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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Goleta Water District Prevails in Slippery Rock Lawsuit as Judge Rules to Protect Recharge of the Goleta Groundwater Basin

After an intensely fought courtroom battle, the Goleta Water District has resoundingly prevailed on its claims for use of water underlying Slippery Rock, according to a court ruling issued yesterday.

In a 30-page tentative decision Judge James Herman of the Santa Barbara Superior Court decided that the District had rights as senior appropriator to the water trapped in bedrock formations underlying Slippery Rock's property. The Court concluded that water from Slippery Rock Ranch "materially contributes" to recharge of the Goleta Groundwater Basin.

Once the Court's decision becomes final, it will legally ensure that this critical source of recharge for the Basin will be available--in perpetuity--thus allowing the District to serve its customers in the Goleta community.

Commenting on the decision, Rick Merrifield, Goleta Water District Board President noted: "Especially here on the Central Coast, we are well aware that water is a limited resource that needs to be managed carefully. We are delighted that the court recognized that the bedrock water is a public resource supplying the District's customers, and not a commodity to be exploited for private gain."

On one issue, the Court acknowledged Slippery Rock's argument that there may be "surplus water" available. A second phase of the trial will now proceed over the next few months to determine how much surplus water beyond everything that is needed by the District to serve the public could be available for Slippery Rock to appropriate.

Pursuant to court procedures, the Court is expected to finalize its decision in the coming weeks, before moving on to the next phase of the trial.

The Goleta Water District provides water to a diverse population of approximately 87,000 in the Goleta Valley area, including agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional customers. The District's water system includes over 270 miles of pipelines, a water treatment plant, storage reservoirs, pumping facilities, active wells, a recycled water system, and connections with Lake Cachuma and the State Water Project.

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