

Section 2

Drought Institutions

The Drought Plan provides a systematic institutional setting for Butte County to implement and reduce the impacts of drought-induced water shortages. The plan consists of a monitoring and assessment component and a response and mitigation component. These actions are designed to work within the existing framework of government, pulling together key personnel from private, local, State, and federal sectors. The Drought Plan forms several committees to implement the aforementioned components. The committees include:

- Drought Task Force;
- Interagency Coordination Group; and
- Specialized Working Groups.

2.1 Drought Task Force

An effective drought plan requires an entity that is responsible for instituting actions and reports to the Chief Administrative Officer and the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors will form a Drought Task Force (DTF) and assign the responsibility of leading the Task Force to the Director of the DW&RC. The DW&RC is an established entity with experience in managing such tasks. The DTF will be made up of various Department Directors (or their designee) and others in the County as shown in Table 2-1. The Board of Supervisors can also modify membership as necessary.

Table 2-1
Members of the Butte County Drought Task Force*

Director, Department of Water & Resource Conservation-Chair Emergency Services Officer-Vice Chair Chair, Butte County Water Commission Chair, Butte Basin Water Users Association Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Director, Department of Public Works Director, Division of Environmental Health Agricultural Commissioner Director, UC Cooperative Extension/County Farm Advisor California Department of Forestry/Butte County Fire District Conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service President, Butte County Resource Conservation District
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*Others may be added as suggested by the Board of Supervisors

The DTF will monitor hydrologic conditions throughout the water year and report the findings to the Water Commission and the Board of Supervisors annually in non-drought situations, and biannually, quarterly, or monthly as a drought progresses. The DTF will monitor and report the following information:

1. Drought forecasts and climate conditions;
2. Projections based on:
 - a. Snow-pack/precipitation
 - b. Stream flow
 - c. Reservoir levels
 - d. Groundwater levels;
3. Requirements for routine and special reports;
4. Resource information gaps and recommendations to address them;
5. Information needs of the coordination group and working groups (if activated);
and
6. Responses to information needs of the coordination group and working groups (if activated).

2.2 Interagency Coordination Group

A Butte County Drought Interagency Coordination Group (ICG) will be activated in the second phase of a drought emergency. The ICG will assess drought impacts, initiate general actions to respond to impacts, activate specialized working groups as necessary, and serve as the primary liaison with appropriate local, State and federal agencies. The members of the ICG (or their designee) are those shown in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2
Butte County Drought Interagency Coordination Group*

Chair, Board of Supervisors-Chair
Chief Administrative Officer-Vice Chair
Drought Task Force Members
Butte County Sheriff
President, Butte County Farm Bureau
Executive Director, Butte Environmental Council
California Department of Water Resources
California Department of Fish & Game
Executive Director, Private Industry Council

*Others may be added as suggested by the Board of Supervisors

2.3 Specialized Working Groups

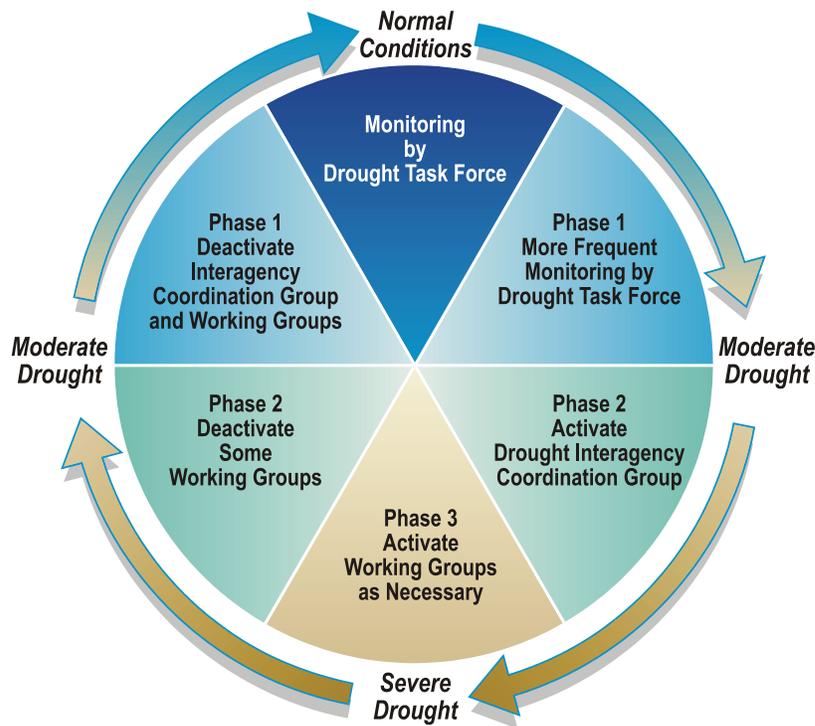
The ICG can also activate specialized working groups as needed to coordinate the assessment of drought impacts, as well as appropriate response and mitigation actions. Such working groups can include, but not be limited to:

- Water Availability;
- Municipal Water;
- Rural Communities;
- Environmental Protection;
- Agricultural Water;
- Tourism;
- Wildlife;
- Economic Impacts;
- Energy Loss;
- Health; and
- Review and Reporting;

The working groups will provide policy recommendation to the ICG for monitoring and assessment needs, and appropriate mitigation and response measures. The recommendations will then be directed to the Board of Supervisors for their approval.

2.4 Institutional Sequence

The general sequence of actions to be carried out will be in accordance with Figure 2-1. The first approximation of drought severity in relation to a 1987-1994 drought scenario is that Phase 1 would occur in years 1-3, Phase 2 in years 4-6, and Phase 3 in years 6 and beyond. Expenses to support activities are subject to normal fiscal constraints of respective agencies. Requests for special funding will be forwarded through the appropriate lead agency, and recommended by the ICG to the Board of Supervisors.



*Adapted from State of Colorado 2001

Figure 2-1
Drought Planning Phases

During all phases of a drought emergency, the DTF will collect data on snow-pack, reservoir levels, stream flow, precipitation, and temperatures. The DTF will meet biannually, quarterly, or monthly depending on the drought phase to share the information, discuss projections, and evaluate drought-related water conditions.

The ICG will be activated based on DTF data and discussions. Activation of the ICG will initiate Phase 2 of the Drought Plan. When activated, the Chair of the ICG will comment on the DTF's data and can then activate any working group as necessary (Phase 3).

The working groups will assess potential drought impacts and the ICG will comment on any observed or potential impacts identified by the working groups. The ICG will then recommend what actions, if any, should be taken to the Board of Supervisors for their approval. The Chair of the ICG, through the Director of the California Office of Emergency Management, will then relay the information to the Office of the Governor.