
BIGGS-WEST GRIDLEY WATER DISTRICT

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 15, 1995

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1.0: Introduction: Assembly Bill 3030, commonly referred to as the Groundwater Management Act, was authored by California State Assemblyman Jim Costa from Fresno and signed into law by Governor Wilson in October of 1992. The Act lists 12 components that may be included in a groundwater management plan to the extent applicable, the 12 components are considered in evaluating and operating the Biggs-West Gridley Water District (hereinafter "BWGWD") so that groundwater can be managed within the District and coordinated to maximize the total water supplies available while protecting groundwater quality.

1.1: Groundwater Basin Management: Department of Water Resources Bulletin 118-80 defines groundwater basin management as including planned use of the groundwater basin yield, storage space, transmission capability, and water in storage. Groundwater basin management includes:

- a. Protection of natural recharge and use of intentional recharge;
- b. Planned variation in amount and location of pumping over time;
- c. Use of groundwater storage conjunctively with surface water from local and imported sources; and
- d. Protection and planned maintenance of groundwater quality.

1.2: Section 3, Chapter 947, Statutes of 1993: The Department of Water Resources shall, on or before January 1, 1998, prepare and publish, in a bulletin of the Department published pursuant to section 130 of the Water Code, a report on the status of groundwater management plans adopted and implemented pursuant to Part 2.75 (commencing with section 10750) of Division 6 of the Water Code.

2.0: Purpose: It is the purpose of BWGWD, by adopting a groundwater management plan, to manage and monitor groundwater resources existing and available within the District boundary including a possible extended service area created by Exhibit "A" to BWGWD's agreement on diversion of water from the Feather River as entered into on May 27, 1969 with the State of California, DWR and/or a sphere of influence adopted and/or amended by the Butte County Local Agency Formation Commission. Additionally, it is the intent of BWGWD to coordinate and cooperate with other local private or public water purveying public agencies for the purpose of preserving, protecting and monitoring Basin area groundwater extraction, distribution, allocation or exportation insuring compliance with Water Code Sections 1745.10, *et seq.*

3.0: History of the Formation, Operation, Acquisition, Distribution and Maintenance of Water Supplies: BWGWD has acquired and/or monitors the provision, transmission, operation, maintenance and distribution of water for agricultural and environmental purposes. The background of BWGWD in the provision of water services is set forth in paragraphs 3.1 through 3.4

3.1: Formation of BWGWD: BWGWD was organized in the early 1950s pursuant to the California statutory enabling authority in Division 13 of the California Water Code. Following formation, the District joined with three other districts; i.e., Sutter Extension Water District, Richvale Irrigation District, and Butte Water District to coordinate the acquisition, maintenance and operation of a water supply and distribution facility. BWGWD thereafter joined with these three districts in the purchase and acquisition of water rights and a canal system from Sutter Butte Canal Company. The four districts and the Sutter Butte Canal Company entered into an agreement dated July 12, 1956 covering the maintenance and operation of the canal system. The agreement of July 12, 1956 was amended by: (a) an agreement and conveyance dated September 21, 1966 entered into by the district; and (b) an agreement and conveyance dated April 11, 1969 entered into at Biggs in Richvale and consented to by Butte and Sutter. The districts then entered into four additional contracts effecting their operation, diversion facilities, main canal and available water including: (a) an agreement dated July 6, 1964 entered into by the State of California acting by and through the Department of Water Resources; (b) an agreement on diversion of water from the Feather River dated May 27, 1969 entered into by the State of California acting by and through the Department of Water Resources; (c) a water sale and exchange agreement entered into by Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the districts on or about May 27, 1969; and (d) a consent agreement dated May 27, 1969 entered into by Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the districts.

The districts revised their operating agreement of July 12, 1956 as made necessary by a series of four contracts which are discussed above. BWGWD shares water rights without allocation as to district boundaries with the three districts discussed above as much of the return flow from the use of said water rights finds its way into drains and natural channels and is recaptured and used by all four districts.

The four districts created the Joint Board with powers to control, maintain and operate the joint water distribution facilities of each district, together with causing rainfall, snowfall, weather, evaporation, hydrographic, engineering and other data and records now available and continuously accumulated relating to Feather River water flows, water diversion rights and use of water within the districts. BWGWD is allocated 29 percent of 555,000 acre-feet of water

annually acquired by the joint districts pursuant to historic pre-1914 water rights subject to deficiency limitations in the May 1969 agreement.

3.2: History of Water Supply Acquisition Whether Surface or Ground: Refer to paragraph 3.1 for BWGWD's history of water supply acquisition.

3.3: History of Distribution of Water Supplies: BWGWD distributes its water supplies annually during the irrigation season generally commencing by charging its water distribution system with surface water supplies from Lake Oroville as early as February each year and generally completing its water distribution by October 31 each year provided further that BWGWD may continue water distribution in November and January to benefit wildlife habitat in the Butte Basin by benefiting wildfowl and complying with the ARB's restrictions on rice straw burning in attempting to discover other reasonable methods of removing rice stubble from lands within BWGWD. Water supplies distributed during times of shortage are allocated pursuant to a proration and water duty imposed upon crops grown by district landowners as determined by the Board of Directors. Water shortages have occurred on a more frequent basis in the last 20 years and notably the drought years of 1976 through 1977 and of course the five-year drought commencing in 1987 and running through 1991 and then again in 1993.

3.4: History of Operation and Maintenance of Water Supplies: See paragraphs 3.1 through 3.3. Additionally, the district's secretary and manager coordinates the acquisition, operation and distribution of all water utilized by district landowners and water users for agricultural production each year. Programs of water conservation are encouraged by the district in order to lessen or at least maintain the water duty for each crop grown within the district.

3.5: History of Operation, Maintenance and Management of Gray Lodge Refuge Water Supplies: Gray Lodge Wildlife Management Area is a State of California water fowl and wildlife refuge of approximately 8,000 acres with approximately 2,500 acres lying within District boundaries consisting of approximately 1,500 acres of primary water right lands and 950 acres of secondary water right lands with the remaining 5,500 acres of Gray Lodge lying outside District boundaries. In District and outside District lands continue to receive water supplies on an annual basis. Gray Lodge lands both in the District and outside the District receive supplemental groundwater services which are non-District operated and maintained. Pursuant to federal legislation enacted in October of 1992 by then-President George Bush, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act is obligated to make additional water supplies available up to a total of 44,000 acre-feet for Gray Lodge uses. Such supplies may be wheeled through the water distribution and conveyance

system constructed, installed, operating and existing within BWGWD which will be the subject of a wheeling agreement.

4.0: Hydrogeology of BWGWD: Attached is a hydrographic map of BWGWD which identifies the agricultural water supply and distribution facilities.

5.0: BWGWD's Adoption of Groundwater Management Plan Issues Set Forth in Water Code Section 10753.7: BWGWD adopts components relating to a groundwater management plan which are set forth in Water Code Section 10753.7.

5.1: Control of Saline Water Intrusion: BWGWD is authorized to take practical, reasonable and feasible steps to insure against adverse impacts created by demonstrated saline water intrusion within that portion of the Butte Sub-Basin managed by BWGWD. If needed or as required, BWGWD will establish and maintain a regular program of groundwater quality testing and monitoring in order to establish a baseline quality criteria for groundwater which is available from BWGWD and includes an estimated saline content. Such monitoring efforts will routinely test on a periodic basis as determined by BWGWD in order to insure adequate water quality and that baseline water qualities are not adversely impacted or deteriorating as a result of saline water intrusion.

5.2: Identification and Management of Well Head Protection Areas and Recharge Areas: BWGWD does not manage well head protection areas and has no district operated recharge areas. In the future, should well head protection areas be established together with recharge areas; the district shall manage such areas in order to monitor and insure the quality of the groundwater resource within the district.

5.3: Regulation of Migration of Contaminated Groundwater: BWGWD will periodically test certain areas within the district where it is believed that saline water intrudes in order to insure the minimization of any adverse impact to agricultural production, existing surface water supplies and existing groundwater aquifers. The goal will be to eliminate migration of any groundwater which is contaminated.

5.4: Administration of a Well Abandonment and Well Destruction Program: BWGWD defers to Butte County as a domestic well regulator to administer well abandonment and well destruction programs. BWGWD will comply with demands for well abandonment and well destruction particularly those that exceed an unsafe TDS level as determined by BWGWD.

5.5: Mitigation of Overdraft Conditions: BWGWD currently knows of no overdraft conditions or conditions of threatened overdraft that exist within BWGWD boundaries. Should conditions of overdraft or threatened overdraft occur within BWGWD; the district will cooperate with state and federal agencies to monitor and remedy the impacted area by learning the cause of the overdraft situation and attempting to implement factors which will 1) determine and maintain a safe annual yield of groundwater for use within BWGWD in order to supplement available surface water supplies for the growing of crops on lands within BWGWD without producing overdraft conditions; 2) develop data and information which identifies impacts on groundwater with the neighboring areas that might be effected by groundwater use within BWGWD which may be part of a conjunctive use program developed in cooperation with the State of California or other potential qualified water transferees; 3) establish mitigation measures to offset identified adverse impacts of groundwater extraction; and 4) establish quantitative limitations on groundwater extractions from particular areas and establishing criteria for well spacing and operations within the district to limit adverse impacts of groundwater extractions on wells within and without the district.

5.6: Replenishment of Groundwater Extracted by Water Producers: BWGWD will encourage groundwater replenishment where such groundwater is extracted by water producers including the continued application of pre-1914 surface water supplies. BWGWD will continue to monitor and develop data in order to insure the protection and use of the groundwater resource for the benefit of landowners and water users within BWGWD.

5.7: Groundwater Level and Storage Monitoring: BWGWD will determine the static groundwater level within the various sub-basins in district boundaries on an annual basis and will determine the static groundwater water level before the start of each irrigation season and at the conclusion of each irrigation season. Monitoring of the groundwater storage within different sub-basins in district boundaries will be commenced on an as-needed basis to insure that an overdraft condition described in Water Code Section 1745.10 does not and will not exist.

5.8: Development of Relationships with State and Federal Regulatory Agencies: BWGWD entered into an agreement with the State of California Department of Water Resources in May of 1969 providing for the storage of historically acquired pre-1914 rights in Lake Oroville subject to certain deficiency requirements during times of drought but insuring the storativity of 160,950 acre-feet of surface water supply. BWGWD will continue to develop and maintain good working relationships with the staff of the Department of Water Resources as well as other federal and state agencies

on an as-needed basis to protect and preserve both ground and surface water rights for the benefits of landowners and water users within BWGWD.

5.9: Facilitating Conjunctive Use Operations: Groundwater supplies available within BWGWD are recharged annually by numerous factors including precipitation and the application of surface and/or extracted groundwater supplies for the irrigation of crops. The quantity and timing of recharging BWGWD's service area as a sub-basin of the Butte Basin depends upon a number of factors many of which are within the control of landowners, water users, the District manager, employees and Board of Directors of BWGWD.

5.9.1: District Water Shortages: Current District bylaws, rules and regulations and governing act statutes allow BWGWD to distribute available water supplies to District landowners in the event of shortages on a pro rata basis which BWGWD's Board of Directors determines based upon numerous factors including types of crops grown, timing of agricultural water needs, available groundwater supplies, etc. See Water Code Sections 35453, *et seq.* Landowners facing water shortages are first encouraged to enter into private agreements with other landowners for the use of well water. If supplies are needed for BWGWD purposes, BWGWD reserves its rights to require uses of groundwater in those circumstances where water shortages and/or failure or inadequate capacity of facilities causes shortages throughout other areas of the District upon payment of compensation. The terms of any District/landowner agreement regarding quantities of groundwater, maintenance and operation of facilities, term, compensation and distribution are the subject of negotiations between BWGWD and the landowners.

5.9.2: District Water Transfers: BWGWD has engaged in and will continue to reserve operational flexibility to engage in transfers of its surface water supplies to the State of California and/or other qualified purchasers of water in circumstances where shortages of water caused the potential for hardship in other areas of the State which have access to state or federal water project facilities and where BWGWD has a surplus of water supplies conserved by programs benefitting their landowners and water users. Prior to undertaking any program, BWGWD will evaluate any adverse economic or environmental impact of such conjunctive use program. In this way, groundwater storage capacity of BWGWD can be used in a

conjunctive manner with surface water supplies in order to assist other areas in need of water in addition to landowners within the District and to the benefit of the District and its landowners, as long as such programs do not 1) exceed the safe annual yield of the aquifer; 2) result in conditions of overdraft or otherwise fail to comply with provisions of California Water Code Section 1745.10; and 3) result in uncompensated adverse impacts on neighboring landowners effected by the program.

5.9.3: District Approval of New Wells: To facilitate the monitoring of groundwater extraction and use within District, subsequent to September 1, 1995 any landowners desiring to construct and install a well within BWGWD may be required to prepare a written request specifying 1) size of the well to be constructed, 2) identify the location of the well; 3) the approximate distance in feet from all other existing wells within 3,000 feet of the proposed installation of the new well (inside or outside District boundaries); 4) capacity of the well; 5) depth of the well; and 6) service needs. The written request prepared in writing shall be delivered to BWGWD's manager who shall submit the request to the District Board of Directors for approval or disapproval at the next regular or special District Board meeting. Approval of construction and installation of a new well may be conditioned upon 1) timing of well waters extracted for agricultural operations or used for conjunctive use purposes either through outside District water transfers or transfers within District; 2) impacts on neighboring well owners (inside or outside District's service area) and whether such impacts can be reasonably and feasibly mitigated; 3) well metering; 4) District well inspection; 5) District ability to curtail use of groundwater extracted pursuant to a conjunctive use program; and 6) any other action which the District may deem necessary or appropriate pursuant to its bylaws, rules, regulations, existing statutory enabling act legislation, state or federal applicable EPA, CWA or ESA regulations.

6.0: Implementation of Groundwater Management Plan: BWGWD shall continue to implement this groundwater management plan and develop a groundwater management program which further elaborates upon the contents of this plan and engages in continuing cooperation and coordination with other Butte Basin Groundwater Users.

6.1: Annual Coordination Meeting: Pursuant to California Water Code Section 10755.3 BWGWD shall meet, coordinate and cooperate with other local agencies within the Butte Basin at least annually to coordinate groundwater management programs.

