



**Butte County
Department of
Water and Resource
Conservation**

308 Nelson Avenue
Oroville, CA 95965-
3302

Phone (530)538-4343

Fax (530)538-3807

Email:

bcwater@buttecounty.net

Website: [http://
www.buttecounty.net/
waterandresource/](http://www.buttecounty.net/waterandresource/)

**Water and Resource
Conservation Staff**

- Paul Gosselin,
Director
- Vickie Newlin,
Assistant Director
- Lynne Pillus,
Administrative
Assistant, Senior

**Butte County Water
Commission**

George Barber, Chair
DC Jones, Vice-Chair
Larry Grundmann
Mark Kimmelshue
John Lane
Ryan Schohr
David Skinner
Ernie Washington

Vacant—Landowner,
surface water



Our Mission:

*“To manage and
conserve water and
other resources for
the citizens of Butte
County”*

Water Solutions

February 2012

**2011 Groundwater
Status Report**

By Paul Gosselin

This month, the Department released the *2011 Groundwater Status Report* as required by Chapter 33 and Chapter 33A of the Butte County Code. The report gives general information on groundwater conditions, hydrology, and monitoring data on groundwater levels, groundwater quality and land subsidence. The *2011 Groundwater Status Report* includes the Basin Management Objective (BMO) reports for each of the sixteen sub-inventory units.

Hydrologic conditions improved in 2011 with the Sacramento Valley being classified as a wet year. With improved conditions the past two years, storage in most major in-state reservoirs has rebounded. Last fall, at the end of water year 2010, all the major CVP and SWP reservoirs had storage capacities greater

than 100 percent of historical average. Storage in the SWP's Lake Oroville had increased to 134 percent of average capacity (82 percent capacity).

Groundwater level monitoring in the spring and fall showed improvement in the basin from previous years. Although groundwater levels are measured four times per year, the spring and fall measurements are used for comparison. Most wells in the monitoring network have “basin management objectives” (BMO) that indicate desirable groundwater levels for that particular well. If a measurement does not reach the BMO for that particular well, an Alert Stage is triggered. An Alert Stage results in more outreach, data evaluation and possibly additional monitoring. The spring 2011 groundwater level measurements showed that of the 102 wells monitored, 24 wells still did not meet their

BMO and triggered an Alert Stage. Wells that reached an Alert Stage were in the Cherokee, Esquon, North Yuba, Chico Urban and Durham/Dayton, Llano Seco, M&T and Vina areas. However, most of the wells that reached a BMO Alert Stage had improved groundwater level measurements when compared to the spring of 2010.

In the fall of 2011, groundwater level data showed that 12 of 79 wells monitored did not achieve their BMO. In comparison, 25 wells reached a BMO Alert Stage in 2010 and 32 wells reached a BMO Alert Stage in 2009.

The Durham/Dayton and Chico Urban Areas each reduced the number of wells in Alert Stage to only one well in each area. While 2011 data looks promising, even

(Continued on page 4)

Draft Delta Plan Environmental Impact Report

By Paul Gosselin

The development of the Delta Plan by the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) reached a critical juncture with the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on November 4, 2011. The comment deadline was February 2, 2012.

The DSC was created as part of the Delta Reform Act of 2009 and is directed to develop the Delta Plan. The Delta Plan is a strategic document that includes legally enforceable policies, strategies and actions within the Delta to further advance the “coequal goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring and enhancing the Delta ecosystem.” The Delta Plan will incorporate a number of other plans including the Delta Conservancy Strategic Plan, the Delta Protection Commission’s Economic Sustainability Plan, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and the State Water Resources Control Board

(SWRCB) Delta Flow Criteria.

The DEIR is intended to identify and assess the impacts of the Delta Plan. The DEIR used the Fifth Staff Draft Delta Plan as the Project Plan and considered five alternatives. The Delta Plan has a limited scope outside of the Delta. According to the Delta Reform Act, the Delta Plan was limited to address defined “covered actions” that will “occur, in whole or part, within the boundaries of the Delta or Suisan Marsh.” In our region, the Delta Plan is limited to providing guidance and recommendations. For the most part, the Fifth Draft Delta Plan has improved from previous versions. Previous drafts attempted to impose regulatory oversight outside of the Delta that would affect local land use authority, water rights and fees. However, the Draft Delta Plan continues to focus on improving flows through the Delta as the primary means to restore the ecosystem. To achieve the increased Delta stream flows, draft Delta Plan places responsibility on the northern Delta watershed for providing increased

flows to the Delta.

The impact could be devastating to the local groundwater basin, stream flows, and the economy. Analysis shows that the impact of the proposed flow criteria would increase the demand on our groundwater basin, impact habitat in our streams and permanently drop the level of Lake Oroville. To complicate matters, the DEIR does not analyze any potential impacts to the north of Delta watershed. The lack of clarity of the draft Delta Plan and the inadequacy of the DEIR raises significant concerns for the region. The DSC held a series of hearings on the DEIR including one in Willows on January 19th. On January 24th, the Butte County Board of Supervisors approved the submission of a letter voicing the concerns with the Delta Plan and the DEIR. You can keep up with Delta Issues by visiting the “Delta Issue” link in the Department’s website at <http://www.buttecounty.net/waterandresource/>

It's a Big Year for the 13th Annual Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway!

Millions of waterfowl migrating along the Pacific Flyway call the Northern Sacramento Valley their home during the winter months, and you are invited to the Snow Goose Festival for an action-packed 4-days celebrating this annual phenomenon!

There is a BIG list of more than 70 field trips and workshops that cover six counties, reaching out

into the rice fields, wildlife refuges and river walks where mild winter weather, abundant food and lots of water draw our avian visitors.

In addition to numerous bird-watching field trips, you might choose to join an owl radio-tracking team on the local ecological reserve, or try birding by ear, a snowshoe hike in Lassen Park, a BIG day of birding, or hike the scenic Sutter Buttes in search of lofty views and resident wildlife.

Various workshops offer something for everyone... learn nature photography, sketching in nature, bird carving, how to record nature sounds, designing a garden for wildlife, and much more. Free nature activities are offered for children, as well as armchair adventures for the less hardy.

Greg Miller is joining the festival this year and causing some BIG excitement for everyone! Greg is one of the famed birders featured in the 2004 book, The Big Year,

(Continued on page 3)

Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Public Outreach Workshops

By Vickie Newlin

The Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management (NSVIRWM) planning process continues. The group held three workshops on the 18th and 19th of January to ascertain information on the needs and aspirations of the general public within the region. These workshops were held in Oroville (1/18/12 from 9:00 to 11:00) in Red Bluff (1/18/12 from 2:00 to 4:00) and in Colusa (1/19/12 from 3:00 to 5:00). In total, about 180 people attended the workshop series at one of the three locations.

These workshops followed weeks of intensive, targeted outreach efforts by the Technical Advisory Committee (NSVTAC) in an attempt to bring in ideas and concerns of

disadvantaged communities (DACs) and tribal interests as well as inform the general public about their opportunity to weigh in on the planning process. This outreach included presentations to local jurisdictions such as cities and special districts, as well as television and radio appearances that encouraged folks to fill out a questionnaire about water-related issues. The next few months will be dedicated to recording and summarizing the comments received at the workshops, as well as through the questionnaires. The results of the public input will be used to help guide the discussion at the NSVTAC regarding the development of goals and objectives for the NSV plan.



Supervisor Connolly introducing the NSV IRWM Outreach Workshop

The new website was launched in December 2011 at www.nsvwaterplan.org, and contains an abundance of information about the history of this planning effort. In addition, you will find maps and other graphics that tell the story of this six-county region and how the planning process is evolving. We encourage you to take a peek at the website and become involved in this very important planning process.



Workshop participants discuss regional issues

The next NSV Board meeting will be held on March 5, 2012 at 9:00 and the next NSVTAC meeting will be held on February 16, 2012 at 9:00, both at the Willows City Hall. These meetings are open to the public.

by Mark Obmascik and portrayed by Jack Black in the 2011 movie. Greg will lead several field trips and as Keynote Speaker, will be the highlight of our Gathering of Wings Banquet on Saturday night

Be sure to see the inspiring Uptown/Downtown Pacific Flyway Art Exhibit at two of our local galleries: Avenue 9 Gallery and Chico Art Center. Although the exhibit is open Jan. 20 through Feb 12, you won't want to miss

our special Welcome Reception on Friday, Jan. 27. This is a special night for Festival attendees to mix and mingle, admire art, meet the artists, and enjoy live music and refreshments. Bring a friend!

Admission is free to the festival headquarters and various events on Saturday and Sunday, January 28-29, located at the Masonic Family Center, 1110 W. East Ave. in Chico. Register online for

all events, including field trips, workshops, the Uptown/Downtown Pacific Flyway Wildlife Art Exhibit and Gathering of Wings Banquet. Tickets range from \$5 to \$45.





Meeting

Schedules

Butte County Water Commission

2/1/12, 1:30 p.m.
Board of Supervisors
Chambers
25 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965

3/7/12, 1:30 p.m.
Board of Supervisors
Chambers

Water Advisory Committee/Technical Advisory Committee

April 26, 2012
HR Training Room
2279 Del Oro Ave
Oroville, CA 95965

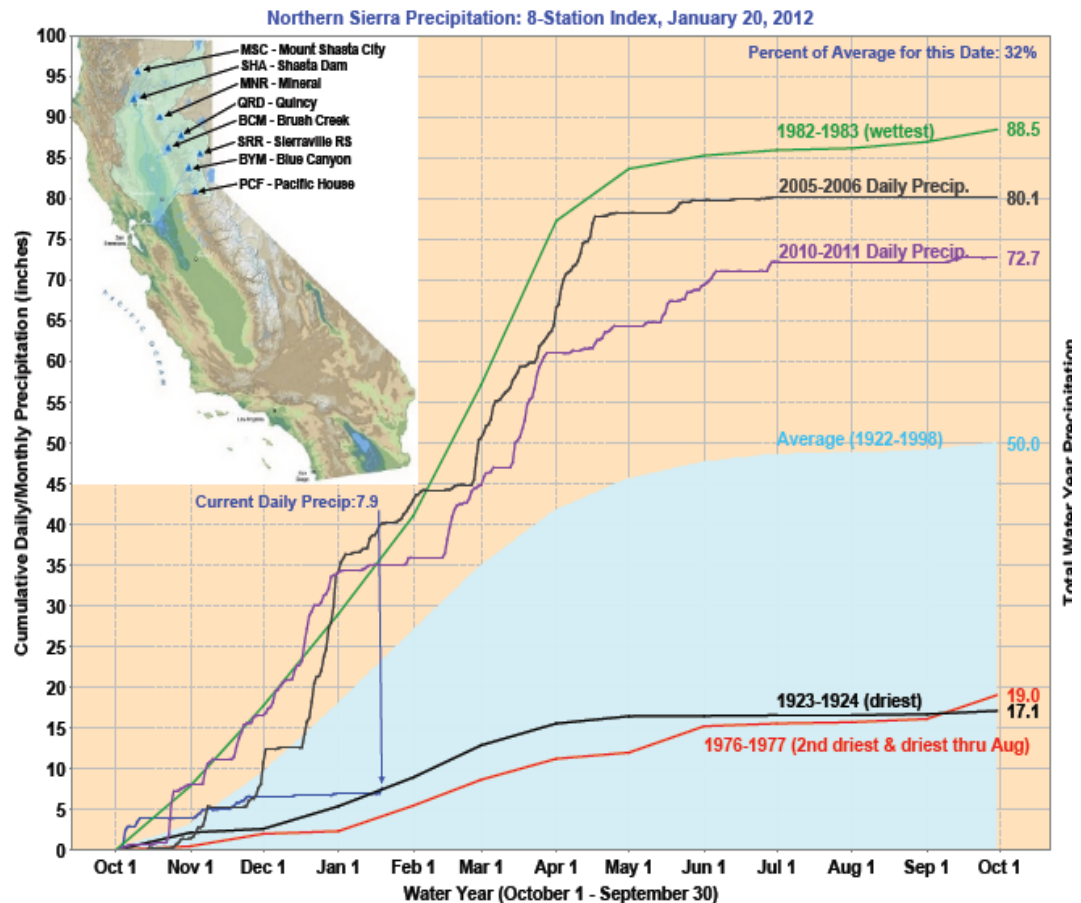
Drought Task Force

TBA
Water & Resource Conservation Conference Room, 308 Nelson Ave.
Oroville, CA

Butte County Board of Supervisors

2/14/12, 9:00 a.m.
Board of Supervisors
Chambers

2/28/12, 9:00 a.m.
Board of Supervisors
Chambers



(Continued from page 1)

with above average precipitation, it typically takes a couple of years to fully recover from a drought period. As the groundwater levels recover from drought conditions, long term trends will continue to be evaluated on a subinventory unit basis.

In July the Department conducted its tenth year of groundwater quality monitoring to identify evidence of saline intrusion. The parameters monitored were temperature, pH and electrical conductivity. These parameters encompass the basic characteristics of evaluating water for evi-

dence of saline intrusion. For 2011, all samples fell within the acceptable range of water quality values as set forth by State and federal agencies and also met BMOs for water quality parameters.

Subsidence is monitored by repeated land surveys and by use of extensometers. These instruments are capable of detecting changes in land surface elevation to approximately 1/100th of an inch. DWR Northern Region has installed and operates eight extensometers in the northern Sacramento Valley: five in Butte County and three

in Glenn County. According to the BMO Ordinance, an Alert Stage is reached if the annual elastic subsidence exceeds the average annual elastic subsidence measured over the period of record of the extensometer. No land subsidence was detected in Butte County from an evaluation of the extensometer records in the Western Canal, M&T, California Water Service, Richvale, and Biggs-West Gridley subinventory units.

The 2011 Groundwater Status Report and BMO reports can be viewed on the department's website under "Reports" and "BMO".