



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

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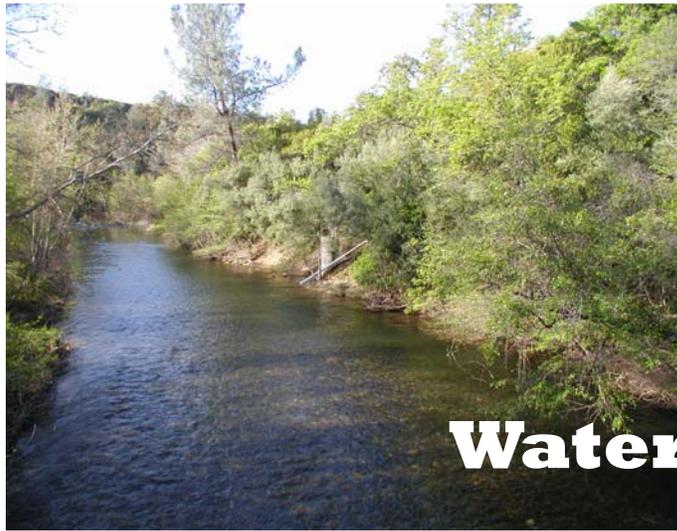
Website: [http://  
www.buttecounty.net/  
waterandresource/](http://www.buttecounty.net/waterandresource/)

**Water and Resource  
Conservation Staff**

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**Butte County Water  
Commission**

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



**Water Solutions**

August 2012

**Our Mission:**

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

**Moderate Changes in  
Spring 2012 Ground-  
water Levels Compared  
to Spring 2011**

By Christina Buck

The 2012 spring ground-water level measurements for Butte County were taken at the end of March by the Department of Water Resources (DWR). Transitions to the new CASGEM system at the state level delayed access to the spring data. However, it is now available for viewing and download from the CASGEM system ([http://  
www.water.ca.gov/  
groundwater/casgem/](http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/)).

Historical water level data is still housed and accessible from the Water Data Library. Additional monitoring data for North Yuba and Chico Urban Area was provided by the California Water Service.

The Basin Management Objective (BMO) pro-

gram establishes alert stages for each monitoring well in the network. The BMO program underwent a review in 2011 and the method for determining alert stages was evaluated and standardized. Prior to the standardization, five different methodologies could be used to establish alert levels. This made it difficult for the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to interpret the data across sub-basins. Now, all but two of the sub-basins use the Historical Range method to establish alert stage elevations. This and the Specific Depth method are described in the 2011 BMO Cover report available on the Department’s website.

With below average precipitation so far for the 2012 water year (October 2011-September 2012), water levels have de-

creased in some areas and increased in others compared to 2011 spring levels. Overall, water levels across the county continue to reflect the drier conditions characterizing four of the past six years. Of the 98 or so wells measured in 2011 and 2012, 38 of them had a higher 2012 spring level than their 2011 spring measurement. The average increase was 2.6 feet, many of them less than a foot higher than in 2011. Of the 2012 measurements that were lower than in 2011, they average a decrease of 2.5 feet. Most wells did not see a significant change in spring levels from 2011 to 2012.

Since the wet 2006 water year, California has experienced a dry, critical, dry, below normal, and

*(Continued on page 4)*

## **Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management: Potential Project List Development**

By Vickie Newlin

The Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Board (NSV Board) unanimously approved Goals and Objectives for the NSVIRWM plan (Plan) at their June 4, 2012 meeting. The NSV TAC brought forward the Goals and Objectives for the Plan in a recommendation

after hours of debate at the TAC level. The Goals and Objectives are a critical step in the planning process, providing the foundation for the regional plan and the evaluation of potential projects. The Goals and Objectives will serve to provide some specific direction for the planning by further defining the needs of the region.

The overlying goals include: Water Supply Reliability, Flood Protection and Planning, Water Quality Protection and Enhancement, Watershed Protections and Management, Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Sustain-

ability and Public Education and Information Dissemination and can be viewed on the NSV website at: [www.nsvwaterplan.org](http://www.nsvwaterplan.org). For further information please feel free to contact me.

The next step in the development of the NSVIRWM Plan revolves around accumulating and cataloging the various types of projects anticipated for inclusion in the Plan. The on-line submittal was launched on July 17. Potential participants are encouraged to enter their projects into the on-line submittal also included on the website for inclusion in the NSVIRWM Plan.

## **Update on Delta Issues**

By Paul Gosselin

In July, the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) provided final direction to their staff on the Delta Plan. A considerable amount of discussion was held on the policy document, *Reduce Reliance on the Delta and Improve Regional Self-Reliance* (WR P1). There was strong opposition from those in the region to having the policy be interpreted as applying to the Delta watershed. The Butte County Board of Supervised sent a letter to the Delta Stewardship Council on June 25<sup>th</sup> voicing that point and raising other concerns. The Final Draft of the Delta Plan is expected to be released in September. A Supplemental Environmental Impact Report will be released in October. The Delta Stewardship Council expects to adopt the Delta Plan in early 2013.

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan

(BDCP) took a step forward with the anticipated announcement by state and federal officials on their preferred options for the nearly \$24 billion BDCP. The BDCP is being developed to promote the recovery of endangered, threatened and sensitive fish and wildlife species and their habitats in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in a way that will also protect and restore water supplies. The announcement will identify conservation strategies to improve the overall ecological health of the Delta, identify conveyance through and/or around the Delta, address toxic pollutants, invasive species, and impairments to water quality; and establish a framework and funding to implement the BDCP. The dual conveyance facilities are at the heart of the BDCP discussions. Recent reports have raised concern about whether the BDCP would achieve its ecologic goals or would be economically viable. At the local level, the effect on

storage in Lake Oroville and changes to surface water deliveries from BDCP are being assessed. Butte County is participating in the BDCP proceedings and partnering with regional partners to ensure that the BDCP process fulfills its mission without adversely impacting our economy, communities and ecosystem.

Finally, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has scheduled a series of workshops that will begin in September on the development of the Bay-Delta Plan. The SWRCB's Bay-Delta Plan will create the enforceable requirements for the Delta's water quality and flow standards. The SWRCB has jurisdiction over water rights to implement the water quality standards. The Bay-Delta Plan will be a critical component of the Delta Plan and the BDCP.

To keep updated on Delta issues visit "Delta Issues" on the Department's website.

## Highlights for the New Fiscal Year

By Paul Gosselin

Butte County's new fiscal officially began on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Butte County Board of Supervisors adopted a balanced budget that has narrowed the gap between on-going revenue and expenditures. The good news is that Butte County is on the road to fiscal stability after nearly four years of a severe economic downturn. Even with this relatively good news, the County remains cautious about the potential risks that loom on the horizon.

For the 2012-13 fiscal year, the budget for the Department of Water and Resource Conservation remained relatively stable. The Department is funded from a combination of County General Fund and external revenue, typically from grants. The Department will continue implementation of core programs, develop regional cooperative efforts and complete special projects. The Department's priorities are outlined in the 2011-15 Strategic and Operational Plan. The budget includes the specific items that that Department is funded to carry out over the next year. Here are a few highlights:

Assessing and reporting groundwater conditions will continue to be a priority for the Department. We will continue to monitor and assess groundwater conditions through the Basin Management

Objective (BMO) program and will meet our obligations under the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Program (CASGEM). The CASGEM Program was part of the 2009 Delta Reform Act. The CASGEM Program is a new requirement for groundwater monitoring as a condition to secure water related loans and grants. The Department was approved as the CASGEM monitoring and reporting agency for Butte County.

Another highlight for this fiscal year will be the continued development of the Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management (NSVIRWM) Plan. Considerable progress has been made in the development of the NSVIRWM Plan that will be completed by September 2013. In June 2012, the NSVIRWM Governing Board adopted Goals and Objectives. The NSVIRWM has begun soliciting potential projects that are consistent with the NSVIRWM Goals and Objectives. The NSVIRWM has a website, <http://www.nsvwaterplan.org>, where you can stay informed on and involved with the NSVIRWM activities.

The management of Butte County's State Water Project Table A Allocation will take a major step forward this year. Butte County will enter into two-year agreements to lease portions of the County's Table A amount that are not needed for in-county use. The agreements will offset over \$1.3 million in state charges and will generate about \$2.5 million over the course of the two year

agreement. Work will continue on longer term solutions.

The Lower Tuscan Aquifer Monitoring, Recharge and Data Management Project will be completed at the end of this fiscal year. The field activities, led by the Brown and Caldwell Team, are nearly completed. Final data collection from a stream and an aquifer performance measurements are remaining. The remaining effort will be to compile, evaluate and report the results of the three-year scientific effort. We will hold public workshops and prepare written materials on the project results later this year.

State initiatives continue to present many challenges to the sustainability of Butte County water resources. The implementation of the 2009 Delta Reform Act, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and the State Water Resources Control Board's Bay Delta Water Quality Plan are three cornerstones of paramount concern. At the heart of the Delta Reform Act is the development of the Delta Plan that is expected to be completed this year. The BDCP and the Bay Delta Water Quality Plan may affect local water resources. The Butte County will continue to engage in these state initiatives to protect our interests.

Although we face many challenges ranging from the continued economic downturn to numerous state policy initiatives, we look forward to continued progress in protecting and preserving water resources for Butte County.



**Meeting**

**Schedules**

**Butte County Water Commission**

8/1/12, 1:30 p.m.  
Board of Supervisors  
Chambers  
25 County Center Drive  
Oroville, CA 95965

9/5/12, 1:30 p.m.  
Board of Supervisors  
Chambers

**Water Advisory Committee/Technical Advisory Committee**

TBA  
HR Training Room  
2279 Del Oro Ave  
Oroville, CA 95965

**Drought Task Force**

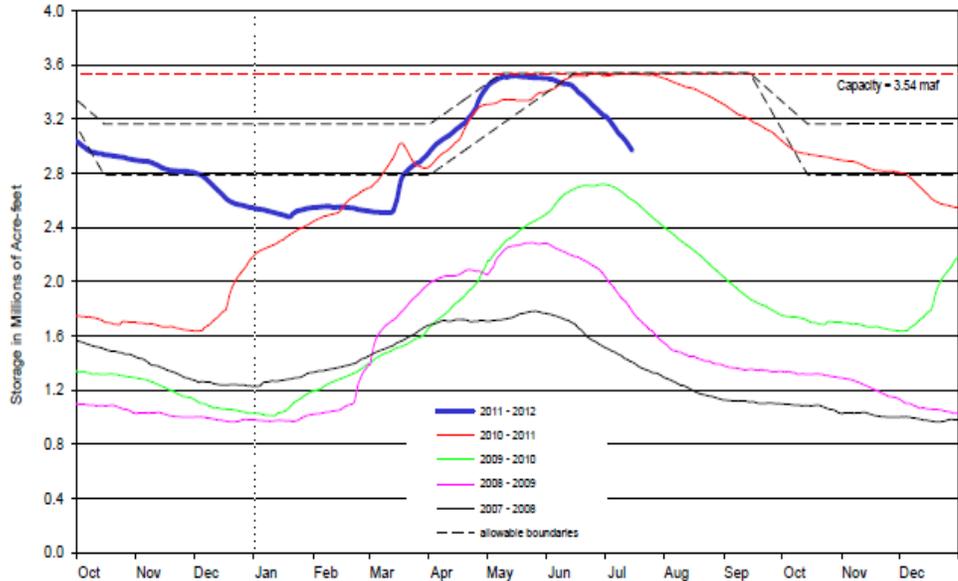
TBA 10:30 a.m.  
Water & Resource Conservation Conference Room, 308 Nelson Ave.  
Oroville, CA

**Butte County Board of Supervisors**

8/14/12, 9:00 a.m.  
Board of Supervisors  
Chambers

8/28/12, 9:00 a.m.  
Board of Supervisors  
Chambers

**Lake Oroville Storage**  
Combination Water/Calendar Year



(Continued from page 1)

|         | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Alert 1 | 28   | 32   | 26   | 25   | 26   |
| Alert 2 | 0    | 6    | 2    | 0    | 3    |

wet (2011) water year, in that order. So far, 2012 has also been below average according to the Northern Sierra Precipitation 8-Station Index. Groundwater levels reflect these dry conditions with a number of Stage 1 Alerts occurring this spring and during the past five years (see Table 1). The following sub-basins have wells that reached alert levels for Spring 2012: Butte Sink, Cherokee, Esquon, North Yuba, Chico Urban Area, Durham/Dayton, Llano Seco, M&T, and Vina. Many of the wells at alert stage 1 have been there

since at least spring 2008. Table 1. Number of Spring Level Measurements at alert stage 1 and 2 for 2008-2012 Using Current BMOs, The BMO Data Summary spreadsheet, available online, highlights groundwater levels below the BMO alert stage 1 in orange and those below Alert Stage 2 in red for spring 2008-2012 based on current alert stages. This can be found on the Department’s website under BMO and then ‘Current Data Summary’.

**Summer Water Level**

**Measurements**

The first of two summertime water level measurements for wells throughout the county was done the second week in July. As this goes to press, Devon Pike is making rounds to the 12 wells in the Water Quality Trend monitoring network. Water quality measurements include temperature, electrical conductivity (EC), and pH. The Department has been conducting this water quality sampling since the summer of 2002.