

**COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED AND REFERRED
BUTTE COUNTY WATER COMMISSION
MEETING OF MARCH 7, 2017**

Copies of all communications are available at the
Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation
308 Nelson Avenue
Oroville, CA 95965

1. *California Water Plan eNews, Wednesday's Update, January 31, 2018
2. *Article from *Chico Enterprise Record*, February 3, 2018, State slashes benefit claims of projects seeking Proposition 1 water storage money
3. *California Water Plan eNews, Wednesday's Update, February 7, 2018
4. *Article from *Chico Enterprise Record*, February 7, 2018, Two local agencies save water at 10 times statewide average
5. *Article from *Chico Enterprise Record*, February 7, 2018, What's the chance for 'normal' rain year now? Grim, if history is a gauge
6. *Article from *Chico Enterprise Record*, February 8, 2018, State plans just one delta tunnel, for now
7. *Article from *Chico Enterprise Record*, February 8, 2018, Two local agencies save water at 10 times statewide average
8. *California Water Plan eNews, Wednesday's Update, February 14, 2018
9. *California Water Plan eNews, Wednesday's Update, February 21, 2018
10. *Article from *Chico Enterprise Record*, February 21, 2018, Sacramento Valley left out of initial federal water allocations
11. *Article from *Chico Enterprise Record*, February 22, 2018, Some fear California drought cuts could erase water rights
12. *Article from *Chico Enterprise Record*, February 23, 2018, Deadline is Friday to appeal state's assessment of Proposition 1 water storage proposals
13. *Correspondence from NCWA

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INVEST**Wednesday Update****Jan. 31, 2018**

This weekly electronic newsletter is designed to keep you current on California Water Plan news. We welcome comments, suggestions, and any news tips that may be of interest to water planners.

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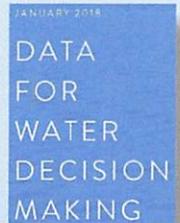
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Comment period opens for draft progress report on State water data platform

The public comment period has opened for a [draft progress report](#) on implementation of Assembly Bill 1755, [Open and Transparent Water Data Act](#). The act requires DWR to create, operate, and maintain a statewide integrated water-data platform. The comment deadline is Friday, March 16.

Multi-institution report takes up the cause of improving water data systems

The UC Berkeley School of Law has released a report based on a multi-institution collaboration to examine how water data systems can be designed for improving water management in California. A central goal of [Data for Water Decision Making](#) is to support efforts to make the most of the Open and Transparent Water Data Act.



Climate change actions and strategies detailed in updated CNRA report

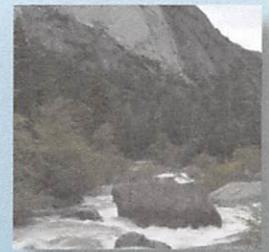
An updated report on State actions to adapt to climate change has been released by the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). [Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update](#) includes a chapter on how climate change impacts are affecting the state's hydrology. A [companion document](#) provides examples of climate change adaptation actions being taken throughout California.

Former DWR director to discuss changing priorities of state and federal water projects

Former DWR Director Lester Snow will be discussing water resources adaptation in the West, during a [presentation](#) on Thursday, Feb. 8, in Sacramento. It will include the changing priorities of State and federal water projects. Snow currently works with the non-profit [Klamath River Renewal Corporation](#).

Portions of the Mokelumne River being considered for wild and scenic river system

Public comments are being accepted on a [draft study](#) assessing the suitability of adding five segments of the Mokelumne River to the California Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The segments cover 62 miles between Salt Springs Dam and Pardee Reservoir. A public meeting on the draft study will be held Thursday, Feb. 15, in Mokelumne Hill.



Groundwater lessons uncovered in Environmental Defense Fund report

Lessons in sustainable management are the focus of a report from the Environmental Defense Fund. [The Future of Groundwater in California](#) covers nine case studies that look at a variety of groundwater management experiences to determine what works, and what does not.

General Plan Guidelines workshop set for next month in Eureka

The [next workshop](#) on the State's update of the [General Plan Guidelines](#) will be Friday, Feb. 9, in Eureka. The guidelines help local governments in preparing their general plans. The updated version of the guidelines takes into account climate change and its implications.

State slashes benefit claims of projects seeking Proposition 1 water storage money

By: Steve Schoonover, February 3, 2018

Sacramento >> The California Water Commission Friday posted its staff evaluation of the public benefit of the 11 projects vying for Proposition 1 water storage bond money, and the numbers were far lower than the applicants had claimed.

For example the proponents of Sites Reservoir, the off-stream reservoir proposed west of Maxwell, had claimed each dollar of public money invested would result in \$2.11 in public benefit. Water Commission staff said the actual benefit would be 40 cents on the dollar.

Applicants had claimed benefits as high as \$6.10. Four proposals came back at zero, and one at 1 cent. The public benefit of the Temperance Flat project was put at a dime on a dollar. None of the applications had a public benefit higher than 75 cents on the dollar.

The posting kicks off an appeal process which runs through Feb. 23.

"We are not kicking folks out," Joe Yun, executive officer of the commission told the San Jose Mercury News earlier. "This is an expression of additional information that needs to come."

Proposition 1, a \$7.5 billion bond measure approved by voters in November 2014, included \$2.7 billion for water storage projects. The 11 proposals were asking for \$5.7 billion.

The money cannot pay to just increase the amount of water stored. Instead the language of Proposition 1 limits the money's use to achieve five public benefits: ecosystem benefits, water quality, flood control, emergency response and recreation.

The Water Commission has until the end of 2021 to actually allocate the funds.

Here's how the projects panned out:

Sites Reservoir

The Sites Project Authority is seeking \$1.7 billion from Proposition 1 to help build a 1.8 million acre-foot reservoir. Water would be pumped into it from the Sacramento River during high winter and spring flows to be available during the dry months of summer and autumn.

The documents posted by the Water Commission Friday indicated the proponents claimed the investment would result on \$3.5 billion in benefits. The staff put the benefits at \$663 million.

The value of ecosystem benefits from the project was cut from \$3.2 billion to \$421 million, and flood control was cut from \$135 million to \$45 million.

The staff report specifically asked for more information to support the claimed ecosystem benefits, and Sites proponents have three weeks to provide that to seek to get the number revised.

Commission staff actually increased the claimed recreational value of Sites from \$192 million to \$197 million.

Temperance Flat Reservoir

The San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority is seeking \$1.3

billion for a \$2.7 billion project to build a new 319-foot high dam with a 1.33 million acre-foot reservoir on the San Joaquin River, upstream from the existing Friant Dam.

Claimed public benefits were \$2.86 per dollar invested; staff put the benefits at 10 cents on the dollar.

Pacheco Reservoir expansion

The Santa Clara Valley Water District is seeking \$485 million for a \$969 million project to replace an existing 100-foot-tall dam on Pacheco Creek, between Gilroy and Los Banos off Highway 152, with a new 319-foot dam just upstream. Storage would increase from 6,000 acre-feet to 140,000 acre-feet.

Claimed public benefits were \$2.43 per dollar invested; staff put the benefits at 36 cents on the dollar.

Chino Basin storage and exchange project

The Inland Empire Utilities Agency is seeking \$480 million for a \$480 million underground storage project southeast of Ontario in San Bernardino County that would draw water from local wastewater treatment plants and a contaminated groundwater basin, treat it, and put it in the ground. Claimed public benefits were \$1.72 for each dollar invested; staff put the benefits at 71 cents on the dollar.

Tulare Lake storage and floodwater protection project

Semitropic Water Storage District is seeking \$452 million for a \$603 million project that would capture excess Kings River winter flows and transport the water to a new surface reservoir adjacent to the California Aqueduct near Kettleman City in Kings County.

Claimed public benefits were \$1.62 per dollar invested; staff put the benefits at 1 cent on the dollar.

Los Vaqueros Reservoir expansion

The Contra Costa Water District is seeking \$434 million for a \$795 million project to enlarge Los Vaqueros Reservoir, off-stream reservoir in eastern Contra Costa County, from 160,000 acre-feet to 275,000 acre-feet.

Claimed public benefits were \$3.58 per dollar; staff put the benefits at 46 cents on the dollar.

South Sacramento recycled water project

The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District is seeking \$304 million for a \$373 million project that would treat wastewater and store it underground.

Claimed public benefits were \$2.85 for each dollar invested; staff put the benefits at 75 cents on the dollar.

Willow Springs Water Groundwater Bank

The Southern California Water Bank Authority is seeking \$306 million for a \$343 million project expand an existing Southern California groundwater bank from 500,000 to 1 million acre-feet, in the Antelope Valley northwest of Palmdale.

Claimed public benefits were \$2.60 for each dollar invested; staff put the benefits at zero.

Pure Water San Diego

The city of San Diego Public Utilities Department is seeking \$219 million for a \$1.2 billion local reservoir and water recycling project in northern San Diego. Claimed public benefits were \$6.09 per dollar invested; staff put the benefits at zero.

Kern Fan groundwater storage project

The Irvine Ranch Water District/Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District is seeking \$86 million for a \$171 million project to expand an existing groundwater bank in Kern County, about 15 miles west of Bakersfield.

Claimed public benefits were \$1.47 for each dollar invested; staff put the benefits at 58 cents on the dollar.

Centennial Dam

The Nevada Irrigation District is seeking \$12 million for a new \$324 million, 110,000-acre-foot reservoir on the Bear River between the existing Combie and Rollins Reservoirs, on the border between Nevada and Plumas counties.

Claimed public benefits were \$4.19 per dollar invested; staff put the benefits at zero.

Reach City Editor Steve Schoonover at 896-7750.

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INVEST**Wednesday Update**

Feb. 7, 2018

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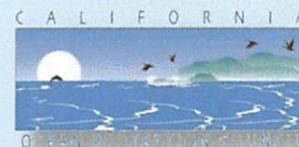
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COMMENTS /
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The California Water Commission (CWC) staff has released its review of [public benefits ratios](#) for proposed projects submitted to the [Water Storage Investment Program](#). The review is the first step in the process of quantifying the public benefits of the proposed projects. Applicants have an opportunity to provide more information before a [second review](#) is conducted.

How seagrass and kelp may help with a problem off the California coast

The possibility of using seagrass and kelp to reduce ocean acidification is explored in a [report](#) from the California Ocean Protection Council. Ocean acidification has implications for wildlife and could potentially alter fisheries along the West Coast. The report is part of an [ongoing effort](#) by California to address the problem.

**\$3.4 million available for projects to restore forest areas damaged by wildfires**

[Funding requests are being accepted](#) for projects that help restore lands and watersheds damaged by recent California wildfires. The funding opportunity covers damage done by two wildfires, the Storrie Fire in Lassen National Forest, and the Power Fire in Eldorado National forest. \$3.4 million is available. The proposal deadline is Thursday, March 22.

Sierra Nevada watershed summit will look at regional approach to climate goals

The annual [Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program Summit](#) will be Wednesday, March 7, in Sacramento. The agenda is under development, but it will offer an opportunity to learn about taking a regional approach to implementing some of California's climate goals. [RSVPs](#) are requested.

**DWR lists projects that deliver the latest climate science and information**

To keep DWR current with the latest climate science, DWR conducts collaborative and extensive engagement with the academic and scientific communities. DWR has released [Climate Science Support](#), which lists more than two dozen projects that provide the water management community with some of the latest data and information available on hydrologic impacts, planning, and outreach.

Water conflict management and diplomacy to be discussed during webinar next week

The American Water Resources Association will present a [water conflict management and diplomacy webinar](#) on Wednesday, Feb. 14. It will look at water conflict management trends being used around the world, plus look at some of the skills being used to support those trends. The webinar will include a question-and-answer session with the instructors from [IHE-Delft](#) and Oregon State University.



Two local agencies save water at 10 times statewide average

By: Staff Reports, February 7, 2018

Sacramento >> Two local water agencies reported water savings in December that were 10 times better than the statewide average.

Still, statewide water conservation numbers were just 2.9 percent compared to December 2013, the benchmark pre-drought year, according to the California Water Resources Control Board.

The Del Oro Water Co. reported savings of 31.4 percent in December, 14th best among the 374 water deliverers that reported. The Oroville District of the California Water Service Co. saved 30.7 percent, good enough for 16th. The Chico District of Cal Water wasn't far behind at 25.1 percent.

However the Paradise Irrigation District reported savings of just 6.5 percent and the Willows District of Cal Water came in at 6.9 percent.

That was better than 133 water agencies that reported using more water in December 2018 than December 2013.

The entire South Coast region used 2.8 percent more water, while the Sacramento River Basin used 16 percent less. The San Francisco Bay Area saved at a 13.1 percent rate.

In other north valley cities, saving rates included 15 percent in Red Bluff, 9.9 percent in Redding, 20.1 percent in Marysville and 12.8 percent in Yuba City.

The statewide savings were put at 11,349 acre-feet.

Statewide average water consumption per person per day was 78 gallons. In Oroville the number was 47 gallons, with 56 gallons in Del Oro, 71 gallons in Chico and Willows, and 100 gallons in Paradise.

What's the chance for a 'normal' rain year now? Grim, if history is a gauge

By: Paul Rogers, February 7, 2018

Hoping for a March Miracle to bail out California's dry winter? It's not likely.

A review of more than 100 years of rainfall records of major cities in California — including San Jose, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Rosa, Redding and Fresno — shows that none have ever finished the rainy season with normal rainfall totals after ending January with the amount of rain they've had so far this winter.

In San Francisco, where rainfall records date back to 1849, the odds are only a little better. Just twice has the city's rainfall total recovered to its normal level of 23.65 inches by June 30 after being where it is now, at 8.53 inches, from July 1 through Jan. 31.

In Eureka, it's happened three times since 1885. In the rest of the cities, not once, even though their weather records also date back to the late 1800s.

In other words, California winters are like Olympic ski racers. Stumble at the beginning of the race, and it's very difficult to catch up by the end.

"The odds are against you with a bad start," said Jan Null, a meteorologist with Golden Gate Weather Services in Saratoga, who compiled the data. "Usually there just aren't enough opportunities to recover."

California's Mediterranean climate means that most rain every year falls during four months: December, January, February and March.

In Sacramento, it's 68 percent and in Los Angeles, it's 78 percent.

So far this winter, December was dry, January was about average in most areas — saved by one big storm on Jan. 8 and 9 — and February so far has been bone dry and hot, with forecasts calling for another 10 days of warm, sunny weather.

While it could still rain considerably between now and April 1, much of the state remains in a sizable rainfall deficit this winter. History shows that when the deficits are this big, there are rarely, if ever, enough storms in most Marches to salvage a normal year.

"There's a reason they call it a Miracle March," said Bill Patzert, who worked for 35 years as a research scientist and oceanographer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. "That's because it doesn't happen that often."

"Miracles are hard to find," he added. "There are plenty of them in the Old Testament, but there aren't that many in California when it comes to water. I wouldn't be betting what's left of your 401K on any miracles."

The rainfall totals from last July 1 through Jan. 31 are not dismal. They just aren't big enough, history shows, to get to a 'normal year,' by June 30, which Null defines in his research as the average rainfall between 1981 and 2010 in each area.

After suffering through the worst drought in the state's recorded history from December 2011 to March 2017, California residents,

water managers, farmers, fire chiefs, fisheries biologists and ski resort owners are jittery. The big fear: What if last winter's soaking storms — the deluges that drove Gov. Jerry Brown to announce an end to the drought emergency last April — were just a one-year fluke and the state is heading back into another drought?

"We had one really good atmospheric river last month," said Mike Anderson, California's state climatologist with the Department of Water Resources. "I got almost three inches of rain at my house in Davis. That was pretty exciting. But ever since then in the north we've only had a few little storms without much water vapor, and the south really hasn't had anything."

"The possibility of getting back to average this winter is pretty slim," he said. "We need to make conservation a way of life and be prepared for dry years when they show up."

Meanwhile, the Sierra Nevada snowpack, the source of one-third of the California's water, is at just 24 percent of the historic average. Lack of storms, and hot temperatures have put it at levels last seen during the drought.

The good news is that last year's storms filled many of California's largest reservoirs. Hydrologically, that's money in the bank. Combined, 46 of the biggest reservoirs in California are at 106 percent of their historic average storage level or the first week in February, according to state records.

The largest, Shasta Lake, near Redding, was 74 percent full on Monday, or 108 percent of the historic average for that date.

State plans just one delta tunnel, for now

By: Staff Reports, February 8, 2018

Sacramento >> Gov. Jerry Brown's administration is moving forward with its plan for two large tunnels to carry water under the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, but says it will only build one tunnel for the time being.

Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth wrote Wednesday that California would build a second tunnel later if money is found for it.

The project would pipe water from the Sacramento River at the north end of the delta to the giant pumps on the south side that send it to Southern California, the San Joaquin Valley and the Bay Area.

But water districts balked at the \$16 billion cost of the two tunnels.

The project was originally a joint state and federal project. But after the biggest customer of the federal Central Valley Project — the Westlands Water District — pulled out due to the cost and the uncertainty it would get any more water, the federal part of the effort collapsed.

A number of State Water Contractors had agreed to their part of the cost, including the huge Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Kern County Water Agency.

But a third large customer, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, said the price was too high, though it might support a smaller, single-tunnel approach.

The state puts the cost of the single tunnel at \$10.7 billion, all to be paid by water districts that use the supply.

A different single tunnel project, however, would probably require a new, costly and lengthy environmental review. The Sierra Club in California and other environmental groups alleged that the state is saying the two-tunnel plan still survives only to avoid seeking new permits and approval on a single-tunnel project.

Nemeth's memo said the first stage would include two intakes with a total capacity of 6,000 cubic-feet per second, one tunnel, one intermediate forebay, and one pumping station.

The second stage would consist of a third intake with 3,000 cfs capacity, a second tunnel, and a second pumping station to bring the total project capacity to 9,000 cfs.

The current entire flow of the Sacramento River at Hamilton City Wednesday afternoon was 6,110 cfs.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Two local agencies save water at 10 times statewide average

By: Risa Johnson, February 8, 2018

Oroville >> Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey announced Wednesday that his office filed a lawsuit against the state Department of Water Resources for environmental damages to the Feather River as a result of the Oroville Dam crisis.

On the one-year anniversary of the day the spillway started to break apart, Ramsey said his office was civilly prosecuting DWR under a state law enacted in 1875 to fight pollution of the state's rivers. The DA's office is suing the state on behalf of the people of California. Ramsey said he planned to issue a summons by early next week.

Civil penalties could be as high as \$51 billion for dumping 1.7 million cubic yards of debris, including concrete ripped from the main spillway and soil from the emergency spillway, into the Feather River, according to the DA's office.

The debris was harmful to fish, birds, mammals and plant life, according to the suit. Concrete and soil that went into the Feather River weighed about 2,000-3,000 pounds per cubic yard, resulting in a total discharge between 3.4 billion and 5.1 billion pounds, the lawsuit alleges.

Ramsey said the state Fish and Game Code Section 5650 allows for a civil penalty of \$10 per pound of material, which could total between \$34 billion and \$51 billion. It is the oldest California environmental statute.

"Our environmental unit has, over the years, brought many 5650 cases in which excessive soil has pushed into creeks, streams, the river," he said. "Because of the excessive nature of that soil, we consider it to be a deleterious substance. The cases that we've brought have been against rouge graders – people that are trying to put in, without permits, various roads or grading hillsides, not the least of which are pot planters."

Usually it is a challenge to prove how much material is dispensed and there is an after-the-fact investigation, but that was not necessary in this case, as DWR admitted 1.7 million cubic yards of debris had gone into the river, the DA said.

"Imagine, if you would, a cubic yard. Stack those one after the other and you'll go 965 miles to the east of Denver," Ramsey said. "In addition to asking for penalties, we are also asking for injunctive relief from DWR to ensure that in their construction, this does not happen again."

The department showed there was an effect on fish as steelhead trout and salmon had to be vacated from the Feather River Fish Hatchery. Under the state code, there is no need to prove that there was an intent to cause damages.

"Basically, you dump, you're liable," he said. "In this case, there is palatable negligence in this dam environmental disaster."

DWR will now have to reveal how much debris has been removed, Ramsey said.

"Certainly they will not have taken everything out," he said. "Most of that material is now between here and the San Francisco Bay."

The lawsuit also asks for restitution from the state for all government

agencies that incurred expenses "responding to, cleaning up and investigating defendant's violations of law."

Since this is a civil case, it will be considered by a single judge, not a jury. Ramsey said it was not possible to file a criminal suit against the state. As for why file now, Ramsey said he was waiting for the independent forensic team report to come out.

The city of Oroville has filed a lawsuit against DWR for expenses and the county has said it intends to do the same.

The lawsuit also asks for damages "for the loss of public resources including the loss of fish, plant, bird and animal life caused by the violations of law described above."

Supporting the allegations are some forensic report findings, released Jan. 5, including that the spillway was built on a weak foundation, without sufficient anchoring and concrete slab thickness, and that the emergency spillway was not properly reinforced. The time period for the environmentally problematic releases in the lawsuit is from Feb. 7-27, 2017.

The state Department of Water Resources previously stated it does not comment on pending litigation.

Contact reporter Risa Johnson at 896-7763.

CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN eNEWS

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Wednesday Update



Feb. 14, 2018

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Webinar will provide preview of Update 2018 public review draft

A preview of the public review draft for [California Water Plan Update 2018](#) will be provided during a webinar on Tuesday, Feb. 27. The agenda and other materials are in development. They will be posted on the Update 2018 [meeting materials](#) webpage as they become available. [Online registration](#) for the webinar is open.



Next California Water Commission meeting set for Feb. 21, in Sacramento

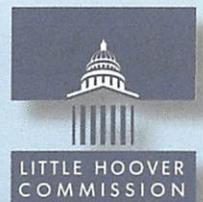
The California Water Commission will meet Wednesday, Feb. 21, in Sacramento. The [agenda](#) includes a review of draft text for the commission's 2017 State Water Project review. Commissioners will also receive a briefing on inundation map regulations.

\$85 million in groundwater sustainability funding recommended by DWR

DWR is recommending the awarding of more than [\\$85 million in funding](#) under the [Sustainable Groundwater Planning Grant Program](#). Most of the funding will go to local agencies for the development of their groundwater sustainability plans. More than \$16 million will go toward groundwater sustainability planning and management in severely disadvantaged communities.

Little Hoover Commission calls for changes in the way the state's forests are managed

California's [Little Hoover Commission](#) has released a report calling for transformational culture change in the way the state's forests are managed. [Fire on the Mountain: Rethinking Forest Management in the Sierra Nevada](#), makes nine recommendations, including a policy shift from fire suppression to using fire as a tool.



Council endorses three-year plan to improve equity in government practices

The [Strategic Growth Council](#) has endorsed the [Equity in Government Practices Action Plan](#) that was developed by the council's [Health in all Policies Task Force](#). The three-year action plan looks to develop racial equity action plans, along with incorporating equity into grants, guidelines, and programs.

Arizona receives framework for developing direct potable reuse

Arizona is among the latest states to take a look at direct potable water reuse. The [Guidance Framework for Direct Potable Reuse in Arizona](#) has been prepared by the [National Water Research Institute](#). The report is intended to help the state government develop regulations for direct potable reuse.

State scorecard on water efficiency to be discussed at upcoming webinar

The [Alliance for Water Efficiency](#) is updating its state scorecard on water efficiency and conservation. It will be discussed during a [webinar](#) on Wednesday, March 21. There will be information on national trends and new state laws that pertain to efficiency and conservation. The last scorecard was released in 2012.

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Wednesday Update**Feb. 21, 2018**

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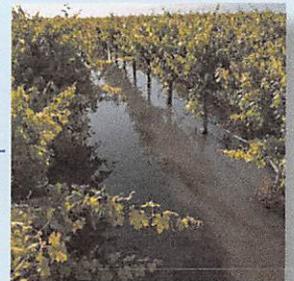
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CDFA secretary to speak as part of water resources adaptation series

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Secretary [Karen Ross](#) will be [next month's guest speaker](#) for the American Water Resources Association's [adaptation series](#). Her presentation will be, "How California Agriculture is Adapting to Climatic and Water Supply Challenges." The event will be March 8, in Sacramento.

Webinar will demonstrate tool that helps evaluate groundwater recharge projects

A chance to learn about cost-effective groundwater recharge projects will be provided during a [webinar](#) on Thursday, March 15. It will provide a demonstration of the [Groundwater Recharge Assessment Tool](#) (GRAT). It is a map-based application that can be customized by water agencies and groundwater sustainability agencies to evaluate recharge project scenarios.



Sustainable food production to be highlighted at Good Food Showcase

An expo to bring sustainable growers and food service advocates together is in the works for Alameda County. The [Good Food Showcase](#) will be Thursday, March 8, in Livermore. Community advocates are invited to participate in the interactive networking that will be part of the expo.

Water council to get update on Open and Transparent Water Data Act

The [next meeting](#) of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council will be Friday, Feb. 23, in Sacramento. The [agenda](#) includes an update on the Open and Transparent Water Data Act, and the recently released [draft progress report](#) on implementing the act.

Systems on display during upcoming Water Board Data Fair

This year's [Water Board Data Fair](#) will be Friday, March 20, in Sacramento. There will be a presentation on three groundwater data systems used by the Water Board, plus a panel discussion on the data life cycle. The board's water-technology partner, [ImagineH2O](#), will be participating in the event.



IEP annual three-day workshop set for next month in Folsom

The [Interagency Ecological Program's](#) (IEP's) [annual workshop](#) will be March 6-8, in Folsom. The event will showcase research results and technical analysis on topics that are priorities for the IEP and the Delta science community. The [IEP](#) is a consortium of State and federal agencies.

CDFW releases revised conservation investment strategy guidelines

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW's) Habitat Conservation Planning Branch has released its revised [Regional Conservation Investment Strategies Program Guidelines](#). The [program](#) encourages a voluntary, non-regulatory regional planning process intended to result in higher-quality conservation outcomes.

Sacramento Valley left out of initial federal water allocations

By: Staff Reports, February 21, 2018

An initial allocation of water has been announced for some of the water users of the federal Central Valley Project, but those in the Sacramento Valley were not included.

In a press release Tuesday, the Bureau of Reclamation said the decision was delayed north of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta due to low snowpack levels and uncertainty about whether Shasta Lake can provide enough cool water for endangered salmon species in the Sacramento River through summer and fall.

No allocation was made for American River or in-delta contractors either, due to the integrated operation of Shasta and Folsom lakes.

For south-of-delta contractors, agriculture districts were allocated 20 percent of their contract total and municipal and industrial users were allocated 70 percent.

The eastern San Joaquin Valley contractors relying on water from Millerton Lake will get 30 percent. The Central San Joaquin Water Conservation District and Stockton East Water District will receive 100 percent of their contract total.

The reservoirs in California, with the exception of Lake Oroville, are more full than usual due to last winter's rain and snow, but rainfall thus far this year is just 60 percent of average. Snowpack is even worse, just 20 percent of average for this time of year.

"California's lack of sufficient water storage forces us to operate on a year-to-year basis," said David Murillo, the Bureau of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region director. "The amount we can store in our reservoirs is not enough to get us through these very dry years."

Should conditions change, CVP supplies could also change.

"Current dry conditions and the dry forecast underscore the need for all Californians to be conservative in their water use this spring," Murillo said. "Without significant rain and snow this spring, conditions could worsen."

Some fear California drought cuts could erase water rights

By: Jonathan J. Cooper, February 22, 2018

SACRAMENTO — A proposal to make California's drought-era water restrictions permanent could allow the state to chip away at long-held water rights in an unprecedented power grab, representatives from water districts and other users told regulators Tuesday.

Members of the state Water Resources Control Board delayed a decision about whether to bring back what had been temporary water bans from California's drought, spanning 2013 to 2017. The plan is part of an effort to make water conservation a way of life, with climate change expected to lead to longer, more severe droughts.

It comes after U.S. officials declared that nearly half the state, all of it in the south, is back in drought just months after emerging from it.

Officials from several irrigation and water agencies said the restrictions are reasonable, but not the plan to impose them under the state Constitution's prohibition on the "waste or unreasonable use" of water. That would create a slippery slope of allowing the board to repeatedly chip away at California's historic protection of water rights for landowners, they said.

"Erratic individuals can occupy great positions of power in government, and you had better believe they will occupy your chair someday," said Jackson Minasian, an attorney for Stanford Vina Ranch Irrigation Co. "Their view of what is 'waste and unreasonable use' will be radically different than yours."

Some water users also said permanent mandates would be too rigid in a sprawling state with needs that vary by region.

The restrictions, punishable by a \$500 fine, include prohibitions on watering lawns so much that the water flows into the street, using a hose to wash down sidewalks or using a hose without an automatic shut-off nozzle to wash cars. A final decision is now expected by April 17.

Hotels would have to ask guests if they really need their towels and sheets washed each day. Running an ornamental fountain without a recirculating system would be barred, as would watering outside within 48 hours of a good rain. Another measure would give cities and counties until 2025 to stop watering ordinary street medians.

Restaurants would be allowed to serve water only on request if the governor declares a drought emergency.

Water officials expect neighbors to be responsible for detecting and reporting most of the wasteful water use, and they have no plans to add more enforcement officers if the permanent restrictions are adopted.

Generally, first-time offenders would get warnings, while repeat offenders risk fines.

Environmental groups urged officials to crack down more aggressively on wasteful water use rather than rely on policies that encourage neighbors to develop good practices.

Water board chairwoman Felicia Marcus said the restrictions are hardly a long-term solution to California's drought problems but "the least we should do."

"We're not in an emergency right now, but shame on us if we just

bury our heads in the sand ... allow people to go out and waste water by washing down the driveway with a hose when a broom would do," she said.

The plan also includes legislation that would create customized water-use limits for urban water districts, which would risk state enforcement if they fell short. Lawmakers also are considering whether to allow districts to enforce drought regulations, a power now reserved for the state.

Gov. Jerry Brown lifted California's emergency drought status a year ago, after a wet winter. Strict 25 percent conservation orders for cities and towns and other restrictions then were phased out.

Some climate scientists say the drought never fully ended in parts of Southern California. The Los Angeles area has received just a fourth of normal rainfall so far this rainy season.

In the Northern Sierra Nevada, the winter so far has been the third-driest on record for the year's wettest three months — December, January and February — produced very little rainfall, said John Leahigh of the California Department of Water Resources.

The water content of the Sierra snowpack, which feeds water supplies, is about 20 percent of normal for this time of year, he said.

Most of California's reservoirs are at or slightly above their historical average for this time of year, but experts expect that to fall when water is released in the spring and summer and not enough melting snow can replenish it.

"This is a very ugly picture in terms of the water supply management," Leahigh said.

Deadline is Friday to appeal state's assessment of Proposition 1 water storage proposals

By: Steve Schoonover, February 23, 2018

Friday is the deadline for agencies seeking water storage money from the Proposition 1 bond measure to respond to the critiques of their proposals by the California Water Commission staff.

It's the third leg of the back-and-forth between the applicants and the state. The applicants first provided their estimates of the public benefits of their projects, and the Water Commission staff responded with its estimates of those benefits, which were much lower.

At stake is \$2.7 billion in bond money dedicated to increasing water storage, which was included in the broader \$7.5 billion water bond approved by voters in November 2014.

Eleven applications were filed for the money, including one for Sites Reservoir west of Maxwell. Those 11 sought a total of \$5.7 billion. The Water Commission staff's review only found \$1.7 billion in public benefits from the projects. That's a billion dollars less than the commission has to spend by the end of 2021, so the situation is still fluid.

The Water Commission met Wednesday in Sacramento, and although discussion of the proposals was not on the agenda, groups lobbied for and against specific projects in the public comment part of the meeting.

The water storage advocates included Assembly Minority Leader Brian Dahle, R-Bieber, who showed up with a red wagon full of petitions. He said the petitions contained 4,000 signatures of people demanding immediate approval of funding for Sites and Temperance Flat reservoirs.

Sites would be an off-stream reservoir in Colusa County that could hold 1.8 million acre-feet of water. Temperance Flat would be a 1.33 million acre-foot reservoir on the San Joaquin River, upstream from the existing Friant Dam.

"Four years ago, California voters overwhelmingly approved a \$7 billion water bond on the promise of new surface storage projects," Dahle said in a press release. "Our government has made a habit of selling the voters a false bill of goods. It is long past time that our government starts keeping its promises."

The text of Proposition 1 does not promise or even mention Sites or Temperance Flat. Instead it sets out a competitive process for the money and said it can be used for surface storage, groundwater storage or several other things.

The text also limits the money's use to build storage that serves just five specified public benefits. Increasing the amount of water stored and available for public use is not one of those five benefits. Instead the benefits are: ecosystem improvements, water quality improvements, flood control, emergency response and recreation.

The measure further prohibits the commission or the Legislature from diverting from those restrictions without a two-thirds vote of the Legislature and an additional vote of the public.

The Sites Joint Powers Authority will be filing an appeal of the Water Commission staff's analysis of its proposal by Friday's deadline, according to JPA General Manager Jim Watson.

The advocates of the reservoir had claimed \$3.5 billion in public benefits. The commission staff pegged it at \$663 million.

The two sides met Feb. 7 to discuss their differences. An audio tape of that meeting indicated Water Commission staff wanted a broader view of the impacts of the project. "You're changing the whole hydrological system," the Sites supporters were told at one point.

For instance, the operational plan would see water taken out of the Sacramento River in the winter to fill the reservoir. That might mean less water in the Yolo Bypass, the massive flood diversion channel west of Sacramento that takes excess water safely past the state capital. The Water Commission wanted to know what the effect on the bypass would be if there was less water there.

"We'll be bringing back additional information," Watson said, "but they need to understand that we're making an offer, they're going to make a counteroffer and at the end of the day we have to decide whether we're going to accept that."

The Sites advocates have said they've arranged enough private investors to build the reservoir without the state money. As a result their proposal to the state was different than the others.

"They see it as a grant, but what we're offering them is an investment," Watson said.

Rather than providing money to get something built, the state money would buy it rights to a share of the water from the reservoir. The state could manage it as it wished and use it for whatever it wanted, whenever it wanted.

"This flexibility is really unique," Watson said. "We're really excited about it. I think we're on the right track."

However a public-private partnership is new for state water officials, and it wasn't clear the state understood how it would work. And it wasn't clear the protocols used to analyze the proposals for bond money were flexible enough to measure the value of something different.

Watson pointed out there's a serious need to improve conditions in the Sacramento River and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

"We need to try a different way, because the same process we've been using clearly is not working."

"We think this model has a lot of merit," he said.

He'll find out if the Water Commission agrees in July. That's when its staff is expected to have a response to the appeals filed Friday.

Reach City Editor Steve Schoonover at 896-7750.

Thomas, Autum

From: NCWA <dherrera@norcalwater.org>
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 8:57 AM
To: BCWater
Subject: NCWA Social Media Newsletter

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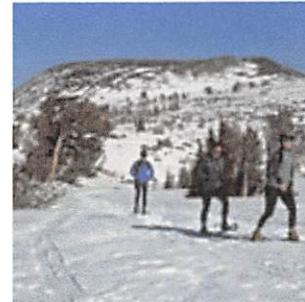


NCWA
Northern California Water Association

2017 Wet Year Provides Welcome Bump to Groundwater Levels in Butte County

*Written by: Dr. Christina Buck, Assistant Director
Department of Water and Resource Conservation, Butte County*

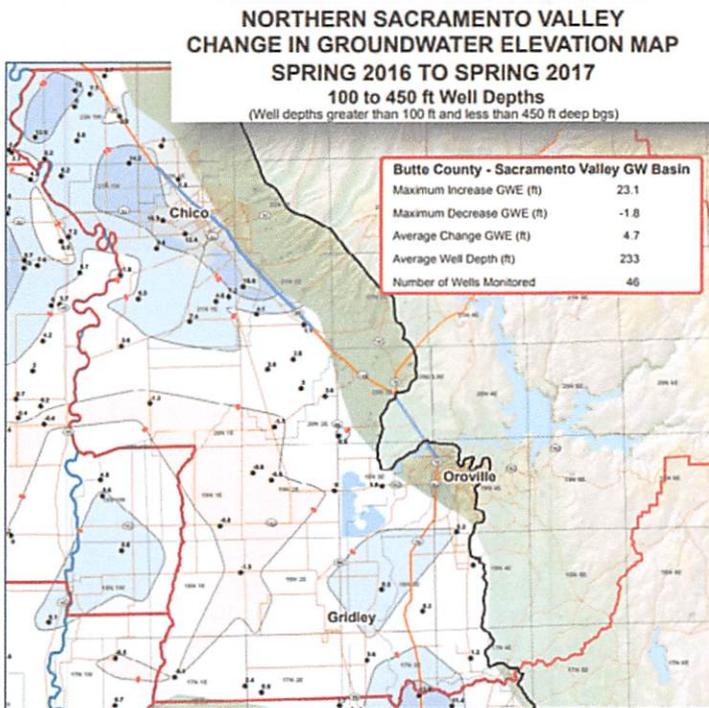
With a historically wet 2017 in the Sacramento River Hydrologic region, there was great anticipation of the results from the spring 2017 groundwater level monitoring conducted by the Department of Water Resources. In Butte County, spring groundwater levels (measured in March) showed an overall average 4.7 foot increase compared to their spring 2016 levels in 46 comparable wells (100-450 ft. depth). Although it may sound moderate, this is a significant increase over the changes we had observed during the past couple of severely dry years. As during the dry years, water levels remained relatively stable, mostly +/- 1 foot of change, in surface



Institute of Forest Genetics.
Contributed by [Carl Gwyn](#)



water irrigated areas in the county. Groundwater levels have the greatest swings within years and between years in areas that are dependent on groundwater pumping for irrigation and on the east side of the valley. In Butte County, this is mostly north and south of Chico where groundwater irrigated orchards are grown and the City of Chico is served by groundwater. The southern part of the county is characterized largely by surface water irrigated rice, with the exception of the Highway 70 corridor that has orchards served by a mix of groundwater and surface water.

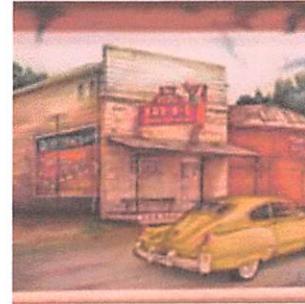


The change maps show that areas with the greatest declines during the dry years (north and south of Chico, 2011-2015), also experienced the greatest increases during the 2017 wet year. Groundwater levels dropped during the recent drought (2011 to 2015) on the order of 5 to 20 feet in the Vina, Chico, Durham and east side areas. In 2017, water levels in these areas increased 5 to 15 feet. Other parts of the county saw more moderate changes both during the dry and wet years, largely due to reliable surface water supplies.

Video: Chico Dairy.

Contributed by

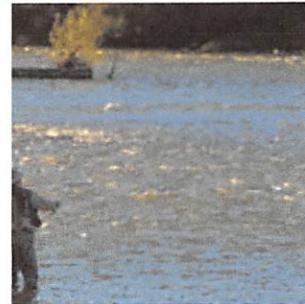
[Jennifer Harrison](#)



Poor Red's Bar-B-Q:

A Fun and Historic Stop in the Valley Foothills.

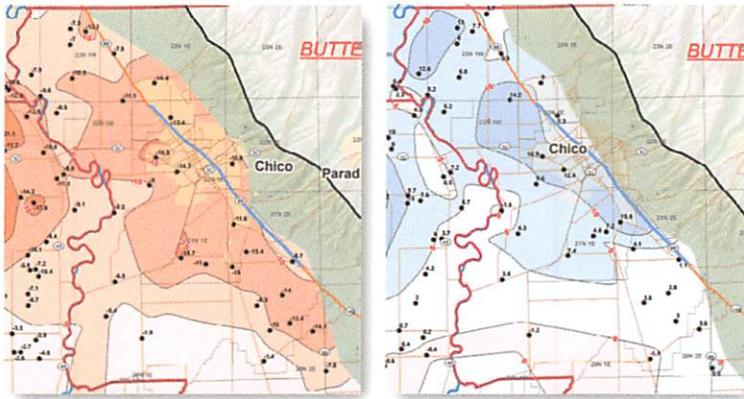
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Casting Hope for Our Future.

Contributed by [Jim Morris](#)

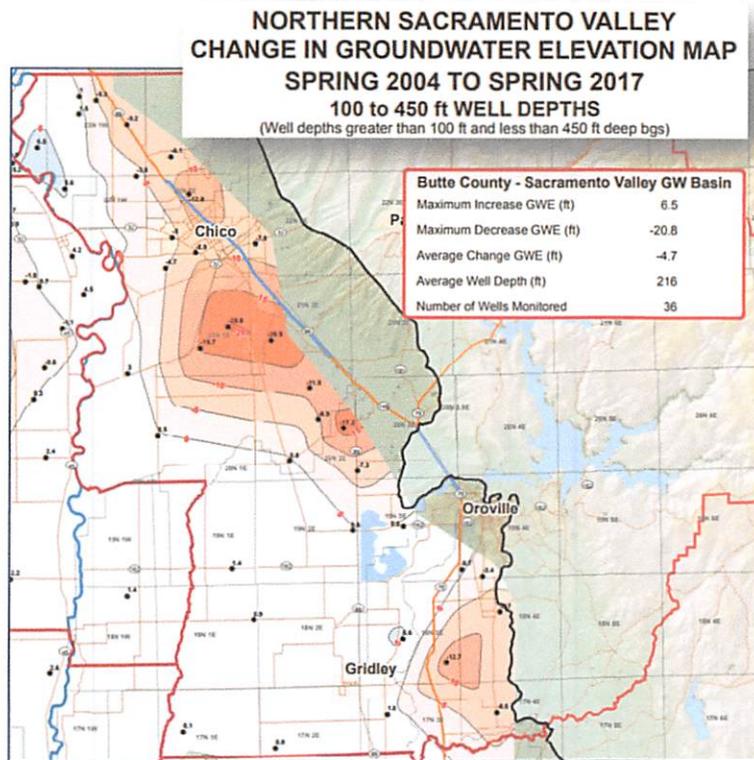
**DWR CHANGE IN GROUNDWATER ELEVATION MAPS
PORTION OF BUTTE COUNTY
100 to 450 ft. WELL DEPTHS**



**Spring 2011 to Spring 2015
Declines during multiple dry years**

**Spring 2016 to Spring 2017
Recovery during wet year**

Although the historically wet year largely made up for the most recent severely dry year(s), generally speaking it was not enough to compensate for the cumulative effects of multiple dry years since the mid-2000s. The DWR change map comparing 2004 to 2017 continues to show areas of decline in northern Butte County with the greatest declines south of Chico in the Durham area. Several wells in this area are still down 15 to 20 feet compared to their 2004 levels. It will take multiple wet years, or other direct or indirect (in-lieu) recharge efforts to bring groundwater levels up in this area.



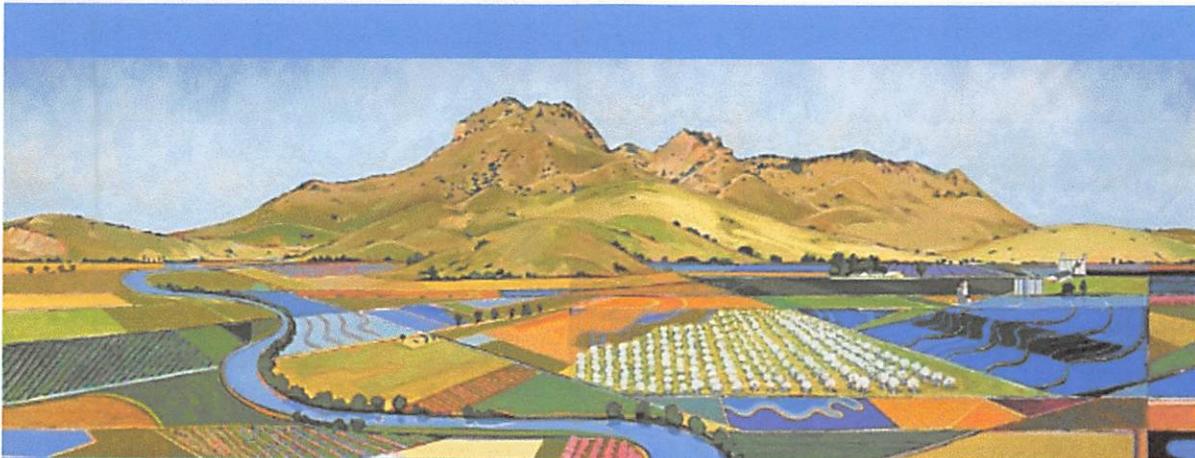
It is important to remember that each monitoring well tells its own story since they vary in depth, well type (irrigation, domestic, dedicated monitoring wells), location, and surrounding conditions, however spring levels overall give a big picture view of basin conditions and how they change throughout the County and over time.

Although areas of decline still exist in the county, the wet year provided much needed recharge to the basin and an opportunity for water levels to recover significantly. We continue to experience great extremes in California hydrology from historically dry to historically wet conditions within just a few years. These big swings in the surface water system generally lead to moderate annual changes in the groundwater system in Butte County, both up and down. Managing our water resources with the reality of these extremes is our challenge and opportunity.

FACT SHEET: The State of Sacramento Valley Groundwater



July 1, 2017



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