

A banner for Butte County General Plan 2030. The top part features the text "Butte County" in a large, stylized font, with "General Plan 2030" below it. To the left of the text is the Butte County seal, which is circular and contains a landscape scene with a mountain, a river, and a tree. Below the text and seal is a black and white illustration of a rural landscape with a barn, a fence, and a field.

*Butte County*  
General Plan 2030

**TO:** Honorable Chair and Planning Commission

**FROM:** Dan Breedon, AICP, Principal Planner *DM*

**SUBJECT:** Policy Recommendations from Butte County Water Commission  
For November 14, 2008 Planning Commission Study Session

**DATE:** November 7, 2008

---

The Butte County Water Commission formed a subcommittee to address water resource policies as set forth in the Policy Alternatives Document. The Water Commission reviewed the recommendations of this subcommittee on November 4, 2008. The Water Commission's final recommendations concerning Policy Topics #17, 18, and 20 are attached. It is staff's recommendation that the Planning Commission review and accept the Water Commission's final policy recommendations that will be considered at the Planning Commission's November 14 Study Session.

**To:** Butte County Water Commission

**From:** Paul Gosselin, Director, Water & Resource Conservation

**Subject:** Water Commission Subcommittee on the General Plan 2030 Update –  
Water Policy Recommendation

**Date:** October 27, 2008

The Butte County General Plan 2030 Update process has entered Meeting Series #5 - Goals and Policies Development. Policies related to water resource management are a critical component of the General Plan Update process. One of the Guiding Principles for the Butte County General Plan Update states, “The General Plan shall address the management and protection of water resources.” Additionally, the Board of Supervisors approved the development of a water element as a component of the General Plan Update.

The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to consider General Plan goals and policies in January 2009. The Board of Supervisors will base their consideration in part on recommendations from the General Plan Citizens’ Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Planning Commission. For water resource policies, the Board of Supervisors will also consider recommendations from the Water Commission.

On October 7, 2008 the Water Commission appointed a subcommittee to prepare recommendations for the Water Commission regarding water resource policies for the Butte County 2030 General Plan Update. The purpose of the Subcommittee is to provide water policy recommendations to the Water Commission for possible submission to the Board of Supervisors. Commissioners Jones, Skinner and Strachan were appointed to the Water Commission General Plan Update Subcommittee.

To assist in the framing of recommended goals and policies, county staff and the General Plan consultant prepared a discussion paper (dated September 22, 2008) that included key policy questions and potential policy options for the General Plan Update. The water resource policy questions were numbers 17, 18, 19 and 20:

17. How should the General Plan protect and enhance Butte County’s water supply?

18. How should the General Plan seek to maintain and enhance Butte County's water quality?

19. How should septic systems and packaged sewage treatment plants be regulated to support water quality?

20. How should the county minimize flood hazards?

On October 16, 2008, the CAC adopted recommendations for the water resource policy questions. The Subcommittee evaluated recommendations made by the CAC. Additionally, the Subcommittee evaluated existing ordinances, policies, programs and the Butte County Integrated Water Resources Plan to prepare their recommendations. The Subcommittee found that the policy recommendations from the Water Commission should account for existing programs and policies while recognizing that the specific implementation may change over the duration of the General Plan. The Subcommittee sought to have the initial recommendations be policy and goal oriented rather than reflect specific implementation steps.

The Subcommittee recommends that the Butte County Water Commission forward to the Board of Supervisors the attached water resource policy recommendations for their consideration.

## Water Commission General Plan Subcommittee Recommendation

### Water Resources

17. How should the General Plan protect and enhance Butte County's water supply?
  - a. Support Area of Origin water rights, the existing water right priority system and the authority to make water management decisions locally to meet our current and future needs thereby protecting Butte County's communities, economy and environment.
  - b. Implement and periodically update an integrated water resource management plan to ensure the sustainability of water resources for the county.
  - c. Continue the Four-County Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Colusa, Glenn and Tehama counties, cooperate with other adjacent counties and water districts to plan for and manage water resources in a way that includes sound science and public participation.
  - d. Ensure that new development can demonstrate an adequate water supply including an evaluation of potential impacts to surrounding groundwater users and the environment.
  - e. Promote agricultural and urban water use efficiency to advance sustainability of water resources.
  - f. Require new development to adopt best management practices for water use efficiency.
  - g. Fully utilize the County's State Water Project Table A Allocation.
  - h. Continue to utilize the Butte County Water Commission and the Department of Water and Resource Conservation as an important part of the water resource planning process.
  - i. Support solutions to ensure the sustainability of community water demands.
  - j. Establish programs to protect and promote groundwater recharge.
  - k. Develop programs that improve the scientific understanding of our aquifer systems, and potential factors related to the sustainability of our water resources.
  - l. Regulate groundwater transfers and substitution programs in order to protect the sustainability of the County's economy, communities and ecosystem.
  - m. Ensure the sustainability of groundwater resources (groundwater levels, groundwater quality and avoidance of land subsidence) through a basin management objective program that relies on management at the local level, utilizes sound scientific data and assures compliance.

18. How should the General Plan seek to maintain and enhance Butte County's water quality?
  - a. Develop water quality protection programs based on strategies to preserve and restore natural infrastructure, reduce runoff and encourage more efficient use of water supplies.
  - b. Continue educational programs on water quality and water resources.
  - c. Develop well standards and programs to ensure that groundwater resources are protected.
  - d. Integrate watershed plans with county planning and programs.
  
20. How should the county minimize flood hazards?
  - a. Maintain watershed health.
  - b. Manage watersheds to minimize flooding.