 commercial/industrial septic systems in the unincorporated El Rio Community. All of the wastewater from these septic systems is discharged to the groundwater in the Forebay.

On August 12, 1999, The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board amended the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region. The State had determined that the nitrates and other contaminants introduced into the groundwater in the Forebay through the discharge from septic systems were threatening the water quality in the Forebay, and were consequently a potential health hazard for the community. Effective January 1, 2008, septic tanks are prohibited in the Forebay.

The project funded by this grant will assist **Ventura County Service Area 34 (Public Works Agency)** in constructing a portion of the sewer collection system for homeowners in the unincorporated El Rio Community. The goal of this project is to improve groundwater quality by constructing a new sewer collection system which will facilitate the abandonment of approximately 202 septic systems currently used by the disadvantaged El Rio Community residents, and through which contaminants are introduced into the groundwater. Abandonment of the septic systems in the El Rio Community will provide a more reliable source of quality water by eliminating the discharge of pollutants from these systems into the groundwater which is currently the sole source of water for the residents, businesses, and agricultural users in the unincorporated area of the Community.

The project will help bring water wells into compliance with the Federal Clean Water Act standards set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency reflected in regulations of the California Department of Health Services; protect the United Water Conservation District recharge efforts in the Forebay; reduce the potential for dependence on imported water from the sensitive Bay-Delta ecosystem; and assist the El Rio community to meet the State septic tank prohibition.

In addition, the project will help protect the surface waters downstream of the project. The aquifers that currently receive the discharge from the septic systems not only impact drinking water sources for the City of Oxnard but several small mutual water companies as well; and the resurfacing of the flows potentially impact surface waters such as the Ormond Wetlands and/or Ormond Beach.

Funding for this project has been provided in full or in part through an agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board.