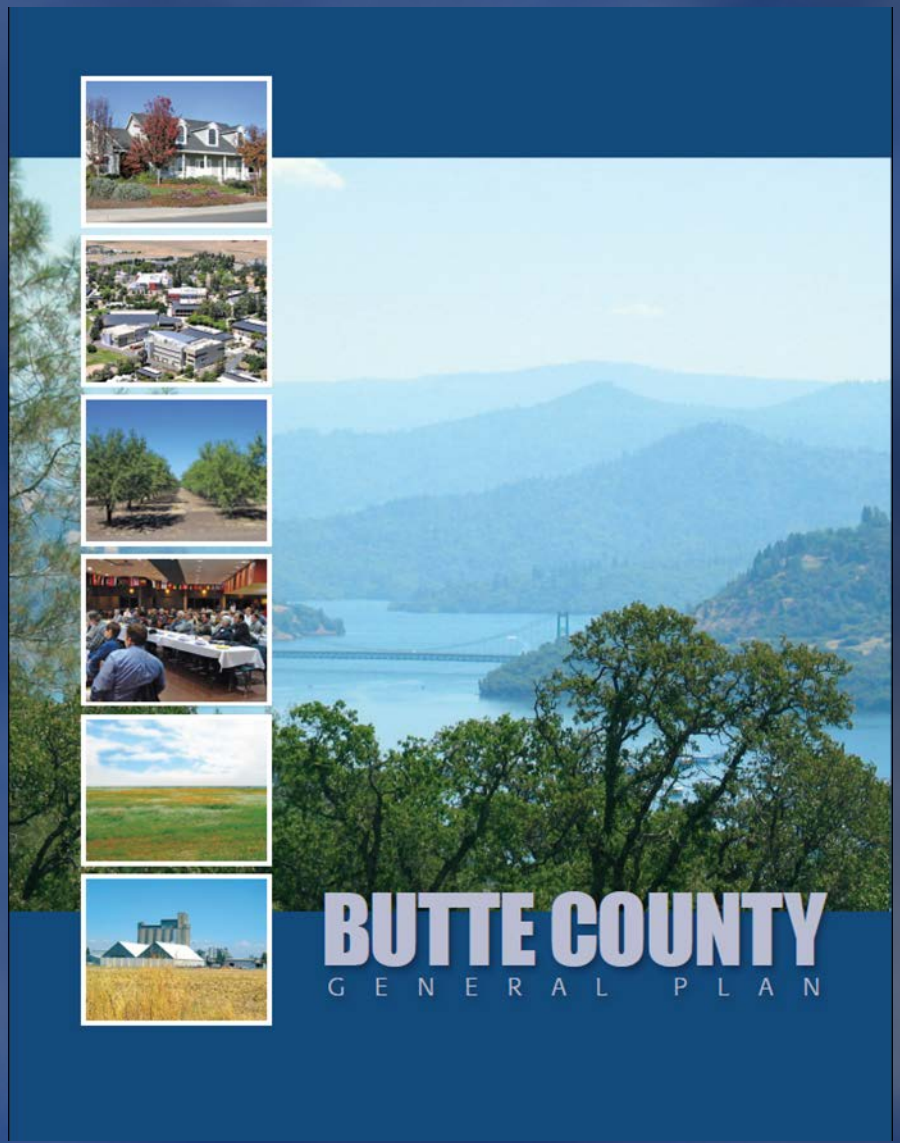
The Butte County General Plan Water Element Experience



Paul Gosselin, Director
October 3, 2017

The Butte County General Plan Water Element Experience

SGMA Water Management and Land Use

County Authorities & Role

- Well permitting
- Land use
- Police powers to manage groundwater
- Presumed to be the GSA for unmanaged areas

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SGMA Water Management and Land Use

Required Collaboration

Land Use Agencies ⟷ **Groundwater Sustainability Agencies**

Can a relationship be built?

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Case Study: Butte County General Plan 2030 Water Resources Element

How did it happen?

What lessons were learned?

BUTTE COUNTY
GENERAL PLAN
2030

Adopted (County Resolution 10-152,
Final EIR Certified under Resolution 10-150):
October 26, 2010

Amended (County Resolution 12-124,
Supplemental Final EIR Certified under Resolution 12-123):
November 6, 2012

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Local History

Strong Community Interest in Water

Internal and External Threats

Reaction

- ***Butte Basin Water Users Association***
- ***1996 Groundwater Conservation Ordinance***
- ***Groundwater Management Plan***
- ***Recognition of Land Use in Water Plans***

We joined the General Plan Journey …..

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The General Plan Journey

New relationships, process and language

Community involvement – value driven process

Water Resource Data – "Settings and Trends" Report

Water Resources Element Debate

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Water Resources Element

Water Commission & Planning Commission

Key topics

- *Recharge area protection*
- *Water supply reliability*
- *Assessment of impacts on the basin*
- *Sustainability*

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Water Resource Element

Compilation of existing programs and policies

New Policies/Action Items

- ***Low Impact Development (LID)***
- ***Assessment of groundwater impacts to surrounding groundwater users and the environment***
- ***Promotion of groundwater recharge***

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Lessons Learned

Informed the process

- *Water budget*
- *Monitoring*
- *Hydrologic conceptual model (recharge)*
- *All data/analysis became part of the DEIR*
- *Modified some proposed growth areas*

"You can't always get what you want…."

Can never avoid litigation

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Lessons Learned

Created a new institutional relationship

Two way dialogue & collaboration

- ***Pre-project involvement***
- ***Water budget update***
- ***Routine collaboration***

Take home message….

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Start the conversation early

Expect and accept differences

Collaboration and coordination CAN work

Butte County
WATER & RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Thank You