

**BUTTE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF WATER & RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

STRATEGIC PLAN: 2022-2027

MISSION

To manage and conserve water and other resources for Butte County

VISION

To work cooperatively with water agencies, conservation groups, and others to enhance the County's water supply and environment through creative water management; to fully utilize the County's State Water Project allocation; to ensure an abundant and sustainable water supply to support all uses in Butte County; and to ensure that local water resources are protected to meet local water needs.

VALUES

- *Collaborate - To consider input from the entire Butte County community;*
- *Respect - To treat everyone's concerns in a courteous and respectful manner;*
- *Serve - To carry out the policies of the Butte County Board of Supervisors;*
- *Support - To support Area of Origin water rights, the existing water right priority system and the authority to make water management decisions locally to meet the county's current and future needs, thereby protecting Butte County's communities, economy, and environment.*
- *Provide - To secure funding for programs that help all of Butte County.*

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Over the next two decades, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies will be actively implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in Butte County subbasins and throughout the region. Actions over the next five years will shape the success of sustainable groundwater resource management for generations. Successful implementation of SGMA will provide economic and ecological sustainability for those who rely on groundwater in Butte County. In addition, climate change, wildfire, drought and other disasters, pose water supply issues to beneficial users and uses, including surface water habitats and groundwater dependent ecosystems. Local communities, particularly Disadvantaged Communities, face on-going challenges to water supply reliability and water quality impacts. Addressing these challenges are critical to sustainability for the entire County.

As Butte County secures a sustainable future for its groundwater resources, conditions such as climate change, impacts to water resources, or other external actions continue to pose challenges to sustainability. State initiatives, including the Delta Conveyance Project, Bay-Delta Water Quality Plan (Bay-Delta Plan), and Sites Reservoir could alter the delivery of surface water that could result in changes in groundwater demand. Potential changes heighten the importance of regional water resource management coordination. The Department will continue to work with local and regional agencies to develop regional water management strategies that protect all water rights and assure the sustainability of our shared water resources. Over the next five years the Department's focus will include:

1. Assist in the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
2. Prepare for the effects of drought conditions and climate change
3. Provide leadership to address local and regional water resource issues
4. Support the protection of local water right priorities and local water resource management authority

PRIORITIES FOR 2022-2027

Strategic Initiatives

The goals and objectives for 2022-2027 covers the activities of the Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation for the next five years. We recognize that circumstances will affect these and other priorities. The department's goals and objectives will be a dynamic document that will be reviewed annually and updated every five years to reflect current legislation, regulations, and water resources issues and conditions. Action items are designated as O for Ongoing (regular annual activities and/or continued support, facilitation and implementation), S for Short term (1-2 years), M for Medium term (3-5 years) or L for Long term (greater than five years). The designations are intended as a general characterization at this point in time. The actual sequencing of action items may be adjusted due to funding availability and changed circumstances. If an action item is part of the Groundwater Conservation Ordinance (Chapter 33), the General Plan 2040 Action Plan or related to SGMA implementation, the reference is provided.

Goal 1: Support Solutions to Ensure the Sustainability of Local Water Supplies

Action Items

1. Help promote agricultural, urban and industrial water use efficiency (O) and conservation, including recycling and reuse.(S)(O) (General Plan W-P5.1) (SGMA)
2. Encourage and consult with local water purveyors to support the efficient delivery and use of surface water for the economic development of agriculture in Butte County, including the use of methods such as (O) (General Plan W-A2.2) (SGMA), dual-use water source infrastructure for irrigators within Butte County (M) (General Plan W-P5.1)
3. Seek grant funding to help improve resiliency of water supplies and related infrastructure impacted by natural disasters including, but not limited to wildfire and drought. (S)
4. Support efforts to develop and maintain reliable water supplies in Butte County. (O) (General Plan W-A2.1, W-A5.1) (SGMA)
5. Administer the Drought Task Force in partnership with the Butte County Office of Emergency Management and update and maintain the Drought Preparedness and Mitigation Plan consistent with the County's response to drought and applicable State law. (O/S)
6. Consult with Board of Supervisors on proposed use of Table A water to areas in the County not currently served by this source.
7. Collaborate with Butte County Departments (i.e., Public Works and Development Services/Planning Division) and local entities on multi-benefit water resources projects, such as drainage/flood studies, for potential opportunities for managed aquifer recharge consistent with the applicable Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

Goal 2: Produce Data, Information and Analyses on Water Resources

Action Items

1. Monitor and Report Groundwater Conditions (O) (General Plan W-P4.2) (SGMA)(Chapter 33)
 - a. Monitor and report groundwater elevation, subsidence and water quality (temperature, pH and electrical conductivity); (O)
 - b. Collaborate and provide monitoring data for the preparation of SGMA Annual Reports for the three Butte County Subbasins (Vina, Wyandotte Creek, and Butte), (O), and
 - c. Prepare and present the annual Butte County Groundwater Status Report to the Board of Supervisors; (O)
 - d. Coordinate with GSAs to improve the groundwater monitoring network through the installation of additional monitoring wells, piezometers and stream gauging stations. (S) (SGMA) (General Plan W-A1.1)
2. Consult with state and regional agencies on the development of data including, but not limited to, Airborne Electromagnetic Surveys (AEM), Household Water Supply Shortage reporting, interconnected surface water monitoring, data visualization and public web-user interfaces (M) (General Plan W-P4.2)
3. Participate in the preparation and update of water budgets through the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (M) (General Plan W-A3.2)(SGMA)
4. Participate in the preparation and update of Periodic 5-Year Evaluations of the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (M) (General Plan W-A3.3)(SGMA)
5. Develop and maintain analytical tools and monitoring approaches to evaluate water resources as follows: (SGMA) (General Plan W-P4.2)
 - a. Data Management System (M)
 - b. Butte Basin Groundwater Model and other modeling approaches (M)
 - c. Geophysical Analytical Approaches (AEM) (S)
6. Partner with and provide technical assistance to applicable entities to expand the monitoring network to ensure that it is capable of collecting sufficient data to demonstrate short-term, seasonal and long-term trends in groundwater and related surface conditions. (O)
7. Monitor, analyze, and report on impacts to beneficial uses of water (including ecosystems) associated with changes in surface and groundwater conditions resulting from disasters, drought, and water management activities.
8. Consult with academia, other agencies, and foundations on innovative analytical approaches to improve the hydrogeologic conceptual model of Butte County Subbasins. (O)

Goal 3: Protect and Manage Groundwater Resources

Action Items

1. Administer the activities of the Butte County Technical Advisory Committee, Water Commission, and other advisory groups to ensure the sustainable use, maintenance, and protection of all water resources in the County. (O)
2. Administer the Groundwater Conservation Ordinance (Chapter 33) related to the regulation of surface water transfers that involve groundwater substitution. (O) (SGMA)(Chapter 33)
3. Support the development and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans. (O) (SGMA)
4. Participate in efforts to conduct comprehensive, countywide mapping of water resources and groundwater recharge areas. (M) (General Plan W-A3.1) (SGMA)
5. Support integration of water resource management and ecosystem considerations into land use planning and County ordinance updates (M) (SGMA)
6. Consult with other local agencies to explore opportunities to promote recharge within the County.

Goal 4: Protect Local Water Resources through Partnerships, Cooperation and Leadership on a Regional and Statewide Basis

Action Items

1. Strive to maintain a cooperative relationship with Groundwater Sustainability Agencies in adjoining subbasins. (General Plan W-A4.1) (SGMA) (O)
2. Support and participate in the implementation of the Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan and the Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. (O)
3. Encourage and support efforts to protect local water rights priorities and local water resource management authority thereby protecting Butte County's communities, economy, and environment. (O)
4. Actively monitor and report on state water policies that may affect Butte County (O) such as the Delta Conveyance Project, Bay-Delta Plan, and Sites Reservoir. (O)
5. Assess the compatibility of state and federal legislation and programs with Butte County's State and Federal Legislative Platform. (O)
6. Participate in and collaborate with committees, advisory boards, and other working groups that manage, monitor, and advise natural resource management activities including the Forest Advisory Committee, Land Use Coordinating Committee, Resource Conservation District, and other related entities. (O)

Goal 5: Advance Water Resource Education and Knowledge

Action Items

- 1. Continue to prepare and distribute the newsletter, *WaterSolutions*, on a regular basis (O)
(General Plan W-A5.2)
- 2. Continue to provide leadership in local and regional water forums (O)
- 3. Continue to participate in educational forums (O)
- 4. Maintain informative website for Department projects and programs and Water Education topics (General Plan W-A5.2)
- 5. Participate in educational and training opportunities and outreach through workshops, webinars, technical trainings, conferences and professional development to stay up to date on emerging technologies, best practices, and regulatory updates.