



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
Administration Department

MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: 11/16/23

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Unusual Air Traffic Happening This Week in SLO County

You may notice some unusual aircraft flying over San Luis Obispo County starting this weekend. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) will begin flying helicopters with [Airborne Electromagnetic \(AEM\)](#) surveying equipment. This technology is used to gather information about our state's groundwater aquifer structure to support drought response, groundwater recharge and the implementation of the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act \(SGMA\)](#).

These helicopters fly with huge hoops hanging below the aircraft about 100 feet above ground. These hoops create an image of the subsurface down to a depth of about 1,000 feet. This allows local agencies across the state to gather information about their groundwater basins and to be more responsive to extremes between wet and dry conditions.

"They are interesting to see flying around." Said Groundwater Sustainability Director Blaine Reely. "The data they collect really helps us have a better grasp of our groundwater systems, and identify optimal areas for groundwater recharge, so we can work to bolster groundwater supplies and protect communities from potential flooding during major rain events."

The DWR will resume the AEM Surveys in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties beginning this Saturday, November 18th. The surveys will be targeting portions of the San Antonio Creek Valley, Santa Maria, Arroyo Grande, San Luis Obispo Cally, Los Osos, Warden Creek, Chorro Valley and Morro Valley.

The DWR's Statewide AEM Survey Project began in the summer of 2021 with a goal to collect data from the state's high and medium priority basins. The collection of AEM data this November completes the data collection effort. Data already collected can be viewed on [the AEM Data Viewer](#).

You can find video of the AEM surveying equipment [here](#) and feel free to use. For more information about the AEM Surveys, Visit DWR's [AEM Project Website](#).

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