

March 26, 2008

PRESS RELEASE: GLENN COUNTY GROUNDWATER UPDATE

The semi-annual spring groundwater level measurements for Glenn County made by the California Department of Water Resources, Northern District (DWR) were completed during the week of March 10-14, 2008. Spring measurements are the basis for groundwater level Basin Management Objectives (BMO) established to determine groundwater safe yield in many groundwater management sub-areas of the County.

During the time of measurement, 8 wells within the County that utilize spring measurements for BMO compliance were below average for this time of year. As a comparison, 16 wells were below average at the same time last year. Overall, groundwater levels are much improved from last year with an average 4 to 5 feet above where they were last year at this time.

Lower than average groundwater levels are the result of insufficient rainfall during the winter and spring months, accentuated by the need for early irrigation to permanent crop plantings throughout the County. Precipitation and surface application of irrigation water are the primary sources of recharge in our area to meet the needs of the majority of wells used for irrigation. As the irrigation season progresses, groundwater levels will experience seasonal fluctuation, which may cause sporadic difficulty during the peak irrigation season. Keeping this in mind, consider any and all methods of conservation available to you and remember your neighbor may be pumping the same time you are.

BMO's for groundwater levels were established and adopted by the Board of Supervisors in June, 2001. Currently, all of the wells utilized for BMO compliance are for domestic or agricultural use. Over the years, there have been many dedicated monitoring wells installed by the County and Water Advisory Committee (WAC) member irrigation districts to monitor groundwater levels and quality. The intent of the monitoring wells is to develop a monitoring network independent from these production wells. During the summer of 2007, 21 distinct aquifer zones from dedicated monitoring wells throughout the County were utilized to establish Summertime BMO's for groundwater level. These established levels are considered interim until they are finally adopted. The WAC is in the process of incorporating these wells towards the development of Countywide BMO's for spring, summer, and fall.

Current and historic groundwater levels in our region can be viewed on DWR's Water Data Library. Their web page is: <http://wdl.water.ca.gov/gw/map> Point to Glenn County and navigate regionally from there. Butte County has developed a regional groundwater information data base program that provides access to groundwater-related information for agencies as well as interested parties with information relating to established BMO's for groundwater elevation, water quality, and land subsidence monitoring. The website address for access to the program is: <http://bc-gis-ims-02/bmoic3>

If you feel you are experiencing pumping problems that may be due to low groundwater levels, there is a process for documenting this by filing a report of abnormal groundwater level with the Glenn County Department of Agriculture. These report forms are available at 720 N. Colusa Street, Willows or just call (530) 934-6501 and a form will be sent to you. Any information that can be gathered is helpful to ensure an adequate supply of water for domestic, municipal, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and environmental use.