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## **VINA GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY AND ROCK CREEK RECLAMATION DISTRICT JOINT BOARD MEETING**

Meeting Agenda  
July 14, 2021, 5:30 p.m.  
Chico City Council Chamber Building, 421 Main Street, Chico CA  
**IN-PERSON AND ONLINE MEETING VIA ZOOM**

*Materials related to an item on this Agenda are available for public inspection in the City of Chico Public Works Operation & Maintenance Office at 965 Fir Street, Chico, during normal 8 am to 5 pm business hours or online at <https://www.vinagsa.org/>*

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

This meeting will be open to the public, but will have limited capacity in the meeting room due to protocols established under the Governor’s Executive Orders for COVID 19 community response. This meeting will also be held using the Zoom online format for those who wish to participate remotely. Please use the following information to remotely view and participate in this meeting online:

If you wish to comment on an item, but do not wish to participate during the meeting, the public may submit comments prior to the meeting via email to [vinagsapubliccomments@chicoca.gov](mailto:vinagsapubliccomments@chicoca.gov). Please submit emails with the subject line “**PUBLIC COMMENT ITEM NO. \_\_\_**”. The public is encouraged to not send more than one email per item or comment on numerous items in one email.

### **ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION:**

To access the live meeting, you have the following options:

1. Join Zoom Meeting
  - a. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86983600705>
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  - a. When prompted, use Meeting ID: 869 8360 0705
3. Directly from your mobile phone you can tap:
  - a. +16699006833, 86983600705# US (San Jose)
4. Dial-in using your landline or mobile phone to:
  - a. 1 669 900 6833
  - b. When prompted, use Meeting ID: 869 8360 0705
5. **If you are having any issues connecting to the meeting, please call or text Kamie Loeser, Durham Irrigation District, at (530) 680-7222 for assistance.**

Please note that when you access the meeting, **you will be placed into a waiting room and admitted** into the meeting by the meeting host.

**Agenda Prepared: 7/9/2021**  
**Agenda Posted: 7/10/2021**  
**Prior to: 5:30 p.m.**



Please contact the City of Chico Public Works Department at (530) 894-4200 if you require an agenda in an alternative format or if you need to request a disability-related modification or accommodation. This request should be received at least three working days prior to the meeting.

1. **VINA GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY (GSA) REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

1.1. Call to Order - Chair Tuchinsky

1.2. Roll Call

2. **ROCK CREEK RECLAMATION DISTRICT (RCRD) SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

2.1. Call to Order – Chair Crain

2.2. Roll Call

3. **JOINT MEETING REGULAR AGENDA**

3.1. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN (GSP) FOR THE VINA SUBBASIN.**

The Management Staff will provide a report on the development, and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee's (SHAC) review, of the following components of the GSP.

3.1.1 The draft Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Chapters, and the Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems Appendix.

**Recommendation:** Staff requests recommendations from the two GSA Boards regarding:

- a. What approach to use to establish Minimum Thresholds for Groundwater Levels in the public review draft of the GSP to be released in September.
- b. Desired changes to other components of the Sustainable Management Criteria including the Sustainability Goal and Undesirable Results statement for Declining Groundwater Levels

3.1.2 The first draft of the Project Management Actions Chapter

**Recommendation:** None, this is an informational item only as this Chapter will be presented to the SHAC for review and recommendations.

3.2 **CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE JOINT MEETING DATES**

The Vina and RCRD GSA Board Members will consider setting future joint board meeting dates for the continued review of draft individual GSP chapters and components, and the review and approval of the public review draft and the final compiled GSP.

4. **ADJOURNMENT** –the Vina GSA Board will adjourn to their regular Vina GSA Board meeting tonight in the Chico Council Chamber. The RCRD Board will adjourn to their next regular meeting to be announced.

**\*\*\*RECONVENED TO THE VINA GSA REGULAR BOARD MEETING\*\*\***

1. Call to Order – Chair Tuchinsky

2. Roll Call

3. **CONSENT AGENDA** - All matters listed under the consent agenda are to be considered routine and enacted by one motion.

3.1. **APPROVAL OF CHRISTINA BUCK AS THE VINA GSA GSP MANAGER**

3.2. **APPROVAL OF KELLY PETERSON AS THE VINA GSA ADMINISTRATOR**

**3.3. APPROVAL OF 6/09/21 VINA GSA BOARD MEETING MINUTES.**

**Action:** Approve minutes of Vina GSA Board meeting held on 6/09/21.

**3.4. APPROVAL OF MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT.**

**Action:** Approve the Vina GSA Financial Status Report as of 7/09/2021.

**4. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

Members of the public may address the Board at this time on any matter not already listed on the agenda; comments are limited to three minutes. The Board cannot take any action at this meeting on requests made under this section of the agenda.

**5. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS**

These items are provided for the Board's information. Although the Board may discuss the items, no action can be taken at this meeting. Should the Board determine that action is required, the item or items may be included for action on a subsequent posted agenda.

**5.1 Vina GSA Management Committee Updates**

**5.1.1 Vina Stakeholder Advisory Committee Update (*Written Report -Kelly Peterson*)**

**5.1.2 Update on Assembly Bill 754-Possible Extension (*Verbal Report – Kelly Peterson*)**

**8. ADJOURNMENT – The Vina GSA Board will adjourn to the next joint Vina GSA and RCRD GSA Board meeting on 8/11/21 to be held in the Chico City Council Chamber at 421 Main Street, Chico CA 95928.**



**Vina  
Groundwater Sustainability Agency  
Agenda Transmittal**

**Agenda Item: 3.1.1**

**Subject: Consideration of the Draft Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Chapters**

**Contact: Christina Buck**

**Phone:530-552-3593**

**Meeting Date: July 14, 2021**

**Regular Agenda**

**Department Summary:** Drafts of the Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) and Monitoring Network Chapters were made available May 19, 2021 for a public comment period. The comment period ended on Friday June 18, 2021. The documents are available online at [VinaGSA.org](http://VinaGSA.org):  
<https://www.vinagsa.org/groundwater-sustainability-plan-gsp>

An overview of the draft Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) and Monitoring Network Chapters, public comments, and SHAC recommendations will be presented to the GSA Boards for information and discussion. An important issue for discussion and potential recommendation is the method for establishing Minimum Thresholds for Groundwater Levels. The Draft SMC chapter included two approaches with the request for public comment on the preferred approach. Attached materials include all public comments received to date on the draft chapters and back up materials showing Minimum Thresholds using both approaches for the South Vina Management Area for comparison in relation to groundwater levels at representative monitoring wells.

**Fiscal Impact:** None

**Staff Recommendation:** Requested Action: 1. Staff requests a recommendation from the GSA Boards on what approach to use to establish Minimum Thresholds for Groundwater Levels in the public review draft of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan to be released in September. 2. Staff requests direction on desired changes to other components of the Sustainable Management Criteria including the Sustainability Goal and Undesirable Result statement for Declining Groundwater Levels



## Water and Resource Conservation

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# MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 9, 2021

TO: Vina GSA Board and Rock Creek Reclamation District GSA Board

FROM: Christina Buck, Acting Director

RE: Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Public Review Draft Chapters

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Drafts of the Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) and Monitoring Network Chapters were made available May 19, 2021 for a public comment period. The comment period ended on Friday June 18, 2021.

The documents are available online at VinaGSA.org:

<https://www.vinagsa.org/groundwater-sustainability-plan-gsp>

### Public Comment Overview

Comments were received from eleven individuals and three organizations including the Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service. All received public comments are attached to this report. Several themes emerged which are summarized in the bullets below:

- A number of comments express concern that the Measurable Objective and/or the Minimum Thresholds for Groundwater Levels are set too low to avoid undesirable results to domestic wells and groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs). Comments suggest GDEs should include consideration of upland Valley Oak Woodlands, the urban forest in Chico, and impacts to listed endangered species.
- Comments express support for and a call for additional data and studies to establish the relationship between groundwater levels, streamflow depletion rates, and significant and unreasonable impacts to beneficial uses of surface water, and groundwater dependent ecosystems.
- Comments generally express a preference for the use of polygons and the approach used in North Vina for establishing the Groundwater Level Minimum Thresholds.
- A number of clarification questions on content and process including requests to more clearly define "sustainably constructed wells" and "suitable habitat."
- Comments expressed the importance of this effort and great concern regarding drought, climate change, water demand, and water transfers compromising the success of sustainable groundwater management.
- Questions regarding outreach efforts and request for a public workshop on this work

All comments received to date have been compiled and attached with this memo. This information is provided for discussion and possible direction to staff. These Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) chapters remain in draft form and will be combined, as revised, with the rest of the GSP for review and public comment in early September.

### **Vina Stakeholder Advisory Committee Discussion and Recommendations**

Staff presented highlights from the SMC and Monitoring Network Chapters to the Vina Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SHAC) at their June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting. The SHAC discussed the SMC for each sustainability indicator (groundwater levels, groundwater storage, water quality, land subsidence and depletion of interconnected surface water). Details of their discussion can be found in the draft Summary Notes included in the Board packet. The following describes formal recommendations they made and substantive issues they discussed for the Board to consider.

The SHAC made a number of recommendations to the Vina GSA Board as listed:

1. **Sustainability Goal.** The SHAC unanimously recommended the word “small” be removed from the Sustainability Goal statement. The recommended statement would read:  
*“To ensure that groundwater is managed to provide a water supply of adequate quantity and quality to support rural areas and ~~small~~ communities, the agricultural economic base of the region, and environmental uses now and in the future.”*

#### **2. Groundwater Levels SMC**

- a. Undesirable Result Statement as stated in the draft Chapter:  
***“Two RMS wells within a management area reach their Minimum Threshold (MT) for two consecutive non-dry year-types.”***

The SHAC discussed whether or not to remove “non-dry year” from the statement. The concern being that with sustained drought conditions, the MT could be exceeded numerous times but if they were dry or critical years, it would not trigger an undesirable result. The SHAC voted on whether to remove or retain “non-dry year.” The result was a split vote with five voting to remove it, four voting to retain it and leave the language unchanged, and one vote offering alternative language. SHAC input also suggested clarifying the definition of water year types. For details of varying viewpoints, see the SHAC Summary notes.

- b. Method for Establishing Minimum Thresholds (MT)  
The SHAC discussed the two approaches to setting the MT described in the draft SMC chapter. Specifically the SHAC was asked for input on how to identify the set of domestic wells associated with a given representative monitoring well (polygon vs 3-mile radius) and the approach used to set the MT. In North Vina a graphing method was used to establish an MT to be largely protective of domestic wells within a polygon, while acknowledging ground surface elevation changes and outliers. In South Vina and Chico management areas, the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile of shallowest domestic wells was used to

establish the MT. The following was the result of the SHAC’s vote on the polygon vs. the 3 mile radius approach:

*SHAC Poll on Polygon Approach*

<b>Vote</b>	<b>SHAC Members</b>
In support	A. Dawson, S. Lewis, G. Barber, S. Goepp, G. Sohnrey
Uncertain, leaning towards polygon approach	B. Smith, C. Chastain, G. Cole
Uncertain	J. Brobeck, C. Madden

With regards to the approach to setting the MT, five SHAC members expressed concerns about how low the MTs are set and concerns about impacts to domestic wells and the environment. Three SHAC members were comfortable with the current direction and approach for setting the MTs. For details of varying viewpoints, see the SHAC Summary notes under subheading, “Approach to setting the Minimum Threshold.”

**3. Interconnected Surface Water SMC**

The SHAC overall supports the approach and framework to address data gaps related to this SMC. For more details on the discussion, see the SHAC notes.

**4. Water Quality SMC**

The SHAC overall supports the approach to this SMC.

**5. Groundwater Storage and Land Subsidence SMC**

The SHAC did not have a formal recommendation on these sustainability indicators.

**Consideration by the Joint GSA Boards**

An overview of the draft Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Chapters, public comments, and SHAC recommendations will be presented to the GSA Boards for information and discussion. Staff would like to receive input from the GSA Boards on what they would like to see in the complete public review draft of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan to be released in September. For reference, a summary table of the SMC for each of the Sustainability Indicators is attached to this memo. It captures the SMC as documented in the draft chapters released for public comment in May.

An important issue for discussion and potential recommendation:

- 1) *Establishing Minimum Thresholds (MTs) for the Groundwater Level Sustainability Indicator*  
 Input from the SHAC and public comments expressed a preference for using the polygon method to associate domestic wells with a representative monitoring site (RMS) well for the purposes of establishing a MT. The Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County in partnership with Rock Creek Reclamation District hired LandIQ to draft proposed polygons for the South Vina Management Area. To inform the Boards’ discussion, MTs have been identified using the polygon and graphing method consistent with the approach used to set MTs in North Vina as described in the draft chapter and on page 2 of the related supporting materials included with this memo. Supporting materials include graphs of the domestic wells for each RMS well that were used to establish a new MT and the hydrograph for each RMS well showing both MTs (15% and graphing method) for comparison for wells

in the South Vina Management Area. Similar graphs are included for North Vina, which are the same graphs that were included in Appendix 3-1 of the public review draft SMC Chapter. MTs shown on the graphs for North Vina were developed using the polygon and graphing method, as described in the draft chapter.

The Chico Management Area was considered too small to use separate 3-mile radius circles around the RMS wells or to draw individual polygons. All the domestic wells in the management area were sorted and the Minimum Threshold was set to 15% of the shallowest domestic wells. Staff has taken an initial look at the results of the graphing method applied to this area and it yields a similar result to the MT-15% approach.

Viewing the graphs that show the groundwater levels in each RMS well, along with the MO and MT for the RMS well, is the best way to evaluate the implications of one approach to establishing the MT over another relative to historical groundwater conditions. The graphs showing the bottom elevation of domestic wells (red points) is the best way to evaluate the proposed MTs relative to nearby domestic wells. Defining the MT is about identifying the conditions, based on the available data, at which undesirable results begin to occur. Domestic wells tend to be shallower than irrigation or municipal wells and are typically most vulnerable to declines in groundwater levels. Therefore, analysis of domestic well depths in the subbasin is the basis for establishing Minimum Thresholds for lowering groundwater levels. The draft chapter states that, “sustainably constructed domestic wells going dry during non-dry year conditions would be a “significant and unreasonable” undesirable result of groundwater management.”

**Requested Action:**

1. Staff requests a recommendation from the GSA Boards on what approach to use to establish Minimum Thresholds for Groundwater Levels in the public review draft of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan to be released in September.
2. Staff requests direction on desired changes to other components of the Sustainable Management Criteria including the Sustainability Goal and Undesirable Result statement for Declining Groundwater Levels.

Sustainable Management Criteria  
version. Public Review Draft (June 2021)

<b>Vina Subbasin</b>	
<b>Sustainability Goal</b>	To ensure that groundwater is managed to provide a water supply of adequate quantity and quality to support rural areas and small communities, the agricultural economic base of the region, and environmental uses now and in the future.
<b>Declining GWL</b>	
Definition	An Undesirable Result is experienced if sustained groundwater levels are too low to provide a water supply of adequate quantity and quality to support rural areas and small communities, and the agricultural economic base of the region, or if significant and unreasonable impacts to environmental uses of groundwater occur.
Identification	Two RMS wells within a management area reach their MT for two consecutive non-dry year-types.
Minimum Thresholds	S. Vina: 15th percentile of shallowest domestic wells within a 3-mile radius of RMS well. N. Vina: Elevation protective of sustainably constructed domestic wells within the polygon associated with the RMS well
Measurable Objectives	The groundwater level based on the groundwater trend line for the dry periods (since 2000) of observed short-term climatic cycles extended to 2030.
<b>Change in Storage</b>	
Definition	An Undesirable Result is experienced if sustained groundwater storage volumes are insufficient to support rural areas and small communities, the agricultural economic base of the region, and environmental uses for suitable habitat.
Identification	Two RMS wells reach their MT for two consecutive non-dry year-types.
Minimum Thresholds	Groundwater Level MTs are used by proxy
Measurable Objectives	The groundwater level based on the groundwater trend line for the dry periods (since 2000) of observed short-term climatic cycles extended to 2030.
<b>Degraded Groundwater Quality</b>	
Definition	An Undesirable Result is experienced if groundwater pumping compromises the long-term viability of rural areas and small communities, the agricultural economic base of the region, and environmental uses for suitable habitat.
Identification	Two RMS wells exceed their MT for two consecutive non-dry years.
Minimum Thresholds	The upper limit of the Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (1,600 µS/cm) for specific conductance based on the State Secondary Drinking Water Standards.
Measurable Objectives	The recommended Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (900 µS/cm) based on State Secondary Drinking Water Standards
<b>Subsidence</b>	
Definition	An Undesirable Result is experienced if groundwater pumping leads to changes in the ground surface elevation severe enough to disrupt critical infrastructure, development of projects that enhance the viability of rural areas, small communities, and the agricultural economic base of the region.
Identification	Occurs when two RMS wells reach their MT for two consecutive non-dry year-types.
Minimum Thresholds	Groundwater Level MTs are used by proxy
Measurable Objectives	The groundwater level based on the groundwater trend line for the dry periods (since 2000) of observed short-term climatic cycles extended to 2030.
<b>Interconnected Surface Water</b>	
Definition	Avoiding significant and unreasonable depletion of surface water flows caused by groundwater pumping that significantly impacts beneficial uses
Identification	Groundwater Level SMC are used by Proxy: Two RMS wells reach their MT for two consecutive non-dry year-types.
Minimum Thresholds	Groundwater Level MTs are used by proxy
Measurable Objectives	The groundwater level based on the groundwater trend line for the dry periods (since 2000) of observed short-term climatic cycles extended to 2030.
Data Gap	Data needed to develop this SMC includes: definition of stream reaches and associated priority habitat, streamflow measurements to develop profiles at multiple time periods, and measurements of groundwater levels directly adjacent to stream channels, first water bearing aquifer zone, and deeper aquifer zones.

**Groundwater Sustainability Plan - Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Chapters**  
**Public Review Draft- Spring 2021**  
**Compiled Public Comments, July 8 2021**

#	Commenter Name	Commenter Organization	Chapter* (SMC or MoN)	Section	Line #s or Figure #	Comment
1	Jim Graydon	Private Well Owner	SMC	3.9 SMC Summary Tables	Table 3-1	MT and MO for Lowering Groundwater Levels in the Chico Management Area may be set too low to protect against undesirable results. Consider revising description of MT and MO to derive more protective trigger values. My domestic supply well and three neighboring wells within 1 mile of CWSCH02 were constructed in 1986 to County standards and are less than 100-ft total depth (approx. 88-ft amsl).
2	Jim Graydon	Private Well Owner	SMC	3.9 SMC Summary Tables	Table 3-2	The water quality in the Chico Management Area is impacted by localized nitrate and chlorinated solvent contamination but has been documented to be high quality as it relates to dissolved solids. With specific conductance typically below 300 uS/cm, an MO of 900 uS/cm allows an unacceptable level of degradation before action is initiated. Recommend setting MO to a level such that action is taken before water quality approaches the secondary MCL.
3	Jim Graydon	Private Well Owner	SMC	3.8 Interconnected Surface Water SMC		I encourage completion of the necessary studies to determine the principal factors impacting groundwater dependent ecosystems in the Chico Management Area. With additional local documentation, more specific and protective MT and MO can be set. Without riparian woodland and adjacent seasonal wetlands, Chico is a very different place.
4	Bridget Gibbons	CDFW	SMC	3.3	172	The narrative for the Groundwater Levels MT identifies impacts to ecosystems, both those supported by rivers and streams and deep-rooted vegetation. However, there is not adequate discussion or analysis of the impacts to environmental uses and users that may result from the quantitative undesirable result definition. While Interconnected Surface Waters are later discussed in Section 3.8, it is still necessary to evaluate the impacts of each sustainability indicator's MTs and MOs on each user of groundwater in the basin, including environmental users such as groundwater dependent ecosystems. CDFW recommends Section 3.3 include an analysis of the relationship between the groundwater level SMCs at each representative monitoring well, deep rooted vegetation, and other environmental users of groundwater, to ensure that the established thresholds will be sufficiently protective.
5	Bridget Gibbons	CDFW	SMC	3.8		If using groundwater levels as proxy for the depletion of interconnected surface waters, "adequate evidence" that demonstrates the relationship and influence of the groundwater levels on the location, timing, and volume of groundwater depletions is required by Section 354.28 (c)(6)(B) for use of the proxy.
6	Bridget Gibbons	CDFW	SMC	3.8		The draft ISW section states that the data needed to develop the SMC for this section do not exist. More explanation on what best available data and information is available within the subbasin is needed, as well as a more detailed explanation of the specific data gaps in addition to the proposed SMC framework. In the previous draft Basin Setting Chapter, stream segments were identified and characterized as primarily gaining or losing reaches, with water volumes quantified. The proposed interim method of using the groundwater levels as proxy needs further discussion as to whether or not the levels identified would likely maintain the current connected reaches or lead to greater surface water depletions over the implementation period. CDFW recommends developing SMCs based on best available data, and providing justification that those levels will avoid undesirable results to all uses and users of groundwater.
7	Eric Lundberg	Public comment	SMC		135-136	Managers should not have the flexibility to implement actions at "any time". Actions should have deadlines associated with seasons and agricultural activities. Actions should be taken before crops are planted, or at the beginning of an irrigation season.

8	Eric Lundberg	Public comment	SMC		159-160	Pumped groundwater has many benefits to the environment and ecosystems. For many crops, pumped groundwater offers as many benefits to the environment as GDEs. MTs and MOs should not be managed exclusively for the benefit of GDEs, but should also take into consideration the improvements and benefits that pumped groundwater offer to the ecosystem. "... environmental uses of groundwater" should not only consider the GDE but also the impacts pumped groundwater has on the ecosystem.
9	Eric Lundberg	Public comment	SMC		180-183	I do not think it is reasonable for the VINA GSA to guarantee a well owner that his/her well will not go dry. By setting an MT and MO, well owners can know that a source of water will be protected, but that some additional well development to the MT or MO levels might be needed. Managers should encourage well owners to develop wells with the MT and MO levels in mind for a protected water source. "Sustainably constructed domestic wells" should take into consideration the MT and MO levels.
10	Eric Lundberg	Public comment	SMC		259	I prefer the North Vina Management Area Approach to establish the level of MT and MO levels, without looking at a percentage of domestic wells to protect.
11	Susan Schrader	Public comment	SMC		Lines 25-31	"projects and management actions are formulated to achieve the sustainability goal and avoid undesirable results". This is a worthy goal and I want to trust that the GSAs, SHHAC, and other stakeholders are honest in their dedication to its achievement. However, there is lots of talk and many references about how our water is being sold to farmers/Big AG down south without oversight. I hope that this goal mitigates the depletion of our groundwater here.
12	Susan Schrader	Public comment	SMC		Lines 62-70	As pertains to the SI being measure and quantified on an ongoing basis... Who or what will do the monitoring and how often? Will the reports be available and shared with the public in a clear and transparent manner? I have not been aware that this plan and report was even a thing, yet I think its information is valuable and needs to be released in the a variety of media formats.
13	Susan Schrader	Public comment	SMC		Lines 75-78	I want there to be adequate surface and groundwater for the many rural areas, small communities, SMALL and large farms, and the natural environment and its wildlife. I want our natural resources protected. Our ability to participate in outdoor activities is a big positive for Chico.
14	Susan Schrader	Public comment	SMC		Lines 80-92	"the subbasin will be managed to prevent undesirable results even though groundwater levels may decline"...How will this be possible? What actions would be taken? I have been dismayed to learn that California has never had groundwater use regulations. I think some are meant to go into effect in the future, but, in the meantime, what allows us to protect our water in the North State? It seems that smaller player will be overpowered by Big AG and its water needs. In fact, you hear of 1000s of acre feet being transported and we are in a drought. I have a well along Bidwell Ave. in Chico and we are worried that it will dry up.
15	Susan Schrader	Public comment	SMC		Lines 108-116	The oversight by the Butte County Dept. of Water and Resource Conservation needs a publicist to create more press coverage, outreach, and education. This is the first I've heard of this plan and its implementation. Furthermore, I didn't understand any of the graphs and would like to see workshops offered to the public to explain what is going on and how to read all those graphs.
16	Sheri Simons	Cohasset Resident	SMC	3.3	148	I am a resident of Cohasset, population approximately 800, thus falling under the definition of a rural area and small community. Our water source is a 136' domestic well. Our elevation is 2900 ft above sea level. I believe that the crop most threatening to our community's groundwater availability is marijuana. I do not object to the use of marijuana but rather to the unchecked use of groundwater, and to the deepening and drilling of new wells, to the detriment of rural households. There is no oversight for this practice.
17	Sheri Simons	Cohasset Resident	SMC		167 - 173	We are experiencing all of the impacts from declining groundwater levels listed here. In fact, due to our well running dry, the estimate for drilling a deeper well (500-800 feet) would be about \$30,000-50,000. Cohasset is not a white collar enclave. No one that I know of has that kind of money lying around... except perhaps the pot growers.
18	Sheri Simons	Cohasset Resident	SMC		258-260	I prefer the approach where surface elevation is a consideration.

19	Sheri Simons	Cohasset Resident	SMC		323-326	I am deeply concerned that we are placing our own comforts (lawns, golf courses) over that of the habitat around us. Creating a scorched earth scenario for generations to come is short selling our children's children and all of nature.
20	Sheri Simons	Cohasset Resident	SMC			We cannot MAKE groundwater but we CAN raise awareness about equitable groundwater usage and make corrections to our valley's crop choices given our increasingly arid climate.
21	Sheri Simons	Cohasset Resident	SMC			I would like to know whether the possibility of Water Districts has been discussed or tabled?
22	James Pushnik	Farmer/Rancher	SMC	RMS polygon258-260	258-260	The use of polygons as representative of a region is reasonable, with the following caveats: there can be substantial elevation gradients across the larger polygons (to be addressin subsequent comments)
23	James Pushnik	Farmer/Rancher	SMC		287-288	Linear trend line used in extrapolating ground water elevation levels does not account for potential increases in multiple use areas ( e.g. increases in urbanization and agricultural expansion)
24	James Pushnik	Farmer/Rancher	SMC		Appendix 3-1	"recognizing the RMS well is not fully representative of wells within the zone due to changes in groundwater surface and water surface elevation throughout the area. Wells above the Minimum Threshold elevation tend to be especially shallow (less than 100 feet deep) or have a significantly different (higher) ground surface elevation than the RMS well." This is particularly tue in North Vina Monitoring area where ground surface elevation can vary by ~200 ft. This acknowledgement argues for RMS wells to
25	James Pushnik	Farmer/Rancher	MoN	RMS	22-24	The use of exiting well as the backbone of the RMS seems reasonable as a cost effective measure, but may not be adequate for accurate short term evaluation/modeling of Ground Water elevational fluctuations, particularly with the "quarterly monitoring schedule" and RMS depth to bottom of well across a regional polygon with distinct elevational gradients.
26	James Pushnik	Farmer/Rancher	MoN		42-46 & 124-125	To the point above ground water elevation would be used as proxy data for several of the SI's across shortand long term monitoring.
27	James Pushnik	Farmer/Rancher	MoN		376-380	Indicates: RMS monitoring sites are designated for compliance for SI's and MT's, MO's, IM's
28	James Pushnik	Farmer/Rancher	MoN		402-404	At a minimum for adequately addressing the above all of the RMS site wells should be a Muti-Complete well with screening across muple depth from ground surface to well depth. A better alternatively, the 17 RMS wells across the Basin should be equipped with electronic monitoring (time domain reflectometry (sorry my knowledge of current technogy may out of date) but some similar method to measure ground water elevation across the well profile on more frequent schedule (weekly through data loggers to provide for timely management actions.
29	Pam Stoesser	Chico Resident				It is just a day before the "public comment" period ends and I and other concerned citizens are just learning of this project. Obviously I haven't had the time to study all the material as it is lengthy and complex. So my opening questions are: What methods are you using to reach the public and as many "stakeholders" as possible? How do you advertise a "Public Comment Period"? How does someone like me get wind of these very important projects if they don't know about it? It almost seems designed to keep us from hearing about it.
30	Pam Stoesser	Chico Resident	SMC		#25-31	I am very concerned about our groundwater levels here in Chico. All of Chico relies on the groundwater, including our trees. There are signs everywhere that our trees are being severely stressed. Not only from lack of rain during this drought, but even old large trees with deep roots are unable to tap into our lowering ground water levels. Just yesterday I met with a tree arborist out of concern for a beautiful, large, old black walnut tree on my property. He told me I needed to start watering it because the tips are beginning to die off. If I water the tree those outer tips and limbs have a chance to survive. We can't survive the summer heat in Chico without our tree canopy. How does this project protect the urban forest and the Valley Oak wild lands long term?
31	Pam Stoesser	Chico Resident	SMC		#40-49	Where is the discussion about "Climate Change" and what measures are you taking to mitigate this long and far reaching event?
32	Pam Stoesser	Chico Resident	SMC		#69	How are you educating the public? This is complex stuff. I consider myself an active and engaged community member, an educated person, and it would take a "Town Hall" style presentation to help me really understand what is going on here.

33	Pam Stoesser	Chico Resident	SMC		#108	When you say that Butte County is managing ground water levels, does this mean that if ground water levels exceed the minimum requirement level, that farmers are given permission to pump and sell water to other locations?
34	Pam Stoesser	Chico Resident	SMC		#171	Big Chico Creek running through Bidwell Lower Park is dangerously low. It's only the middle of June!
35	Pam Stoesser	Chico Resident	SMC		#188	Doesn't the trend of local wells running dry tell us that we are heading in the wrong direction? The best place to store ground water is in the ground...right here. Tell the people whose wells are going dry that it isn't a significant factor. That is just preposterous and criminal.
36	Pam Stoesser	Chico Resident				Within such a short timeframe of learning about this, I have no idea how these comments will play out. I just know that water conservation is critical and should be required of all Butte County citizens, including farmers. Stop allowing more orchards to be planted. They are sucking us dry! Forbid lawns in any new construction, private or public, and make it mandatory that people stop watering existing lawns. Introduce water recycling methods for households. Work to prioritize saving our tree canopy. Treat our water like gold, because it is.
37	Tasha Levinson	Oroville Resident				Not sure where the "comments" were to go. I am an Oroville resident so likely outside "Vina" area, yet constantly am concerned for Butte County as a whole. Each and all of the plans I have seen have no regard for the likely 50-year drought scenario we currently face NOR do they do anything to account for the fact that Glenn County is permitting commercially-largedeeep-acquifer-drilling so as to deplete all surrounding counties (including Butte). All of this is so existentially important and yet is being managed bureaucratically -- Each and all of the water districts must do a better job. Please take this responsibly. Thank you.
38	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		132	When did the Board establish the MTs?
39	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		134	When will the triggers be determined?
40	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		132-136	The impression is given that the MT will never be reached.
41	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		186-194	This phrasing is confusing. Do the years need to be consecutive and non-dry, or can the second non-dry year occur after 5 dry years. If we have to wait for consecutive non-dry(2 in 2 years) then we could reach the MT and theoretically not have to acknowledge it for years on end.
42	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		186-194	I believe the non-dry should be removed. The GSP is supposed to be sustainable and that includes the effects of climate.
43	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		196	What is the meaning of "sustainably" constructed?
44	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		227	When was it decided the 15th percentile would be used?
45	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		243-257	The polygon approach is much easier to understand..
46	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		255	"sustainable" domestic well. Please clarify.
47	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		287-88	The MO does not have a dry/non-dry qualifier. Is this correct?
49	A Dawson	SHAC	SMC		Appx 3-1	How was the North Vina MT developed? The 6 RMS wells have risks to domestic wells ranging from 21-48% with an average of 31%, nowhere near the stated MT.
50	A Dawson	SHAC	MoN		61	Does BBGM refer to the whole Butte basin or just the Vina subbasin.

**Buck, Christina**

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**Subject:** RE: Draft SMC comment-setting of MT

**From:** Anne Dawson <[aakdawson@aol.com](mailto:aakdawson@aol.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 17, 2021 4:27 PM

**To:** [Vinagsa@gmail.com](mailto:Vinagsa@gmail.com)

**Subject:** Draft SMC comment-setting of MT

**ATTENTION:** This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

The following is a general comment on the draft SMC document.

I feel the minimum threshold as proposed is significant and unreasonable because all costs and consequences are being borne by domestic well owners.

The bar for the MT has been set so low that the result is a high likelihood that farmers can continue unimpeded pumping for many years without problem.

Meanwhile GW levels will drop and domestic wells will be affected. As water supply becomes unreliable and well diggers are overwhelmed, domestic well owners will be expected to tolerate many months of inconvenience, anxiety, and cost while awaiting a solution. Domestic well owners often grow a crop and/or raise livestock or keep horses. Landscaping would be lost. Added to that will be the financial stress of deepening a well or digging a new one. Many thousands of dollars have to be spent.

I feel that domestic well owners are being asked to shoulder the consequences and costs of falling GW levels while farmers continue to enjoy unrestricted pumping.

In other words farmers are getting off Scot-free. The burden must be shared by all parties.

Anne Dawson

Domestic well representative, Vina SHAC



**VIA U.S. MAIL AND E-MAIL**

Board of Directors  
Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency  
308 Nelson Avenue  
Oroville, CA 95965  
[VinaGSA@gmail.com](mailto:VinaGSA@gmail.com)

Re: Comments to Draft Sustainable Management Criteria Chapter

Dear Board Members:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency) with comments from the Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County (AGUBC) regarding the Agency's draft Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) chapter that will be a key component of the Agency's Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

We appreciate the effort the Agency and its consultants have devoted to preparation of the draft SMC, and the opportunity the Agency has provided to comment on each GSP chapter as it is developed. As an organization representing owners of about 60,000 acres of land containing both domestic and production wells within the Agency's boundaries, we wish to provide comments to address concerns our owners have with the draft SMC during the comment period you have provided. As revisions are made to the draft SMC in response to comments you will receive, and as the remaining GSP chapters are developed, we anticipate additional SMC comments to arise on behalf of our members. While the comments below address concerns we have at this time, we intend to comment on the final draft GSP when that is circulated later this year. We ask that the following comments be taken into consideration when the Agency prepares that final draft GSP.

1. Groundwater Levels SMC.

The draft SMC proposes two different approaches for establishing Minimum Thresholds (MT): one for use in the South Vina and Chico Management Areas and the other for use in the North Vina Management Area. The former draws circles with a three-mile radius from each RMS

well (7:223-224.) and the latter divides the management area into polygons representing proximate areas to each RMS well (8:244-247). The Agency asked, in particular, for input on the preferred approach based on the Agency's stated intent to use a consistent approach throughout the Vina Subbasin. (8:258-260.)

We believe the Vina North Management Area approach should be applied across the Vina Subbasin to the other two management areas. Our comments, however, will focus on the Vina South Management Area since the lands owned by our members are situated in the Vina North and Vina South Management Areas. Our position is that the polygon approach proposed for the Vina North Management Area should be used across the entire Subbasin is based on the following:

- The circle approach results in double and triple counting of domestic wells tied to RMS wells, a fact which is acknowledged in the draft SMC chapter. (7:224-226.)
- The polygons can be structured to account for surface elevation differentiation as additional data is gathered.
- MT are established for the polygons accounting for sustainable domestic wells in each polygon zone.
- MT can be established within a discrete polygon zone to provide sufficient operational flexibility between the "target" operational level (i.e., the Measurable Objective) and the undesirable results that the GSAs are trying to avoid. This is simply not possible with the use of overlapping circles.
- Future well drilling standards developed by Butte County should be consistent with the SMC, and a clear polygon zone facilitates development and implementation of those standards.

In recognition of the short timeframe to compile this information and meet the goal of the GSAs in getting the draft GSP out for public comment by September 2021, we hired Land IQ to propose polygons for the RMS wells in the Vina South Management Area. Enclosed is a map representing those polygons for the Vina South Management Area. You will find that a seventh zone is created as a result of this work.

The Margin of Operational Flexibility will need to be established for the polygon zones. As a starting point, we reviewed the Measurable Objectives (MO) and MT established for the Vina North Management Area and concluded that the average differential between the MO and MT was 67 feet. Consequently, the attached hydrographs for each RMS well (and polygon zone) show a difference of 67 feet between the MO and MT for the Vina South Management Area.

Finally, the draft SMC's proposed approach for the Vina South Management Area sets the MT to be protective of 85 percent of all domestic wells within each circular zone recognizing that some wells in the data set are unreasonably shallow or not sustainably constructed. (8:234-241.) Given the importance of the task, we disagree with this estimation approach. Wells that are unreasonably shallow or not sustainably constructed simply should not be part of the analysis. The SMC should consider only sustainably constructed wells.

2. Groundwater Storage and Water Quality SMC.

The Groundwater Storage SMC determines that an undesirable result coming from the reduction of groundwater storage is experienced if:

“Sustained groundwater storage volumes are insufficient to support rural areas and small communities, the agricultural economic base of the region, and environmental uses for *suitable habitat*.”

(11:322-326; emphasis added.) Additionally, the Water Quality SMC determines that an undesirable result coming from degraded water quality is experienced if:

“Groundwater pumping compromises the long-term viability of rural areas and small communities, the agricultural economic base of the region, and environmental uses for *suitable habitat*. . . .”

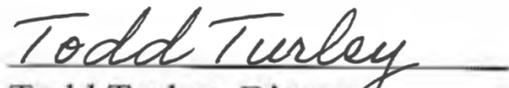
(12:356-360; emphasis added.)

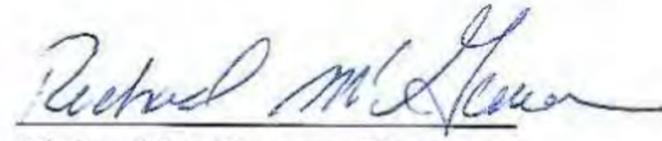
We are concerned about the use of the loosely defined (or undefined) use of the phrase “suitable habitat.” While we understand and appreciate the environmental aspect of an undesirable result, given the significance of what an “undesirable result” is and what it triggers, the words and phrases used within this important concept should be as specific and well understood as possible. We are not sure what “suitable habitat” means, and that can lead to future debate and disagreement. Groundwater Sustainability Agencies must define in their GSPs the specific significant and unreasonable effects that would constitute undesirable results, and define the groundwater conditions that would produce those results in their basins. Accordingly, the environmental aspect of these undesirable results should be rethought and rewritten to be more specific.

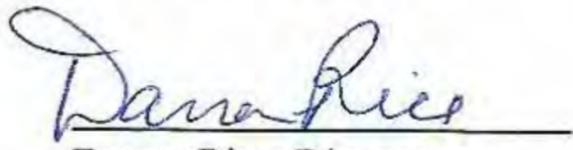
We look forward to continued participation in the process to develop the GSP for the Vina Subbasin. We offer the foregoing comments as the beginning of the Agency's receipt of formal stakeholder input on SMC. We are interested to see the comments from others as well as the Agency's response to the comments received. We intend to comment again on the final draft GSP when that document is circulated later this year.

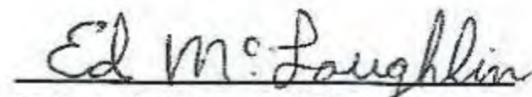
Please feel free to contact us to discuss any of our thoughts or concerns, including the attached map and hydrographs.

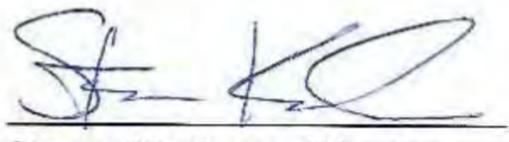
Very truly yours,

  
Todd Turley, Director

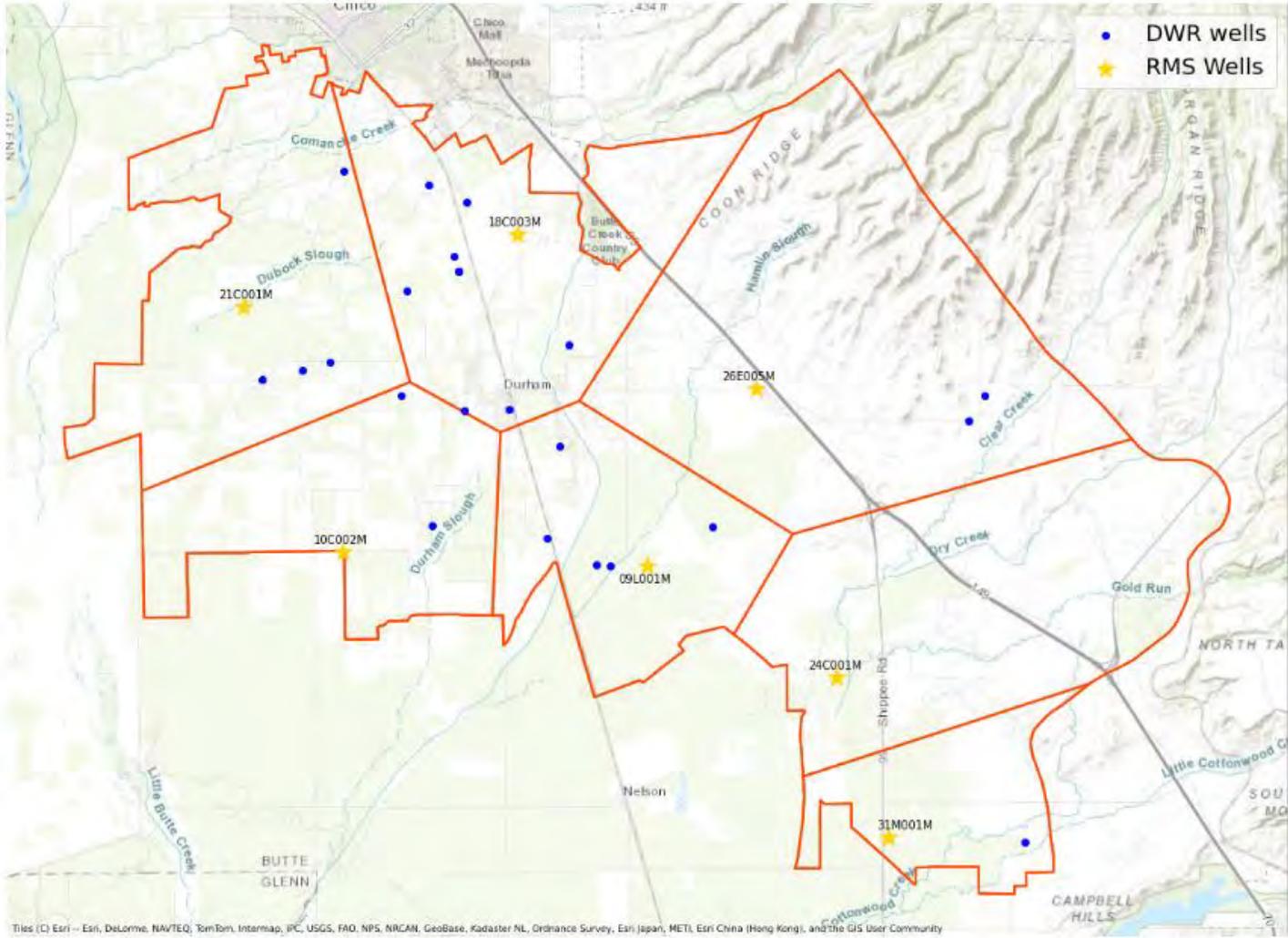
  
Richard McGowan, Director

  
Darren Rice, Director

  
Edward McLaughlin, Director

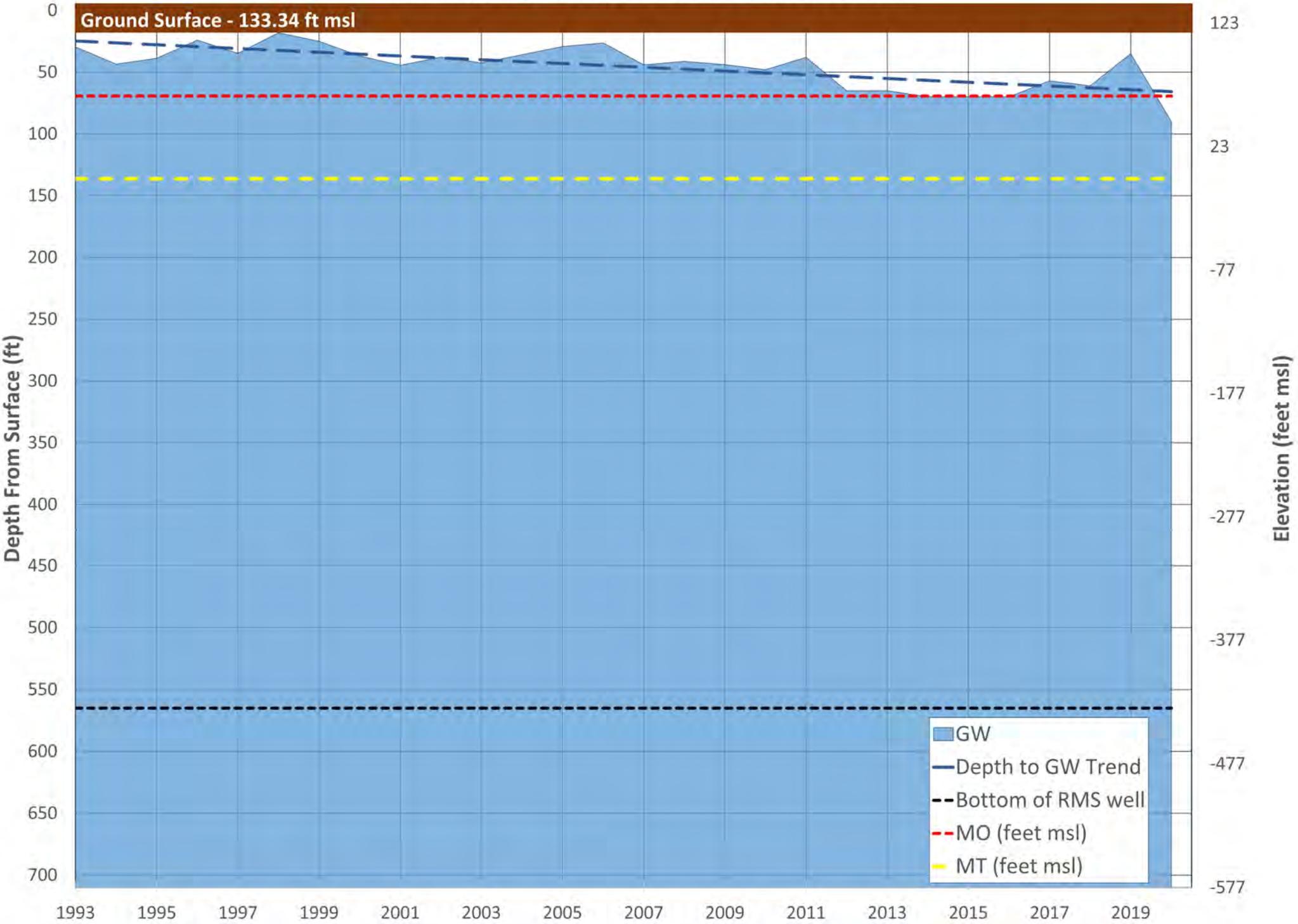
  
Steven Koehnen, Director

Enclosures



Tiles (C) Esri -- Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, iPC, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), and the GIS User Community

# Groundwater Levels for Well 21N01E21C001M



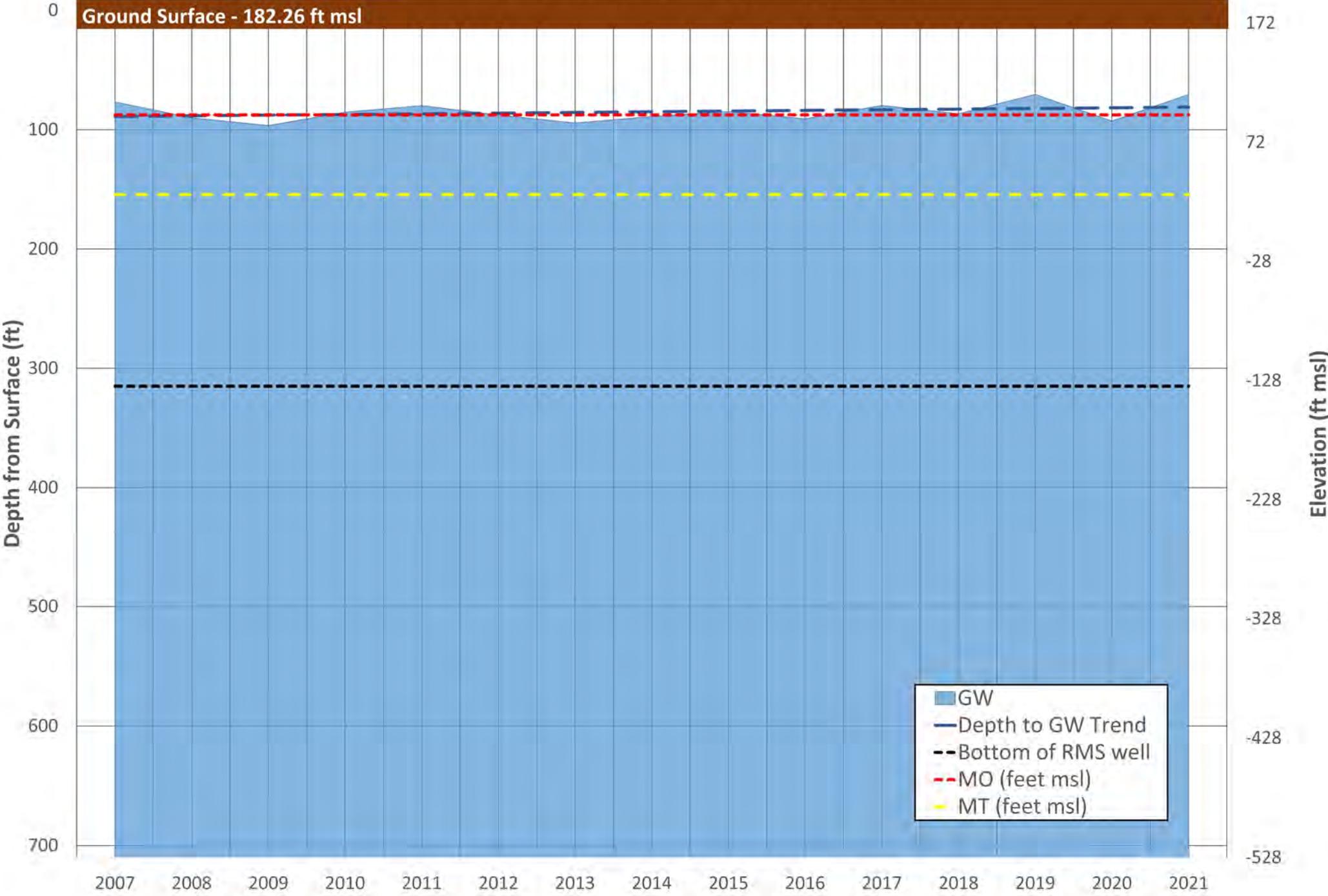
# Groundwater Levels for Well 21N02E18C003M

Ground Surface - 189.07 ft msl



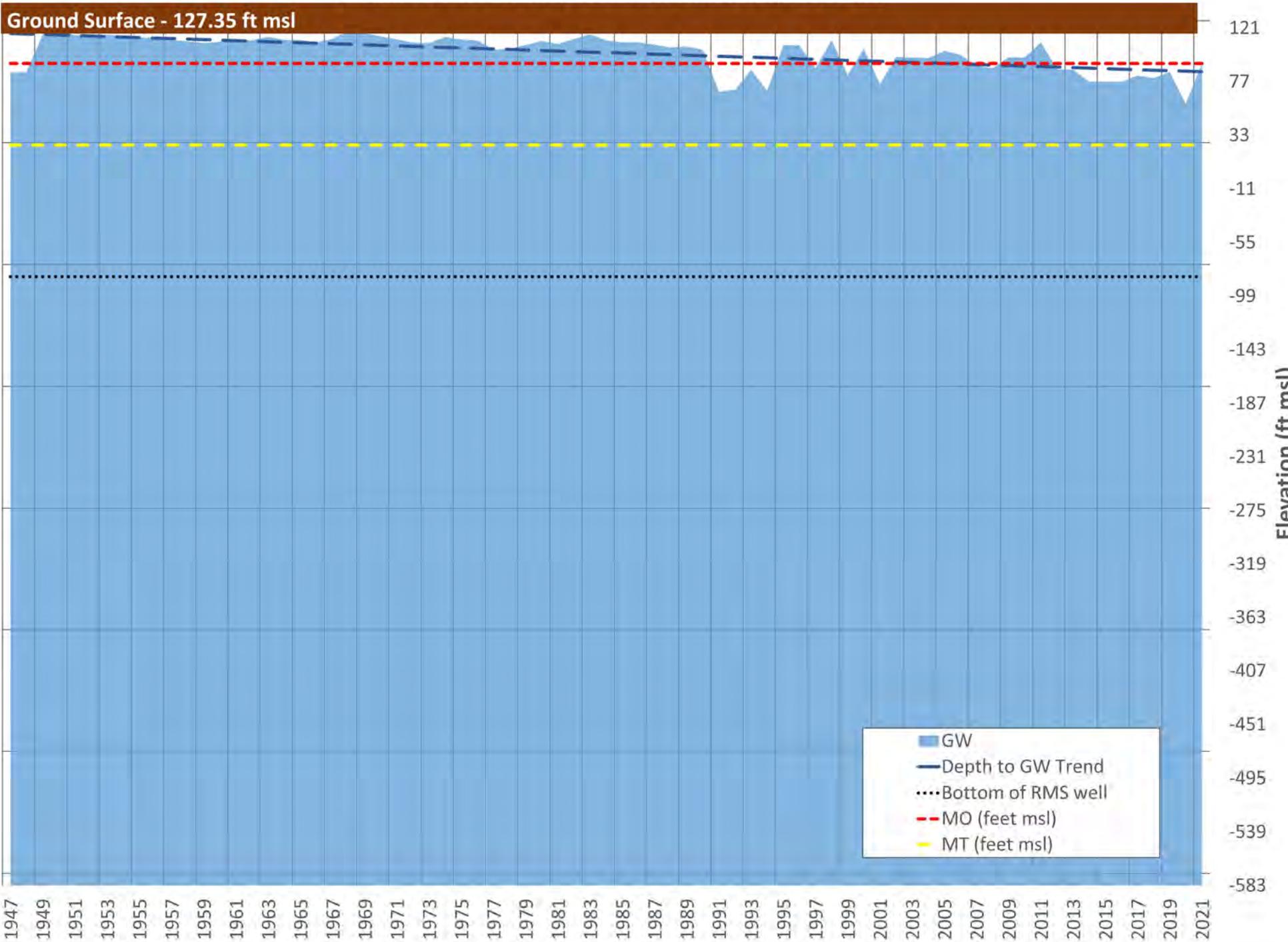
# Groundwater Levels for Well 21N02E26E005M

Ground Surface - 182.26 ft msl

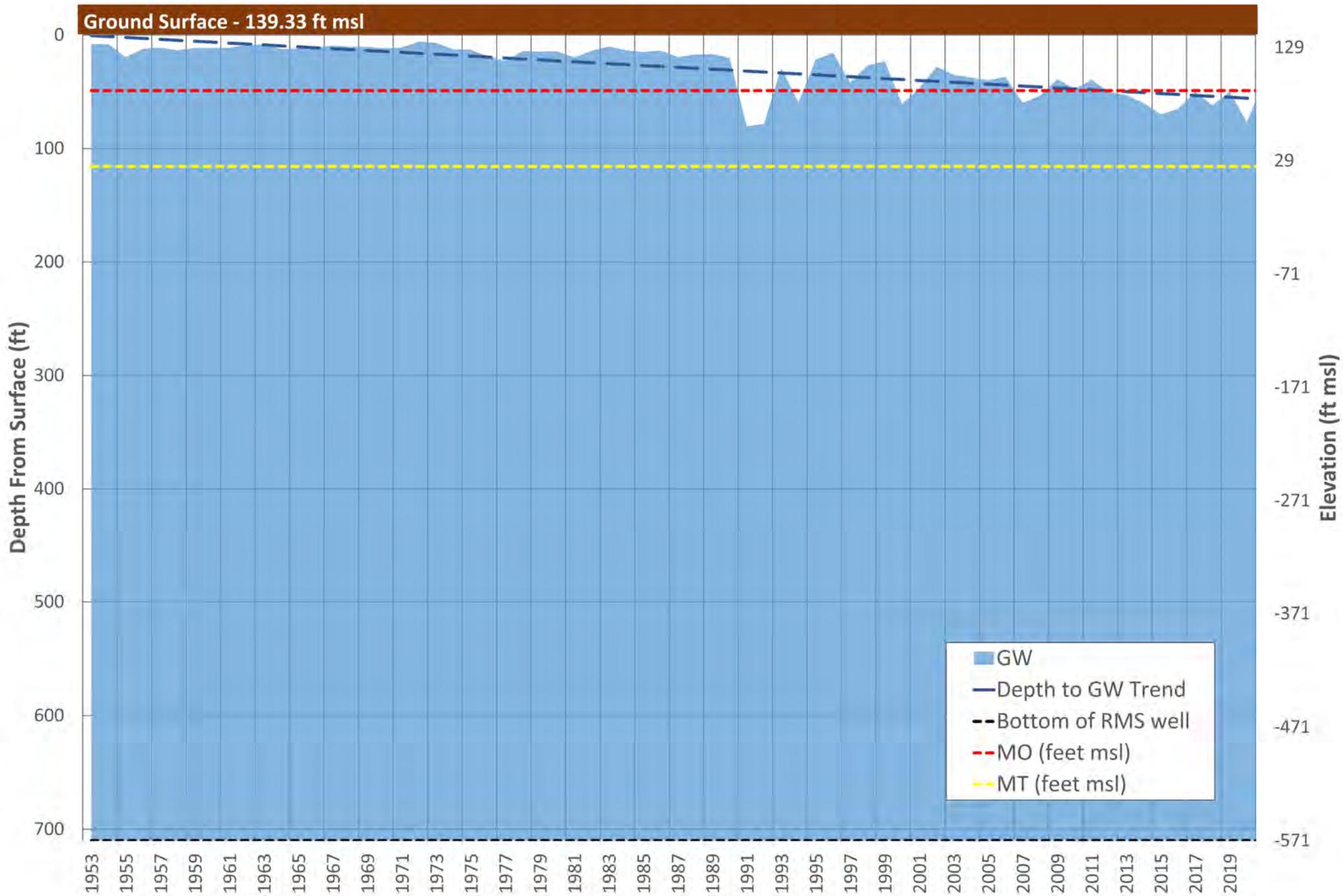


- GW
- Depth to GW Trend
- Bottom of RMS well
- MO (feet msl)
- MT (feet msl)

# Groundwater Levels for Well 20N01E10C002M

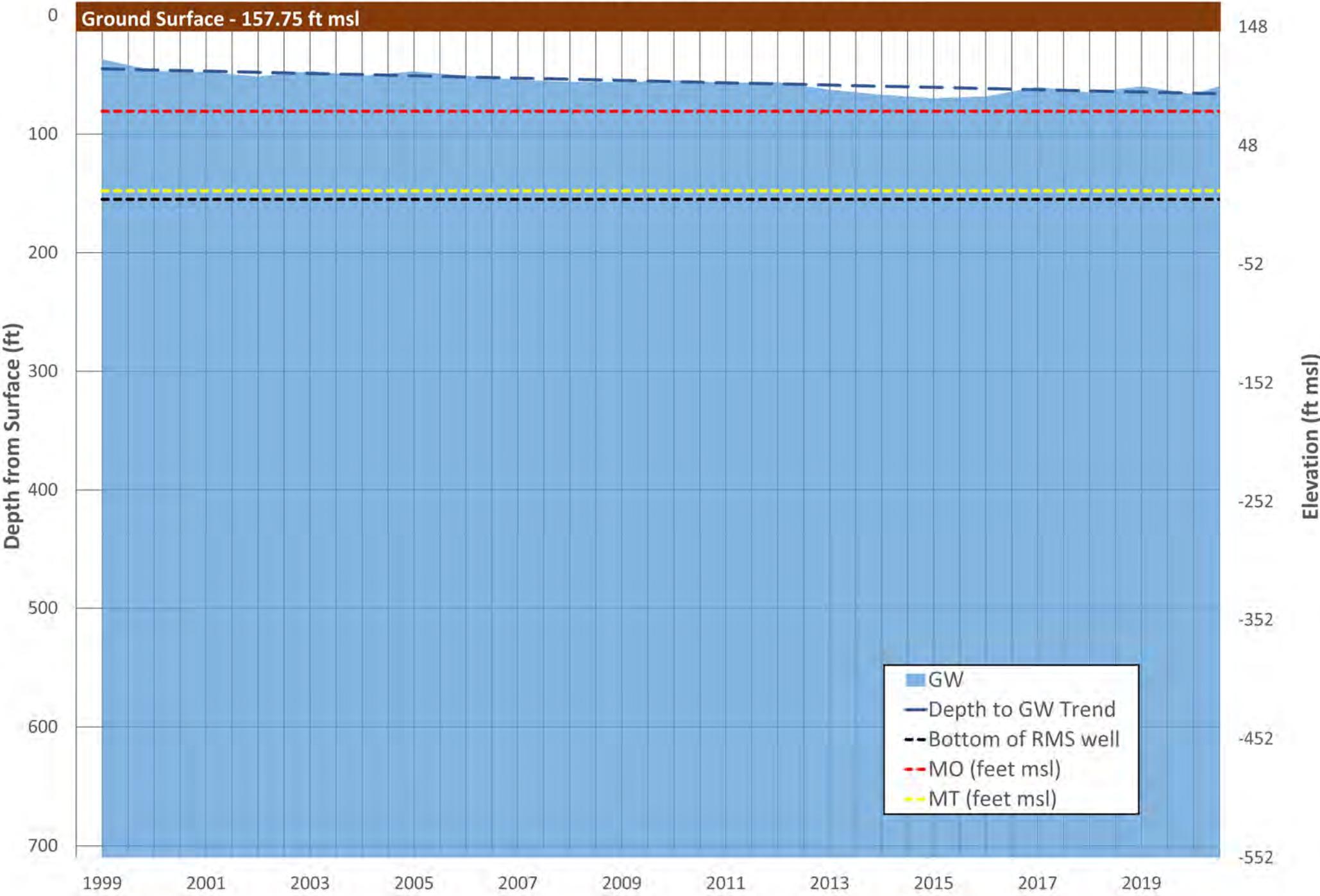


# Groundwater Levels for Well 20N02E09L001M

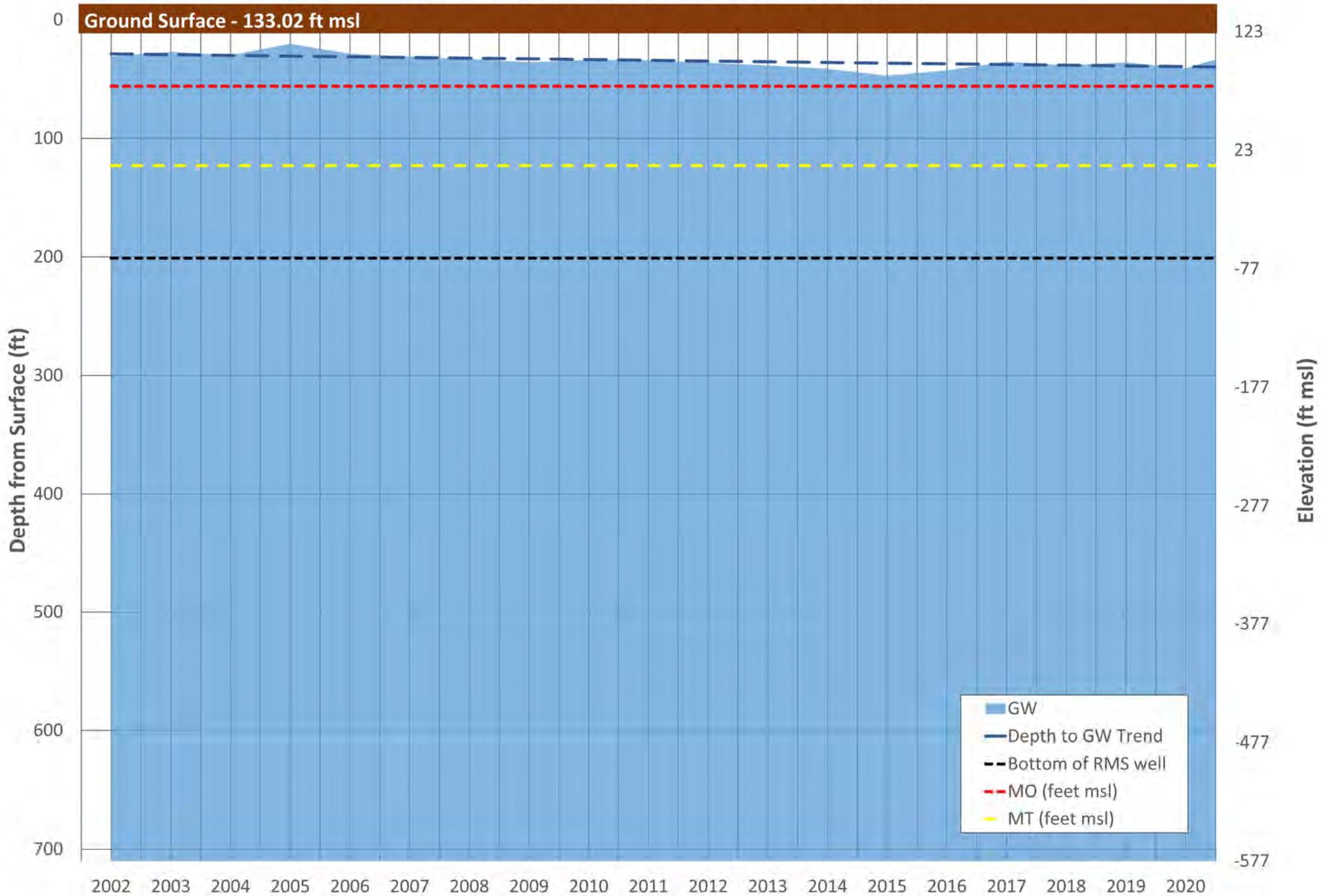


# Groundwater Levels for Well 20N02E24C001M

Ground Surface - 157.75 ft msl



# Groundwater Levels for Well 20N03E31M001M



<https://www.vinagsa.org/sustainable-management-criteria>

### Chapter 3: Sustainable Management Criteria

The GDE definition on line 462 does not include upland Valley Oak woodlands or the GW dependent urban forest that remains verdant without irrigation during drought. “GDE are a sub-class of aquatic and riparian habitat that depend on groundwater for optimum ecological function.” This narrow definition that limits GDE consideration to aquatic/riparian vegetation eliminates GDEs that are not dependent on interconnected surface water. Figures 3-4 on page 68 indicate only the Valley Oak riparian forest meets the narrow standard.

The Groundwater Dependent urban forest is mentioned once on line 486 “Potential impacts identified by stakeholders were:

486 • Degradation of “Urban Forest” habitat in the City of Chico”

But there appears to be no effort on the part of the technical consultants to link groundwater to the arboreal canopy that enhances the human environment.

The “California Code of Regulations, Title 23 includes but does not restrict GDEs to “Interconnected surface water”.

23 § 354.16. Groundwater Conditions. (g) Identification of groundwater dependent ecosystems within the basin, utilizing data available from the Department, as specified in Section 353.2, or *the best available information*.

23 § 351. Definitions. (m) “Groundwater dependent ecosystem” refers to ecological communities or species that depend on groundwater emerging from aquifers or on groundwater occurring near the ground surface. “Near ground surface” is an arbitrary term that should be broadened to include the shallow aquifer when appropriate. This SMC document explains starting on line 463 “The distinction between an ecosystem’s dependence on groundwater versus its dependence on surface water and the associated riparian zone or floodplain is important. In addition, the distinction between the shallow aquifer zone and the deep aquifer zone, or principal aquifer, is also important.”

23 § 351. Definitions. (o) “Interconnected surface water” refers to surface water that is hydraulically connected at any point by a continuous saturated zone to the underlying aquifer and the overlying surface water is not completely depleted.

On line 565 the SMC document inappropriately limits GDE designation to “depletion of interconnected surface water”. “For now, an undesirable result coming from the depletion of interconnected surface water is simply defined as Avoiding significant and unreasonable depletion of surface water flows caused by groundwater pumping that significantly impacts beneficial uses”

The guidelines that the Groundwater Resources Association of California and TNC suggested in their publication *Groundwater Thresholds for Ecosystems* considered the guide to serve as “a *preliminary* assessment of the GDEs in your basin.” Pg 3 of the guide defines GDEs thusly: What are GDEs? Groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs) are species and ecological communities that rely on groundwater for some or all of their water needs. Groundwater reliance within GDEs varies by species or ecologic communities and is either direct (e.g., **phreatophytes relying on groundwater via roots**) or indirect (e.g., riparian birds relying on groundwater-dependent vegetation). GDEs vary across the landscape -- from mountains across river valleys to coastal wetlands – with **groundwater sustaining upland vegetation**... If the connection to groundwater is lost as a result of drought or unsustainable groundwater use, then water in GDEs can become depleted. Because groundwater provides a perennial water supply for GDEs, they serve as an important refuge during dry summers and droughts and are often associated with rare and endemic species. GDEs also benefit human well-being by providing water storage, water purification, soil preservation, carbon sequestration, flood risk reduction, and recreational opportunities (Aldous and Bach 2014; Brown et al. 2011; Rohde et al. 2018). For more information on GDEs visit: [www.GroundwaterResourceHub.org](http://www.GroundwaterResourceHub.org).

These definitions include GDEs that exist outside of established riparian corridors. The language describing GDEs benefitting human well-being imply that wildlife ecosystems are not the exclusive realm of GDEs. Depleting the sub-irrigation of the Chico urban forest would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Since the urban forest provides benefits to humans and wildlife alike more focus on identifying the shallow aquifer levels and interaction with deep rooted, unirrigated urban trees and the shallow aquifer cannot be neglected. The VGSA cannot wait 5 years to include this factor in this iteration of the SMC.

“To select the appropriate hydrologic indicators, we recommend first identifying at least one key ecologic attribute for each ecologic target. Key ecologic attributes are defined as aspects of an ecologic target’s biology or ecology that, if missing or altered, would lead to the loss of that target over time. This is done by tracking how the ecologic target responds to fluctuations in the hydrologic connection to groundwater over time and space. Based on this acceptable range of variation, along with expert opinion of **maximum rooting depths** and a scientific literature review, an initial groundwater threshold can be established.”

[GroundwaterThresholdFramework Final updated Dec2020.pdf](#)

The scientific literature describing Valley Oak woodland dependence on groundwater is extensive. Even TNC has identified the extent of gw level depth that allow this keystone specie to survive the intense heat/drought endemic to the Great Central Valley: <https://mavensnotebook.com/2021/06/08/webinar-managing-californias-groundwater-interconnected-surface-waters-environmental-users/> Valley oaks. 80’  
[Melissa.Rohde@tnc.org](mailto:Melissa.Rohde@tnc.org)

The USDA forest service cites numerous scientific sources that describe the necessity of access to the water table and that the range that supports these Oaks extends to 50' below the 30' depth that most GSAs seem to be designating as the maximum depth for GDE assignment. In fact, the feis data base explains that the Valley Oak thrives best when the water table is at 33'bgs, 3' below the 30' designation.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/quelob/all.html> Quercus lobata

**“HABITAT TYPES AND PLANT COMMUNITIES:**

This species dominates two plant communities: the valley oak woodland and the valley oak riparian forest...Another major management concern is loss of mature trees. Valley oak have died in some areas because of greatly lowered water tables...Trees are resistant to short-term drought; mature trees suffer drought damage only when a series of dry seasons lower water tables to extreme depths... Valley oak typically has several vertical roots that tap groundwater and extensive horizontal root branches. Vertical root depth has been measured as deep as *80 feet* in some individuals...The oaks depend on water-table access. Best growth is attained when water tables are about *33 feet* (10 m) below the surface. They will tolerate poorly drained soil and wet seeps.”

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Pgs 39-44 N VGSA: The MO (measurable objectives) are often below the historic low levels and the MT (management threshold) are 75-90' below historic lows. The MT is supposed to designate “the point at which Undesirable Results may *begin* to occur.” The historic lows are mostly within the 80' max rooting depth of native phreatophytes. Some of the MO are lower than 80'. All the MTs are significantly lower than 80' bgs. The Operational Range of 25c001M on page 39 is extremely wide with an MT that is about 70' below historic low. The remaining N VGSA MTs are similarly pessimistic in meeting goals that would avoid triggering Undesirable Results. A lower water table will dewater longer reaches of streams earlier in the season and persist later in the year.

Pgs 45-50 Chico Management Area. There is only one well in a shallow portion (pg 47). All the wells have MTs that exceed the 80' bgl limit of phreatophytic GDEs.

Pgs 51-57 South VGSA Management Area. All the hydrographs on these pages have the same deep MTs that would not just hit “the point at which Undesirable Results may *begin* to occur” but would indicate undesirable, hard to reverse, undesirable results *are occurring*. Impacts to plants and animals would, in many cases, be permanent even if water levels recover.

**WELL MONITORING:**

407: Well Construction Data – Well data such as perforation depths, construction date, and well depth was considered for selection.

Many of the selected wells do not meet the above criteria for selection:

## Chapter 4: MONITORING NETWORKS

### Pg 19 Table 4-5. Groundwater Levels RMS Well Construction Details

North MA: 3/6 of the wells do not have listed screen intervals. This makes it difficult to know what layer of aquifer is being monitored. Scientifically constructed multi-completion wells with defined screen depths/elevations is needed. The other 3 have screen intervals ranging from about 70' to almost 500'. While this type of well construction is suitable for production it is unsuitable for transparent depth/elevation monitoring of the aquifer system.

Chico MA The well depths are undefined as are the screen depths. There is a notable lack in monitoring the shallow aquifer that supports the unirrigated Chico Urban forest.

South MA: The screen intervals on two of the MC wells have appropriate 10' spacing allowing for better scientific analysis of monitoring data.

Wise resource management strives to improve conditions that have been degraded by human development. Accepting degraded status quo or planning for increased degradation may be realistic given the human inclination to ambitiously convert resources into useful products. But the term “sustainable” implies we have the capacity to identify and honor carrying capacity while devising demand flexibility strategies to meet evolving climate conditions. Robust Management Objectives reduce the probability of careening toward Management Thresholds. Our MO levels can strive to improve conditions without risk of State management takeover. § 354.30. *Measurable Objectives (g) An Agency may establish measurable objectives that exceed the reasonable margin of operational flexibility for the purpose of improving overall conditions in the basin, but failure to achieve those objectives shall not be grounds for a finding of inadequacy of the Plan.*

## Buck, Christina

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**Subject:** RE: Sustainable Management Criteria

-----Original Message-----

From: Paula Busch <paulaprints880@gmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, June 17, 2021 3:49 PM  
To: VinaGSA@gmail.com  
Subject: Sustainable Management Criteria

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Dear Christina Buck and the Vina GSA,

Our small political group just found out about your agency through Supervisor Debra Lucero. We learned much about the water crisis here in the valley. As climate change is heating our environment and we are getting hardly any rain we can see the lakes and creeks drying up. What we can't see are the wells. This is very scary stuff.

I would like to see more outreach and education on your part. Filling out an excel sheet doesn't seem to cut it for such complicated issues.

Chico is a City of Trees. Without water what will happen to our protective vegetation?

Where will the water come from to fight our ever growing number of fires when the lakes are dry?

It seems that the nut crops need an extreme amount of water. Added to this, these crops are shipped off over-seas. That's OUR water going somewhere else.

There is always the threat of our water being sent to Southern California. We need to protect what water we have as little as it is.

On a positive note: we just had a Quiet Cool whole house fan installed as well as an attic fan. We have not had to turn on our AC (today it's 109 out there). The company that installed these also does rainwater catchment and water storage systems. They work! What a great way to conserve and use our natural resources efficiently.

Sincerely,  
Paula Busch  
385 E. Sacramento Ave., Chico



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
West Coast Region  
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100  
Sacramento, California 95814-4700

June 24, 2021

Paul Gosselin  
Water and Resource Conservation  
Vina GSA  
308 Nelson Avenue  
Oroville, California 95965

Re: NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service comments on the Draft Chapter 3 of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Vina Subbasin

Dear Mr. Gosselin:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is the federal agency responsible for managing, conserving, and protecting living marine resources in inland, coastal, and offshore waters of the United States. We derive our mandates from numerous statutes, including the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). The purpose of the ESA is to conserve threatened and endangered species and their ecosystems.

On May 19, 2019, the Vina Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (hereafter, "GSA") released their draft Chapter 3: Sustainable Management Criteria for public comment. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has designated the Vina Subbasin a "high" priority for groundwater management, necessitating the development of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by January 2022, as required under California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA). Several waterways that overlie portions of the Vina Subbasin support federally threatened California Central Valley (CCV) steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and threatened Central Valley (CV) spring-run Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*). This letter transmits NMFS' comments regarding the draft Chapter 3.

Surface water and groundwater are hydraulically linked in the Vina Subbasin, and this linkage is critically important in creating seasonal habitat for CCV steelhead and CV spring-run Chinook salmon. Where the groundwater aquifer supplements streamflow, the influx of cold, clean water is crucial for maintaining temperature and flow volume. Pumping water from these aquifer-stream complexes has the potential to affect salmon and steelhead habitat by lowering groundwater levels and interrupting the hyporheic flow between the aquifer and stream. NMFS has concerns that groundwater extraction in the Vina Subbasin may compromise CCV steelhead and CV Spring-run Chinook salmon instream habitat.



## Comments

**Page 18, line 560:** The draft Chapter 3 states the following: “The undesirable result for this SMC is focused on connectivity where there is a measurable connection between groundwater levels in the principal aquifer and streamflow or associated aquatic habitat viability.” We remind the authors that undesirable results, as explained at CCR 23 §354.26, are caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the basin, not just the primary aquifer. The authors should clarify how their reference to groundwater levels within the primary aquifer is pertinent to determining streamflow depletion dynamics within the Vina Subbasin.

**Page 18, line 562:** The use of Valley Oak rooting depth to inform impacts resulting from streamflow depletion is inappropriate. Streamflow depletion impacts ESA-listed salmonids and their habitat by degrading aquatic habitat. Analyzing whether groundwater levels support Valley Oak trees (*i.e.*, occur within some depth threshold below ground surface) has no informative value with regard to how streamflow depletion may impact identified beneficial uses of surface water (*e.g.*, spawning, rearing and migration of ESA-listed fish). We recommend the GSA develop a future study that investigates the relationship between groundwater levels, streamflow depletion rates, and significant and unreasonable impacts to beneficial uses of surface water, especially as those beneficial uses pertain to ESA-listed salmonids and their critical habitat.

**Page 19, line 581:** The draft chapter does not appear to adequately address the following requirement for minimum thresholds as spelled out in the SGMA regulations:

“The relationship between the minimum thresholds for each sustainability indicator, including an explanation of how the Agency has determined that basin conditions at each minimum threshold will avoid undesirable results for each of the sustainability indicators.” (CCR 23 §354.28(b)(2))

The GSA should explain fully how the proposed minimum threshold of “Two RMS wells reach their MT for two consecutive non-dry year-types” avoids the undesirable result of streamflow depletion (*i.e.*, significant and unreasonable impacts to beneficial uses of surface water). The proposed minimum appears to have little relationship to beneficial uses and potential impacts to those uses.

**Page 19, line 585:** Similar to the above comment, the GSA has not explained how the proposed measurable objective for streamflow depletion avoids the undesirable result of significant and unreasonable impacts to beneficial uses of surface water, or how it avoids the undesirable result of streamflow depletion.

Furthermore, the proposed groundwater elevations chosen as streamflow depletion minimum thresholds and measurable objectives are completely inappropriate for avoiding significant impacts to ESA-listed salmonids and their habitat. Most of the minimum thresholds and measurable objectives correspond to historically low groundwater levels, even exceeding the depth to groundwater seen during California’s recent historical drought. These groundwater levels would likely create historically high streamflow depletion rates and result in instream

conditions very likely to adversely affect ESA-listed salmonids and their critical habitat. During the first few years of GSP implementation, the GSA should design and implement relevant studies that better inform appropriate minimum thresholds and measurable objectives for streamflow depletion. In the interim, we suggest the GSA follow guidance by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife that recommends conservative sustainability management criteria be established to ensure groundwater dependent ecosystem protection (CDFW 2019).

Please direct questions regarding this letter to Amanda Cranford, NMFS Central Valley Office, at [Amanda.Cranford@noaa.gov](mailto:Amanda.Cranford@noaa.gov) or (916) 930-3706.

Sincerely,



Cathy Marcinkevage  
Assistant Regional Administrator  
California Central Valley Office

**References:**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2019. Fish & Wildlife Groundwater Planning Considerations. California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Groundwater Program. June 2019. 28 pp. Available at: <https://cawaterlibrary.net/document/fish-wildlife-groundwater-planning-considerations/>

**Cc:**

Angela Murvine, CDFW Statewide SGMA Coordinator, [Angela.Murvine@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Angela.Murvine@wildlife.ca.gov)  
Dr. Andrew Gordus, CDFW Staff Toxicologist Central Region, [Andy.Gordus@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Andy.Gordus@wildlife.ca.gov)  
Craig Altare, California Department of Water Resources, Supervising Engineering Geologist, [Craig.Altare@water.ca.gov](mailto:Craig.Altare@water.ca.gov)  
Michelle Dooley, Vina Subbasin SGMA Point of Contact, California Department of Water Resources, [Michelle.Dooley@water.ca.gov](mailto:Michelle.Dooley@water.ca.gov)

## Buck, Christina

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**From:** Gosselin, Paul  
**Sent:** Friday, February 12, 2021 10:18 AM  
**To:** vinagsa@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Tania Carlone; Mariana Rivera-Torres (mriveratorres@cbi.org); Buck, Christina; 'Linda.herman@Chicoca.gov'; Peterson, Kelly  
**Subject:** FW: Minimum Objective and Threshold for Vina GSA

Vina GSA

I am forwarding a comment from Ernie Washington regarding SMCs.

Thank you.

Paul

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ernie <george.washington@whchico.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 12, 2021 9:16 AM  
**To:** BCWater <BCWaterFrontDeskHG@buttecounty.net>  
**Cc:** Gosselin, Paul <PGosselin@buttecounty.net>  
**Subject:** Minimum Objective and Threshold for Vina GSA

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Vina GSA Board and Stakeholder Committee, I am writing as landowner in Vina South (Cherokee Strip)with 4 agricultural wells and 1 domestic well. My personal observation over 40 years of farming there backed up by the excellent comprehensive well monitoring and annual groundwater status reports prepared by the County is that groundwater levels have been trending down over the years and the projections are that this will continue. This carries with it an obvious cost to agricultural and domestic users and results in a subtle, but continuous, degradation of the environment. SGMA is an attempt to address this.

With the above in mind and after attending most of the recent Vina Sub Basin Workshop I question setting the M O and M T based on either fall 2015 groundwater levels which appear to be historical lows or 2030 projected levels, even lower. If the bar is set low we will surely achieve it. There maybe sound reasons for this, but it's hard for me to imagine that using 2030 projections was really what was intended when SGMA was enacted.

Ernie Washington

Sent from my iPad

# Establishing Minimum Thresholds for the Groundwater Level Sustainability Indicator

Background information and graphs to support discussion and consideration of recommendation regarding approach to establishing Minimum Thresholds



Lowering of GW Levels

# Graphing Method for Establishing the Minimum Threshold

Graphs show the Elevation of the Bottom of domestic wells in the RMS Zone relative to the RMS well's ground surface elevation. Each red point on the graph represents a domestic well in the RMS zone. Everything is converted to elevation above mean sea level in feet. The elevation of the Measurable Objective and Minimum Threshold established at the RMS well is shown relative to the elevation of the bottom of all domestic wells (post 1980 from the well database) within the zone.

The graphs were used to identify the Minimum Threshold that would be protective of the majority of the domestic wells in the RMS zone while recognizing the RMS well is not fully representative of wells within the zone due to changes in groundwater surface and water surface elevation throughout the area. Wells above the Minimum Threshold elevation tend to be especially shallow (less than 100 feet deep) or have a significantly different (higher) ground surface elevation than the RMS well.

## Summary Tables for North Vina and South Vina Representative Monitoring Site (RMS) Wells

### North Vina (As presented in Public Review SMC Chapter- graphing method)

RMS Well	25C001	10E001	18A001/ 07H001	05M001	36P001	33A001
Ground Surface Elevation @ RMS well	157	189	252	151	163	252
Measurable Objective	130	136	136	115	108	125
Minimum Threshold	50	80	72	31	45	72
# Wells in RMS Zone	18	21	67	5	329	307
Number of wells above the MO	0	1	8	0	0	40
Number of wells above the MT	5	6	32	2	69	116

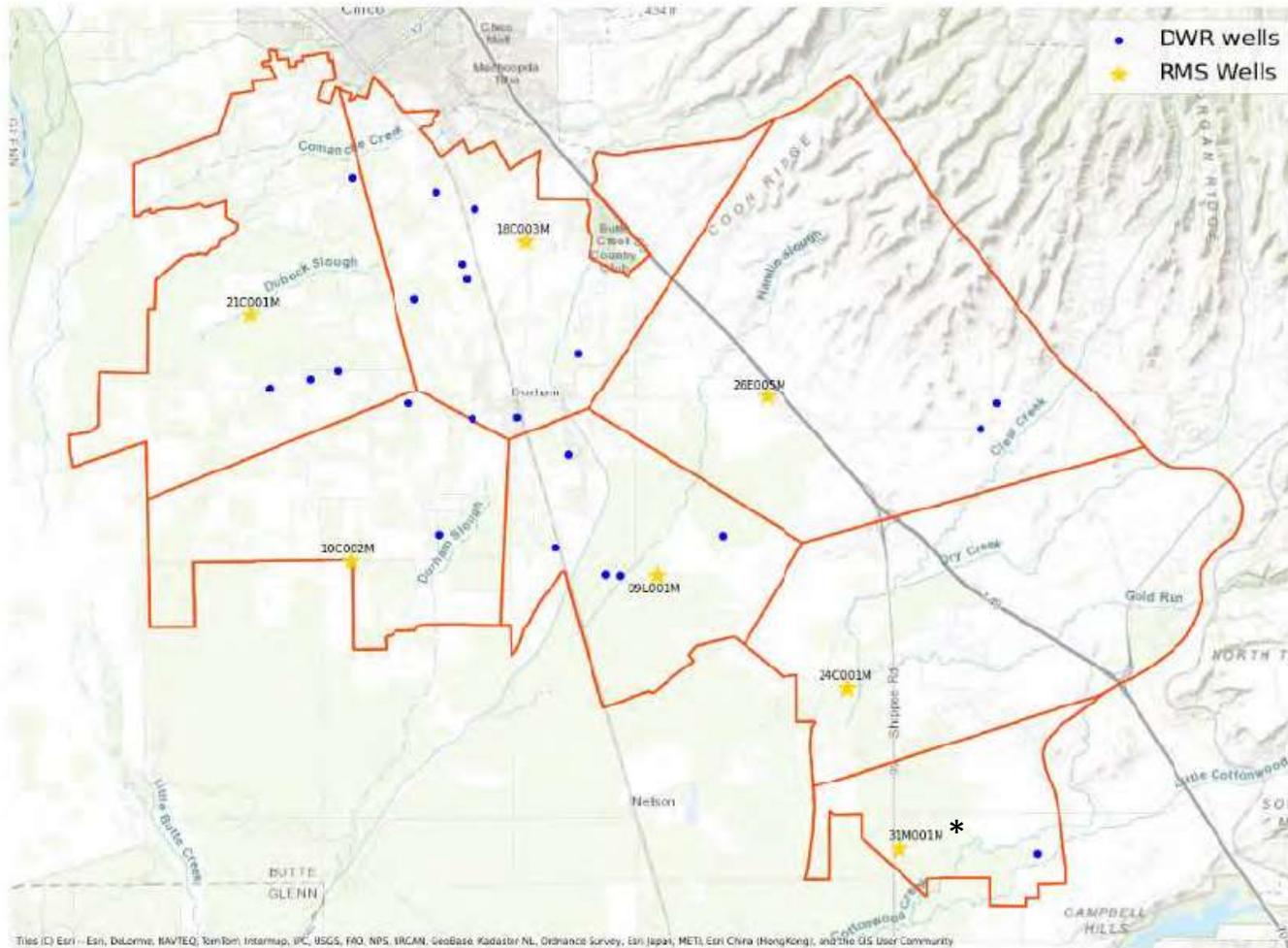
### South Vina (MT (15%) as presented in Public Review Chapter & Proposed MT (Graphing Method)

RMS Well	21C001M	18C003M	26E005M	10C002M	09L001M	24C001M
Ground Surface Elevation @ RMS well	133	189	182	127	139	158
Measurable Objective	64	130	95	92	91	77
Minimum Threshold (15%)	44	65	57	20	43	33
Operational Range	20	65	38	72	48	44
Minimum Threshold (Graphing Method)	10	65	36	20	30	18
Operational Range	54	65	59	72	61	59
# Wells in RMS Zone	155	339	45	29	49	12
Number of wells above the MO	5	1	1	0	1	0
Number of wells above the MT (15%)	15	60	11	4	3	2
Number of wells above the MT (graphing)	57	60	15	4	7	4

# Vina Subbasin

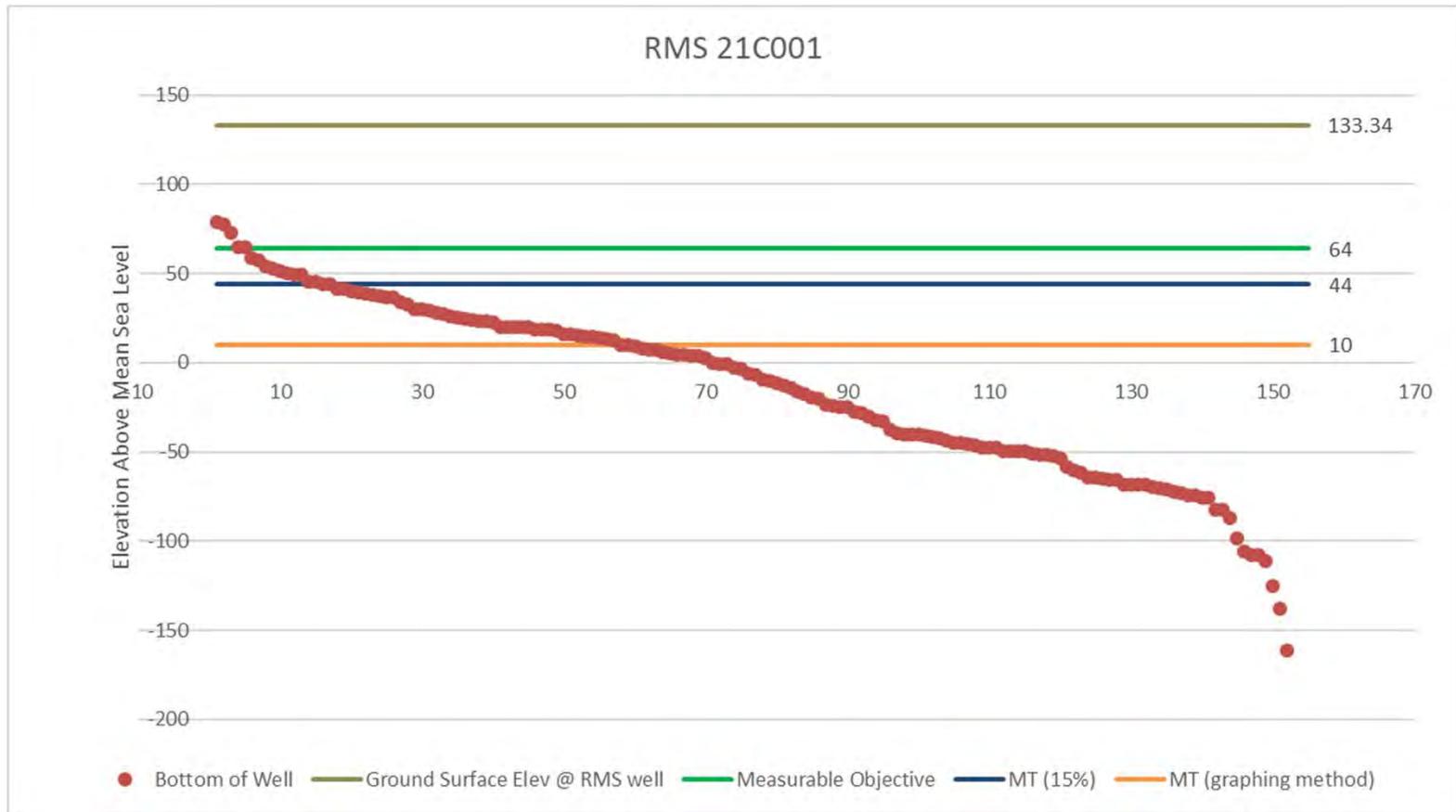
## South Vina Management Area

# Proposed Polygons for South Vina



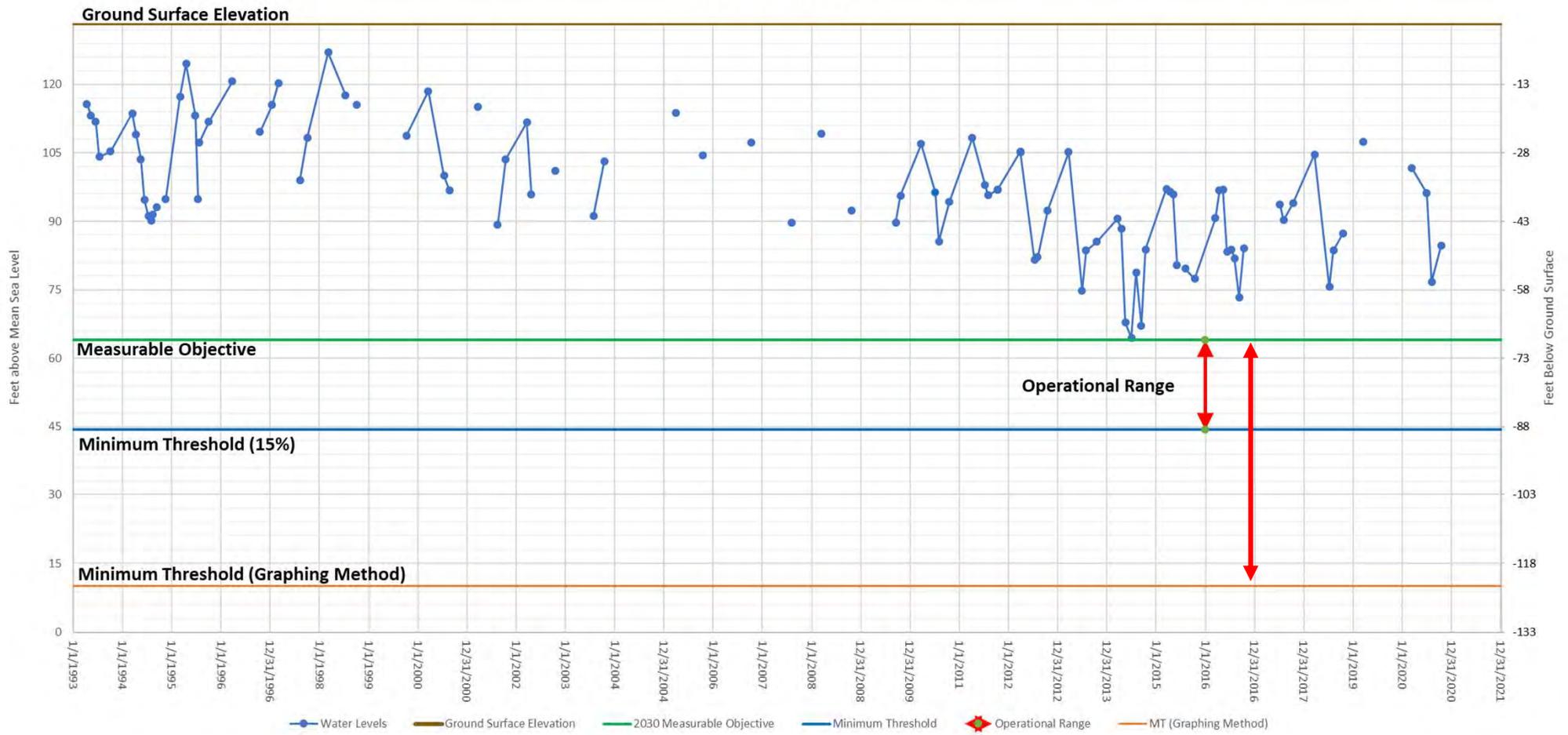
Polygons and Map provided by Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County (AGUBC)

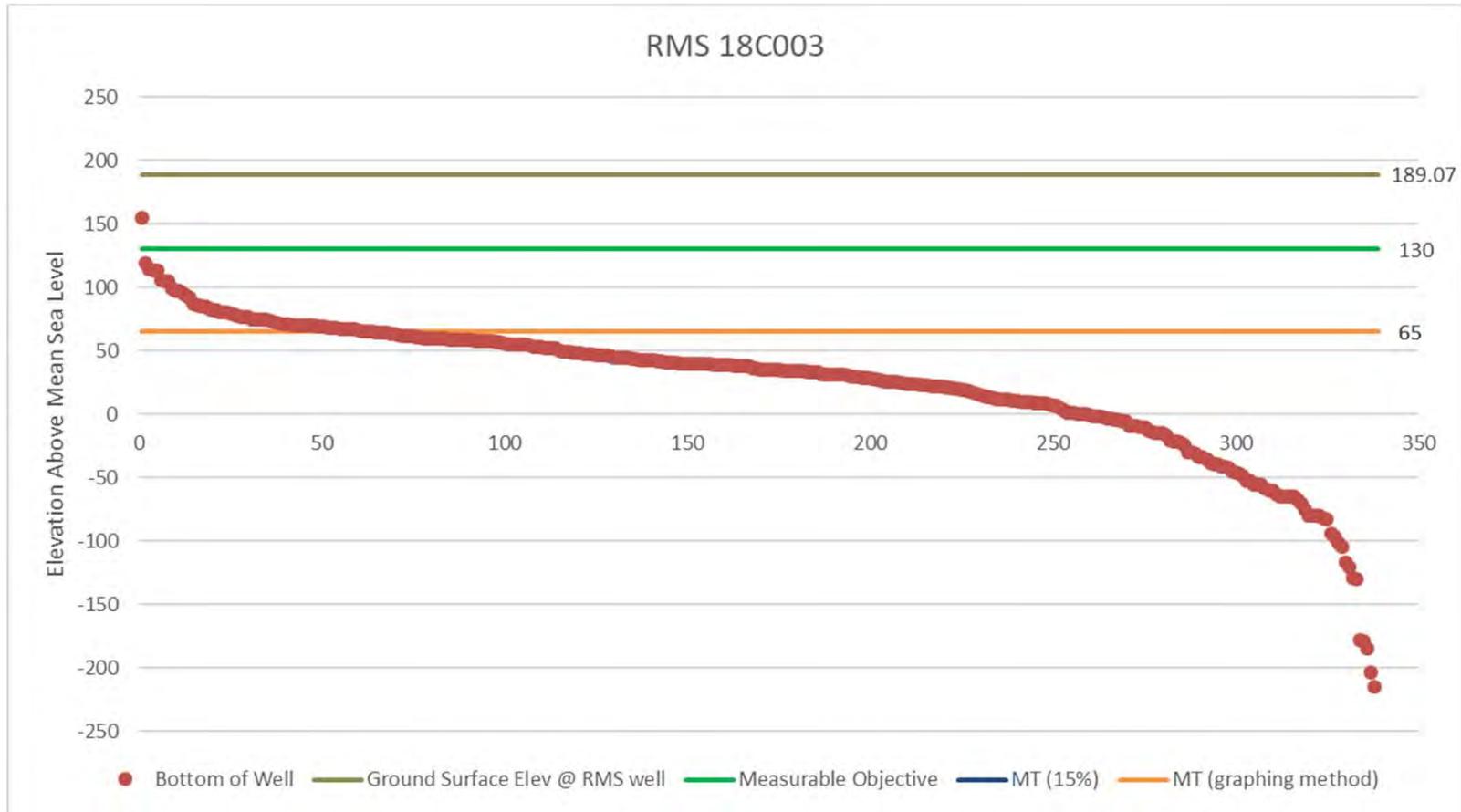
\* For graphs and establishing an MT, the polygon associated with 31M001M is combined with 24C001M consistent with the list of RMS wells in the draft SMC/Monitoring Network Chapters



- Each red point is a domestic well located within the polygon for this representative monitoring well

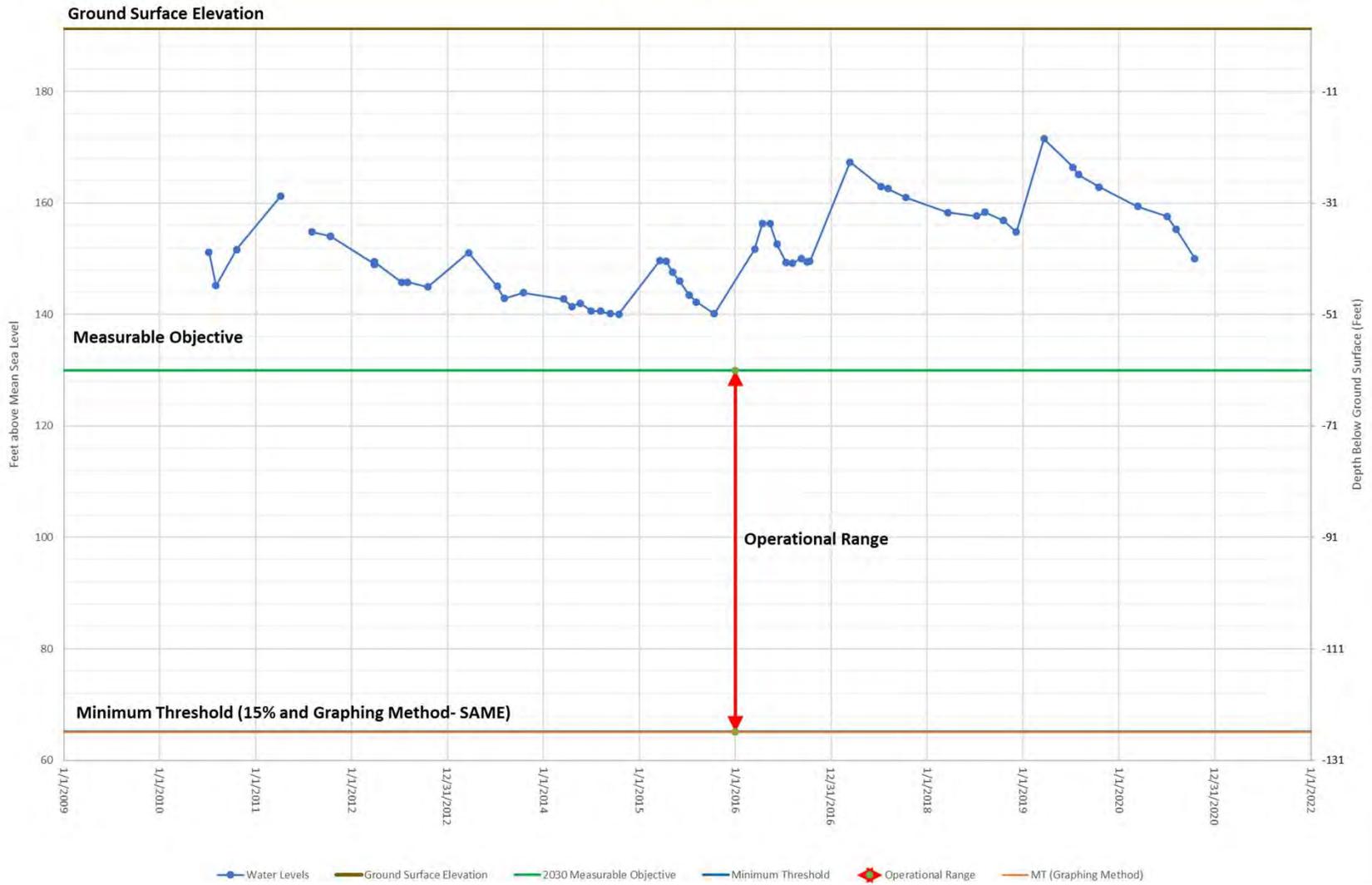
RMS Well 21C001M

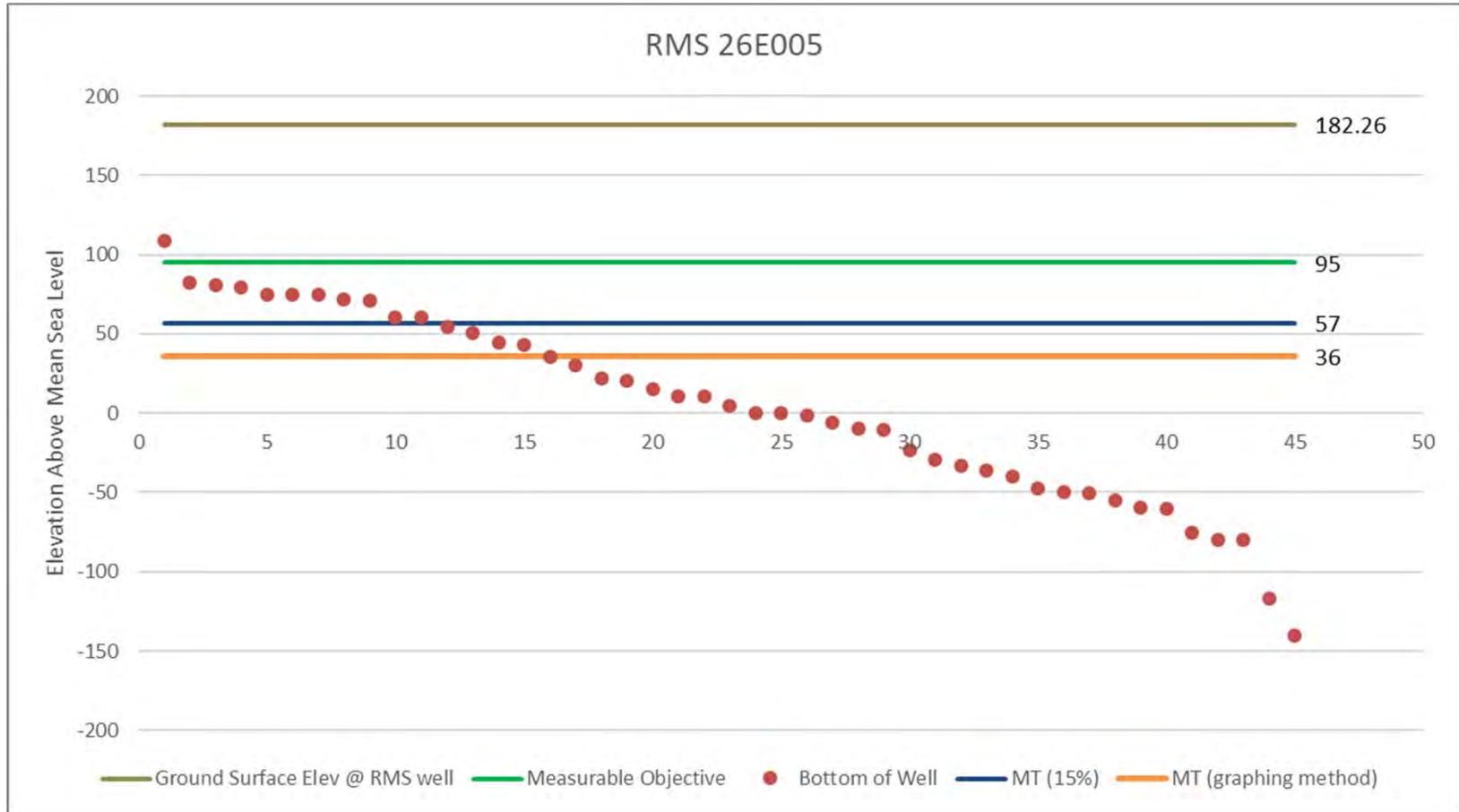




- Each red point is a domestic well located within the polygon for this representative monitoring well

RMS Well 18C003M

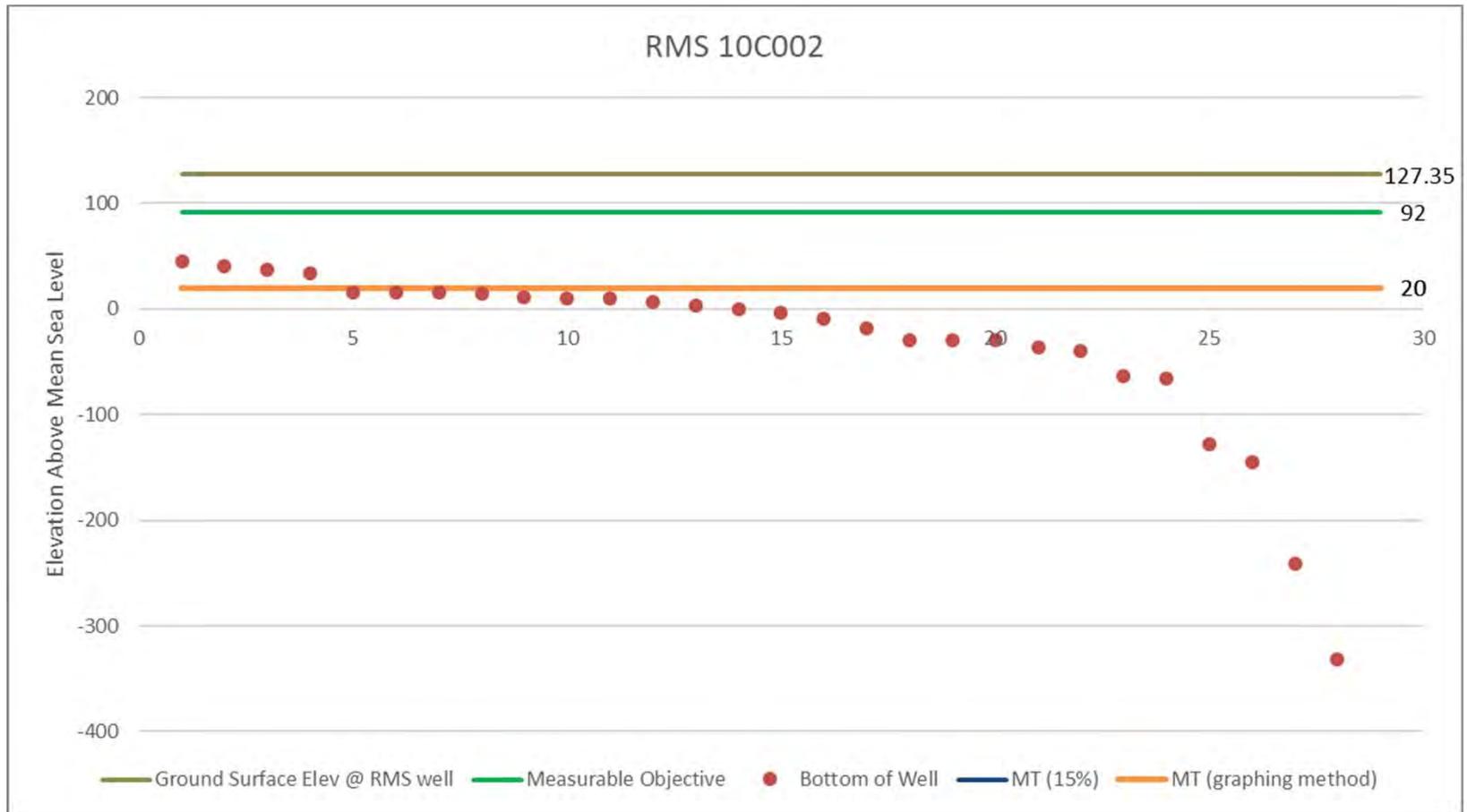




- Each red point is a domestic well located within the polygon for this representative monitoring well

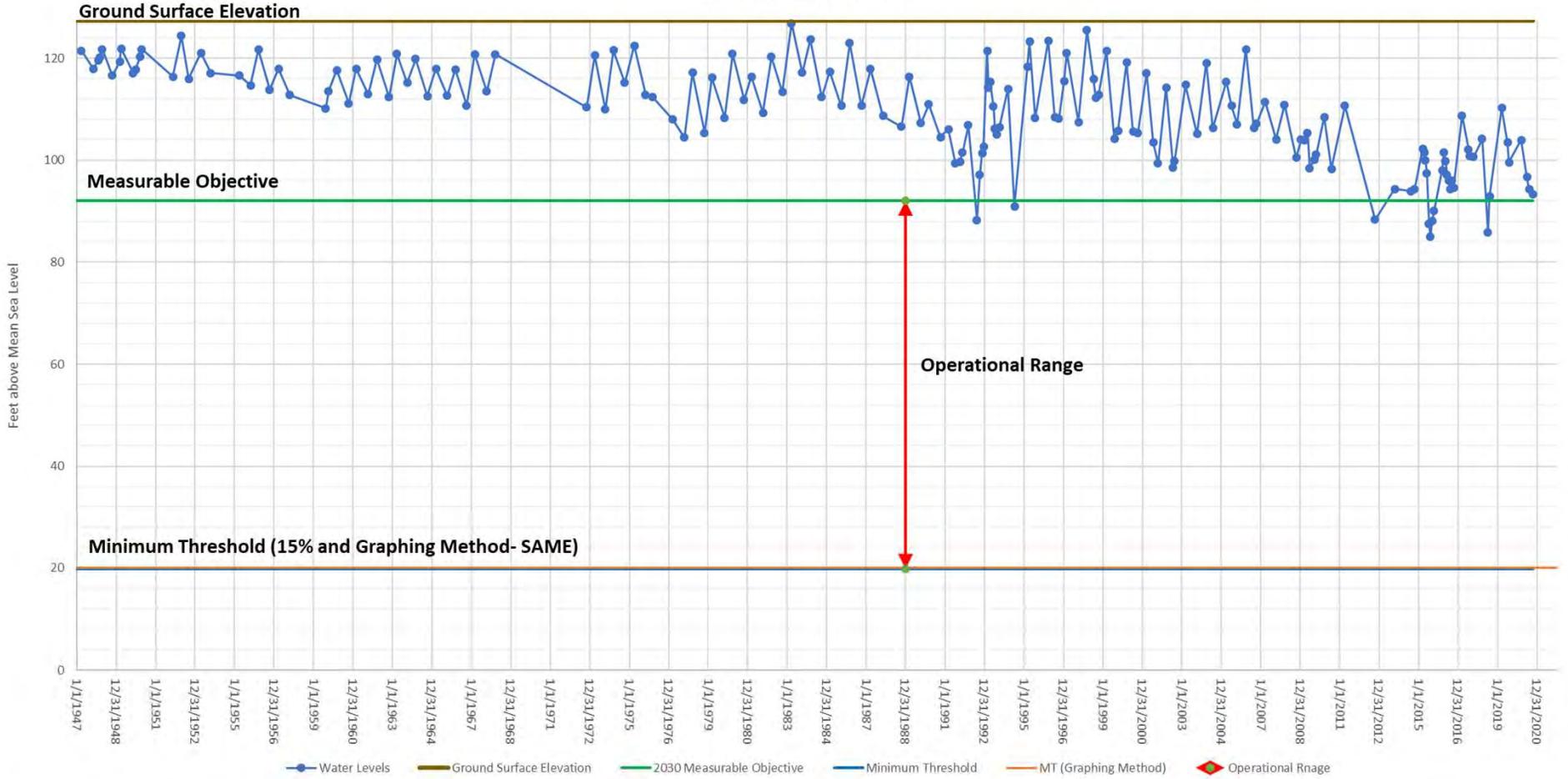
# RMS Well 26E005M

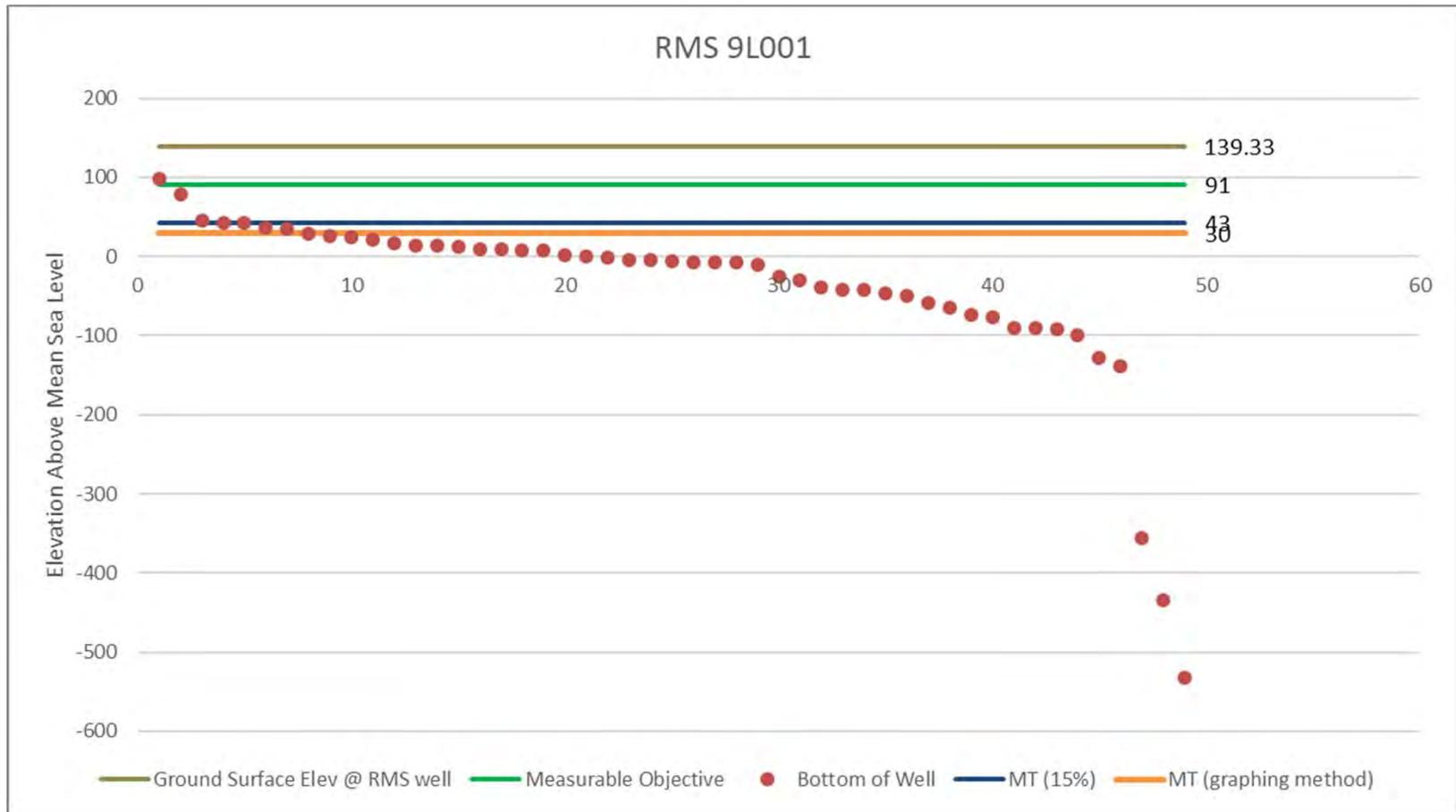




- Each red point is a domestic well located within the polygon for this representative monitoring well

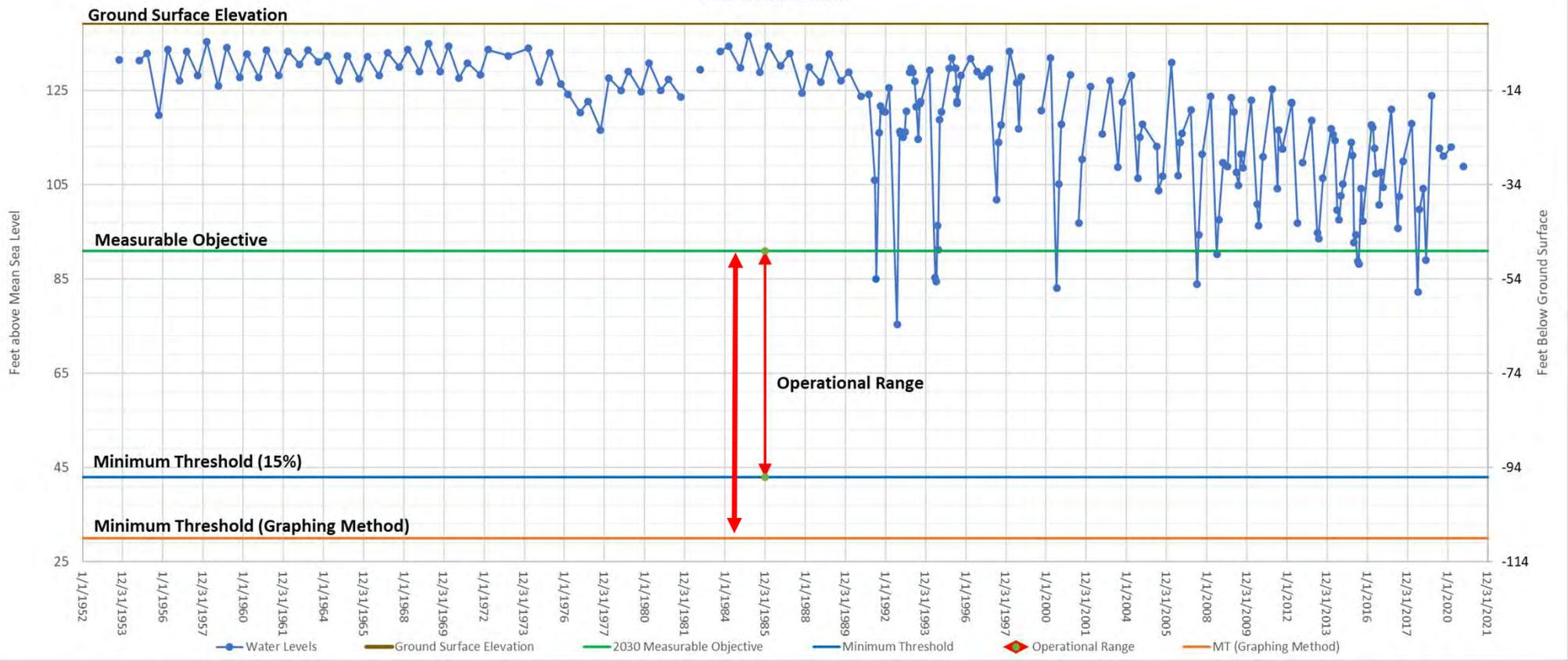
### RMS Well 10C002M

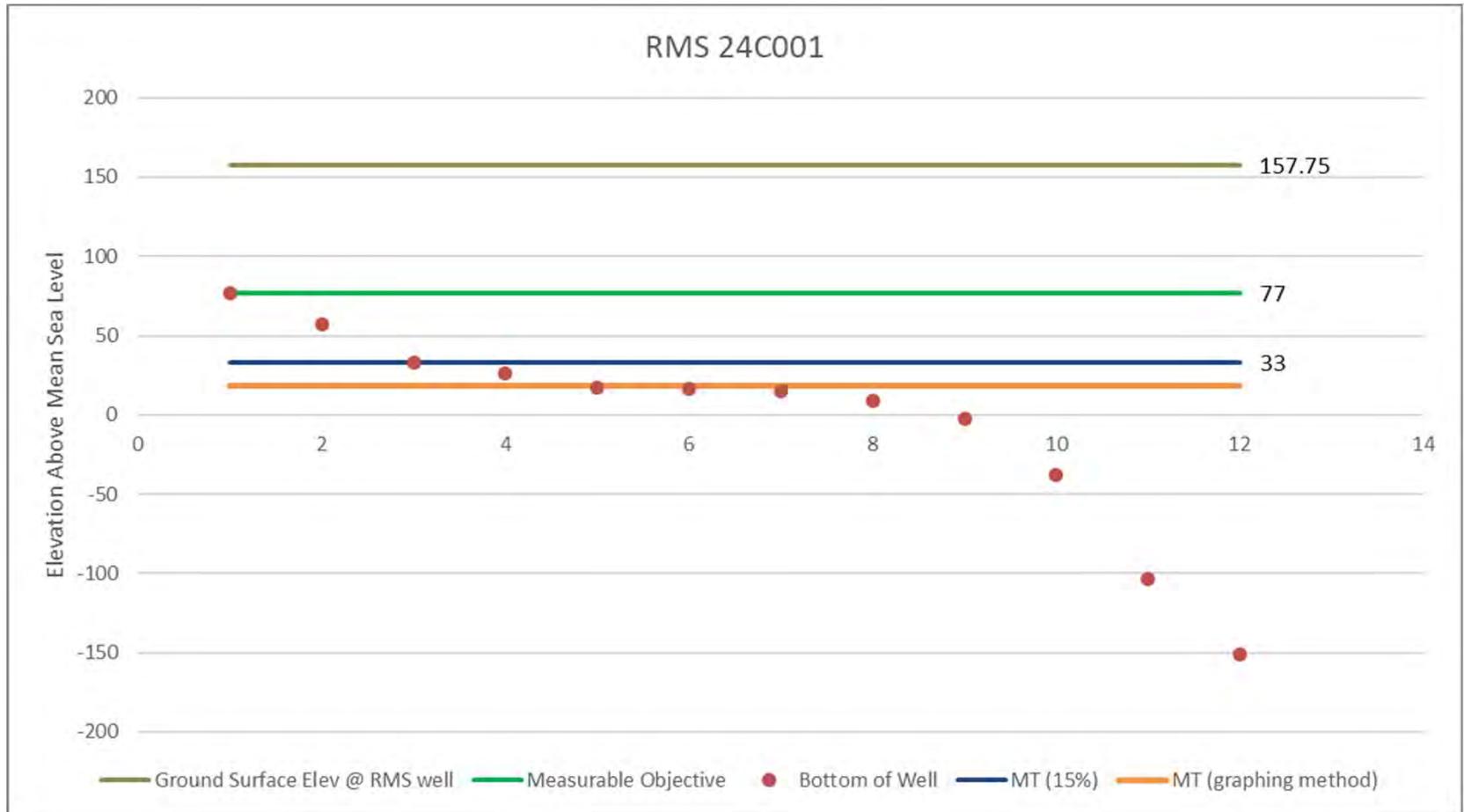




- Each red point is a domestic well located within the polygon for this representative monitoring well

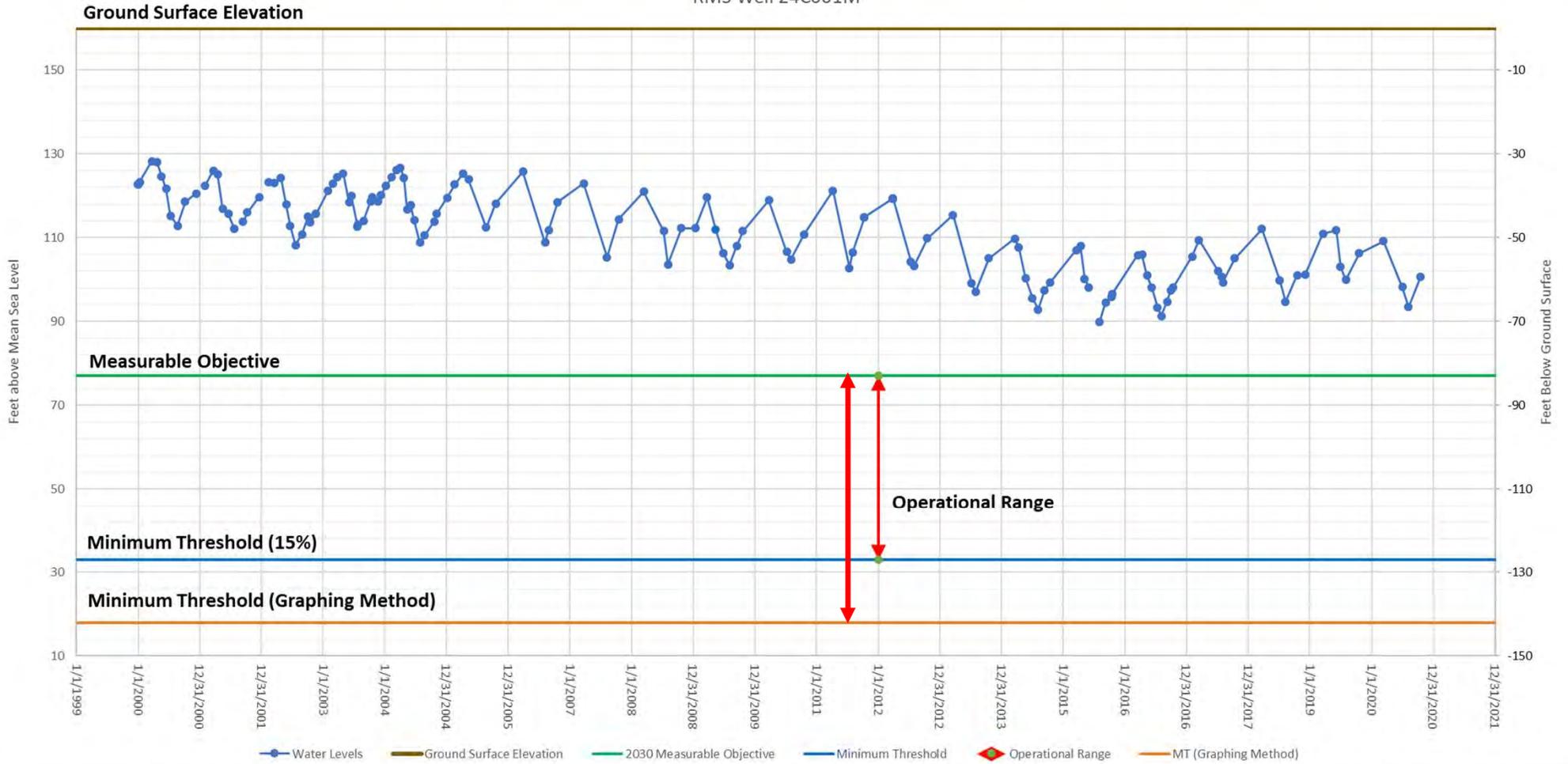
RMS Well 09L001M





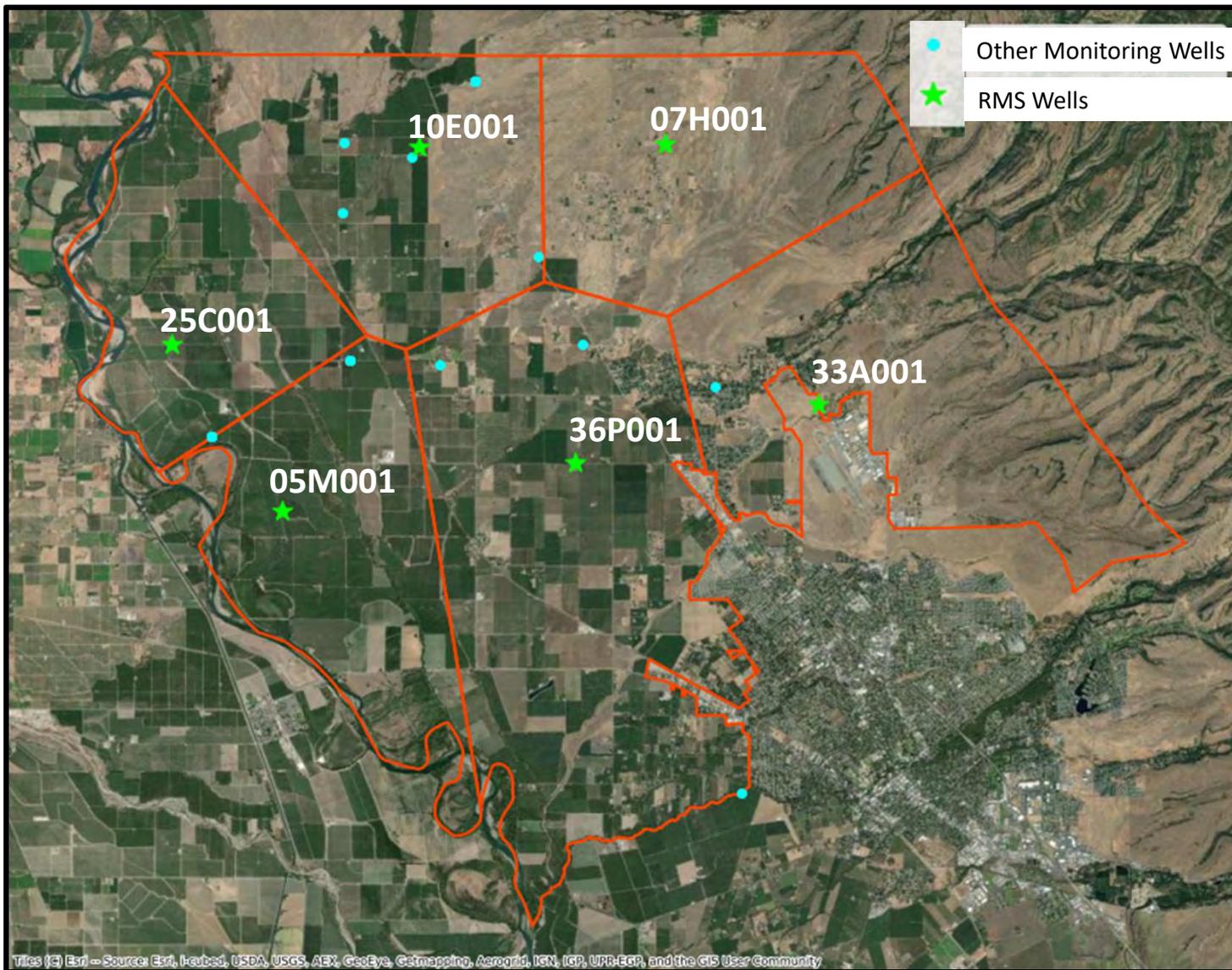
- Each red point is a domestic well located within the polygon for this representative monitoring well

# RMS Well 24C001M



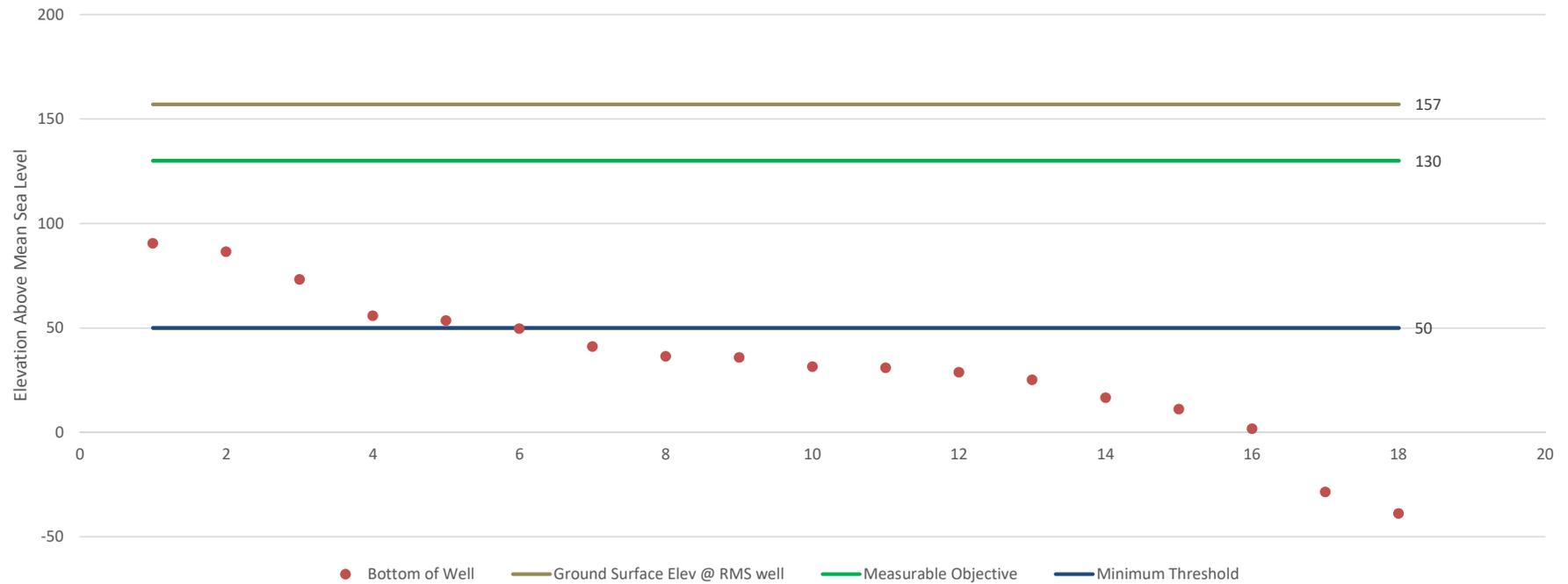
# Vina Subbasin

## North Vina Management Area

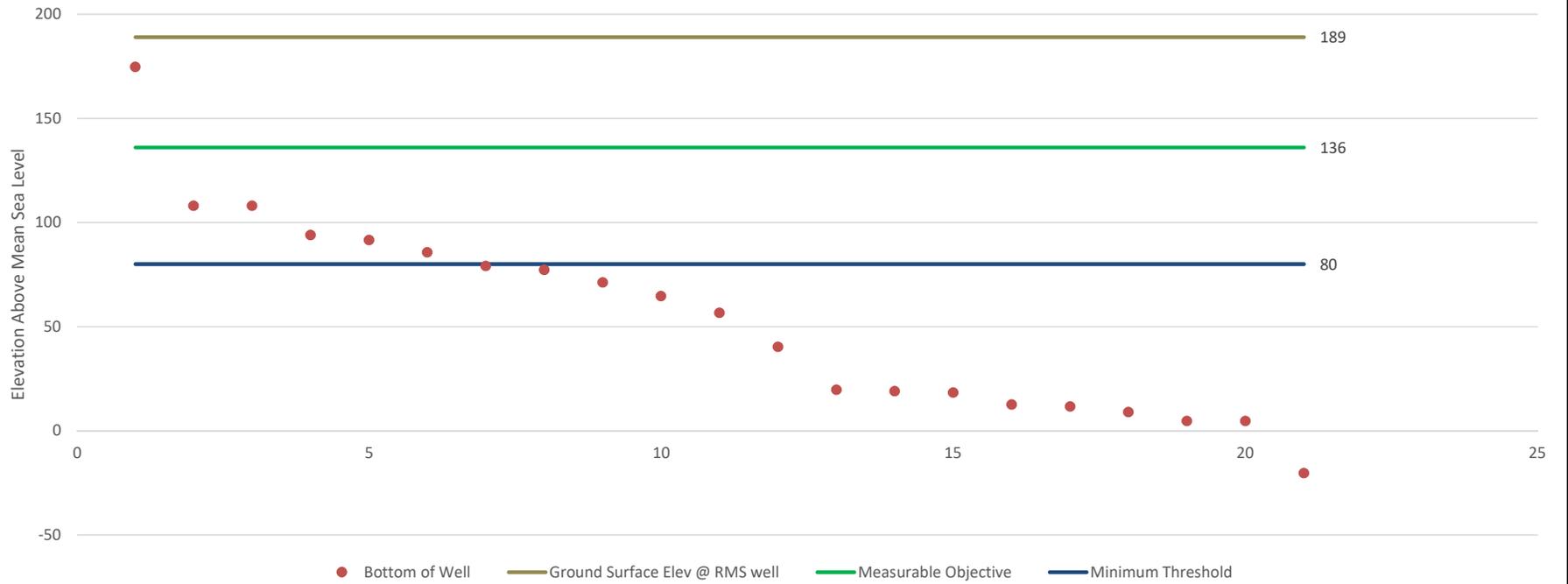


North Vina Management Area  
RMS Wells and Polygons

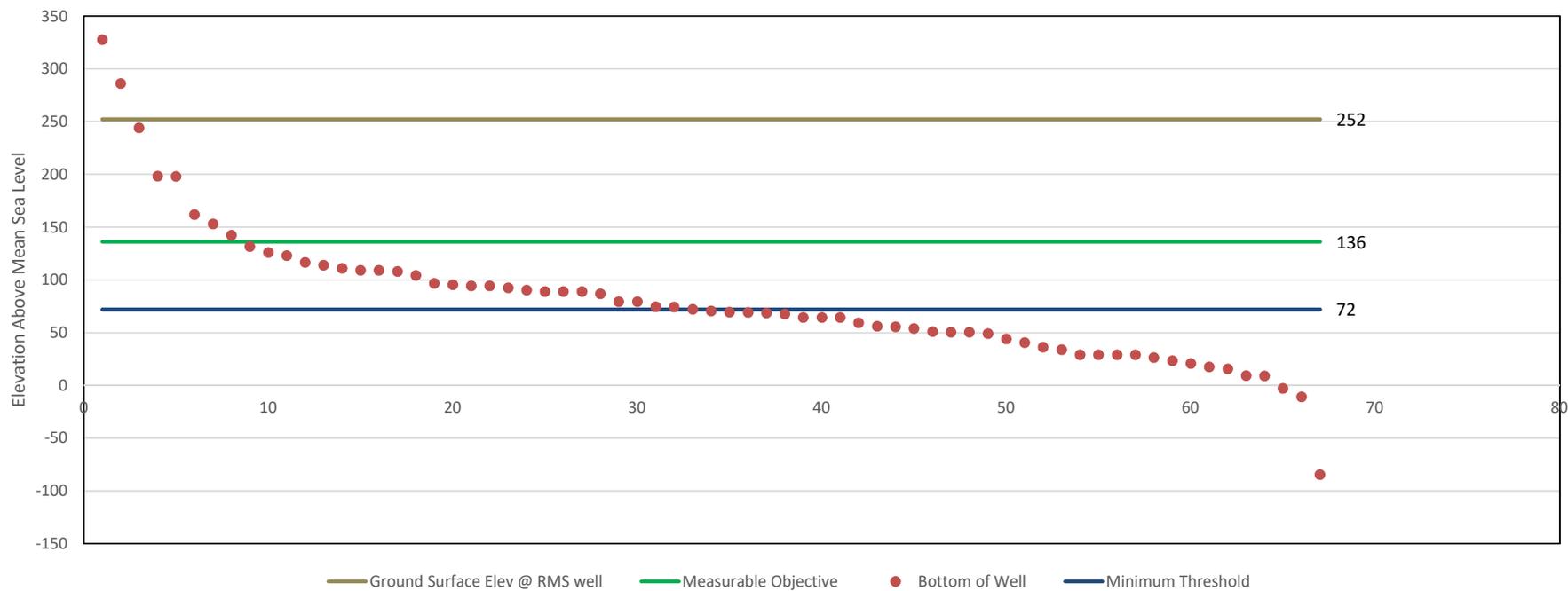
### RMS 25C001



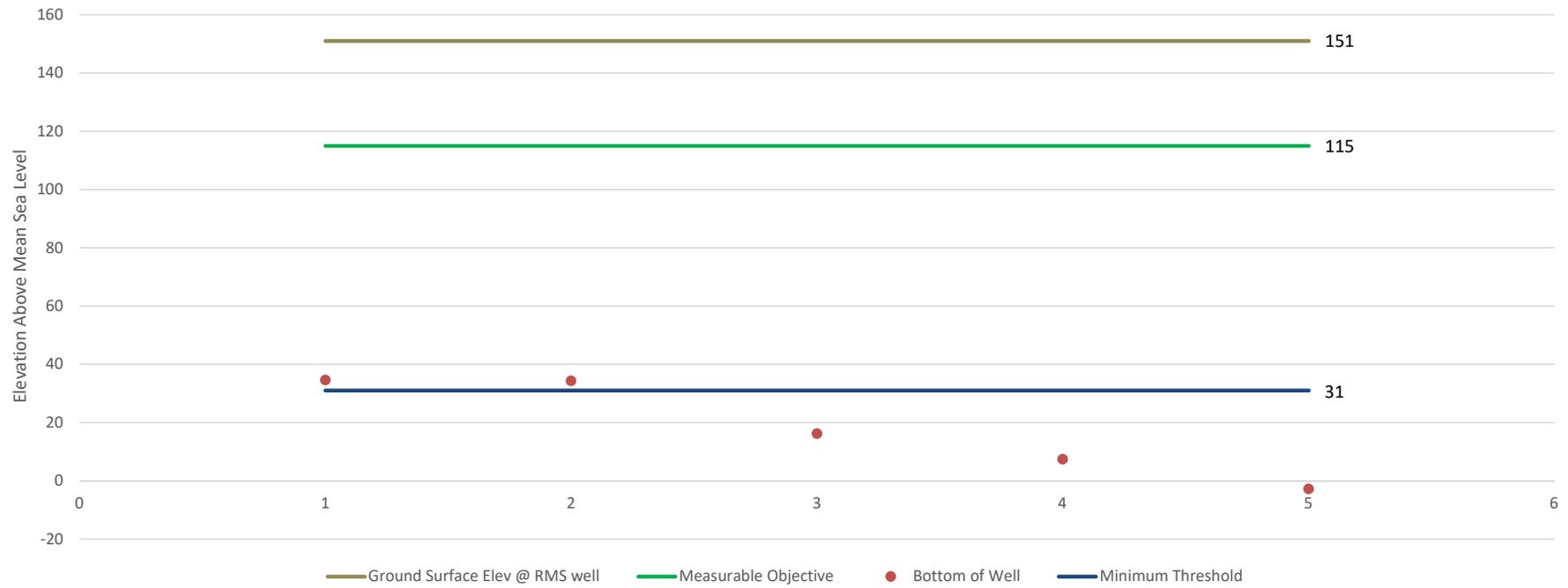
### RMS 10E001



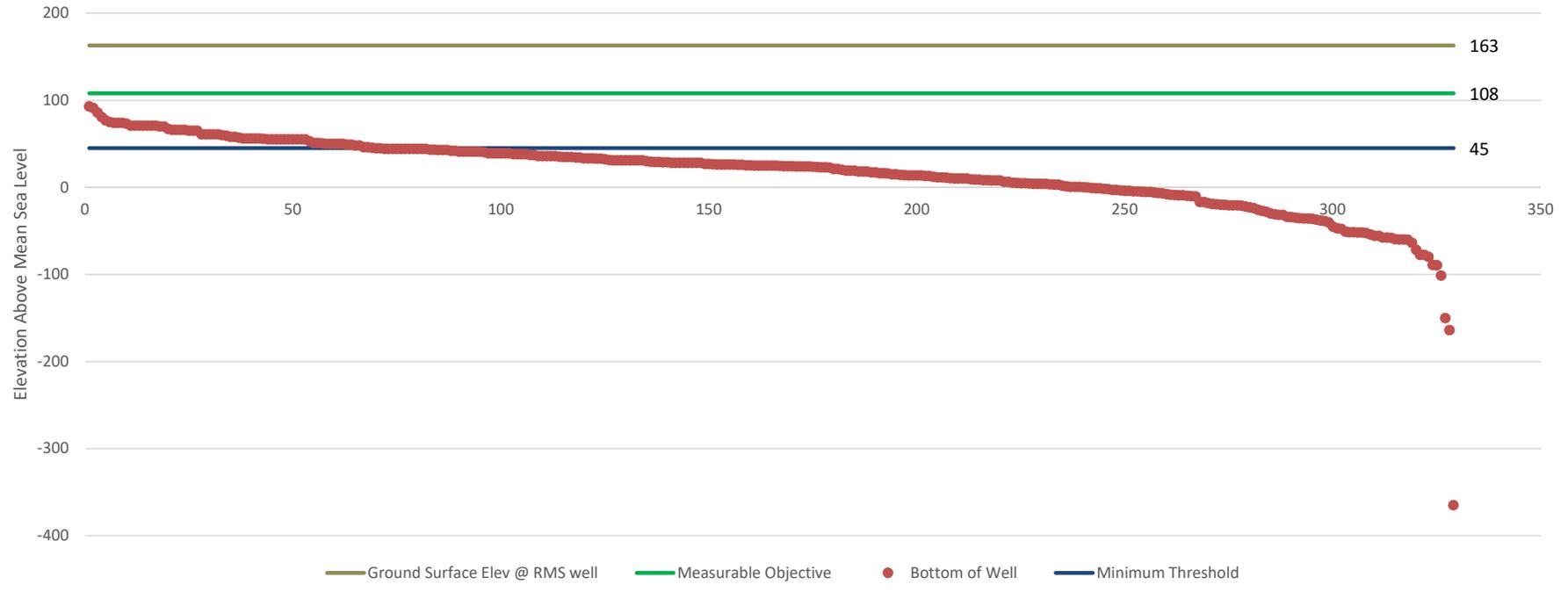
### RMS 18A001/07H001



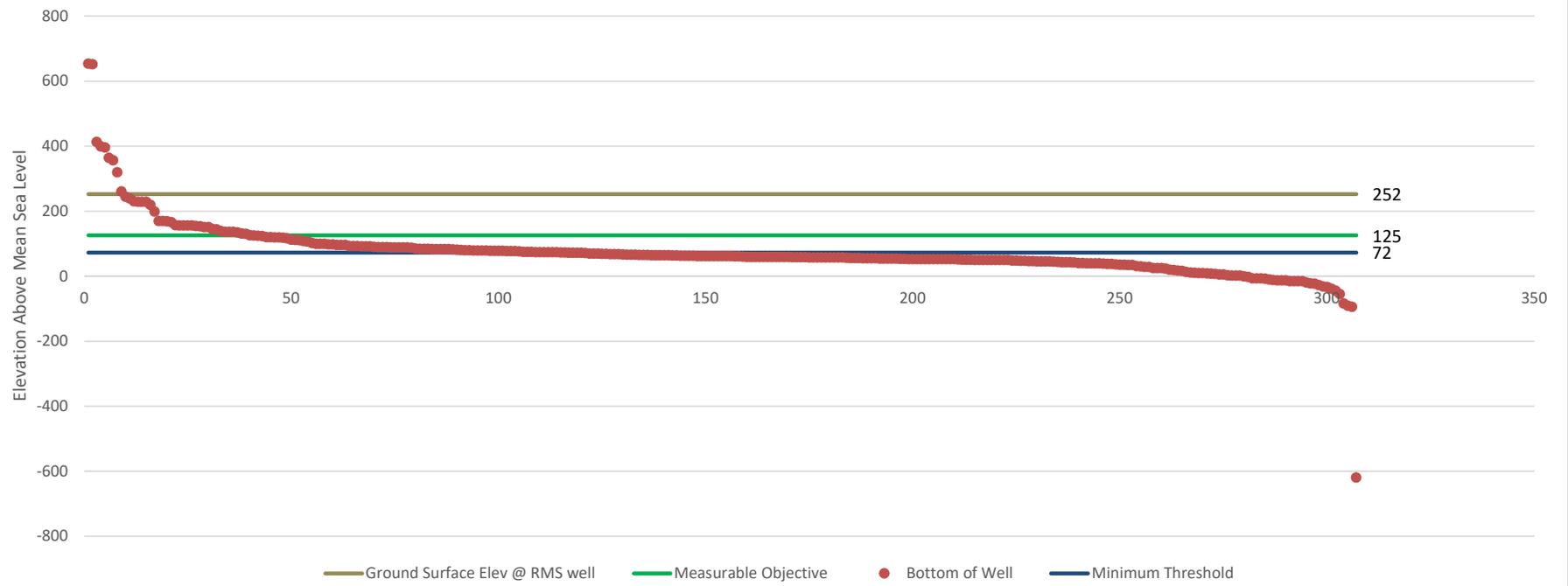
### RMS 05M001



### RMS 36P001



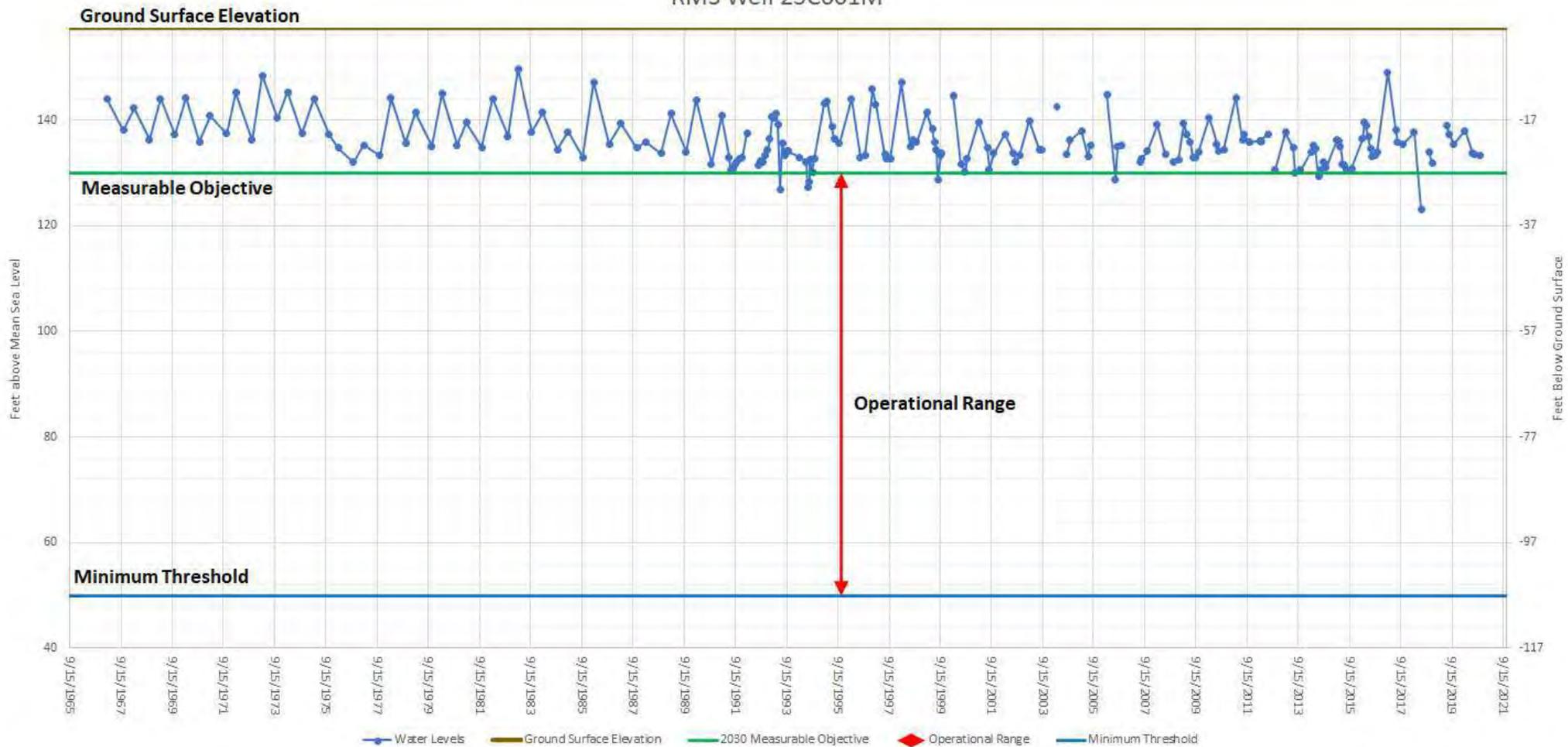
### RMS 33A001



# Vina Subbasin

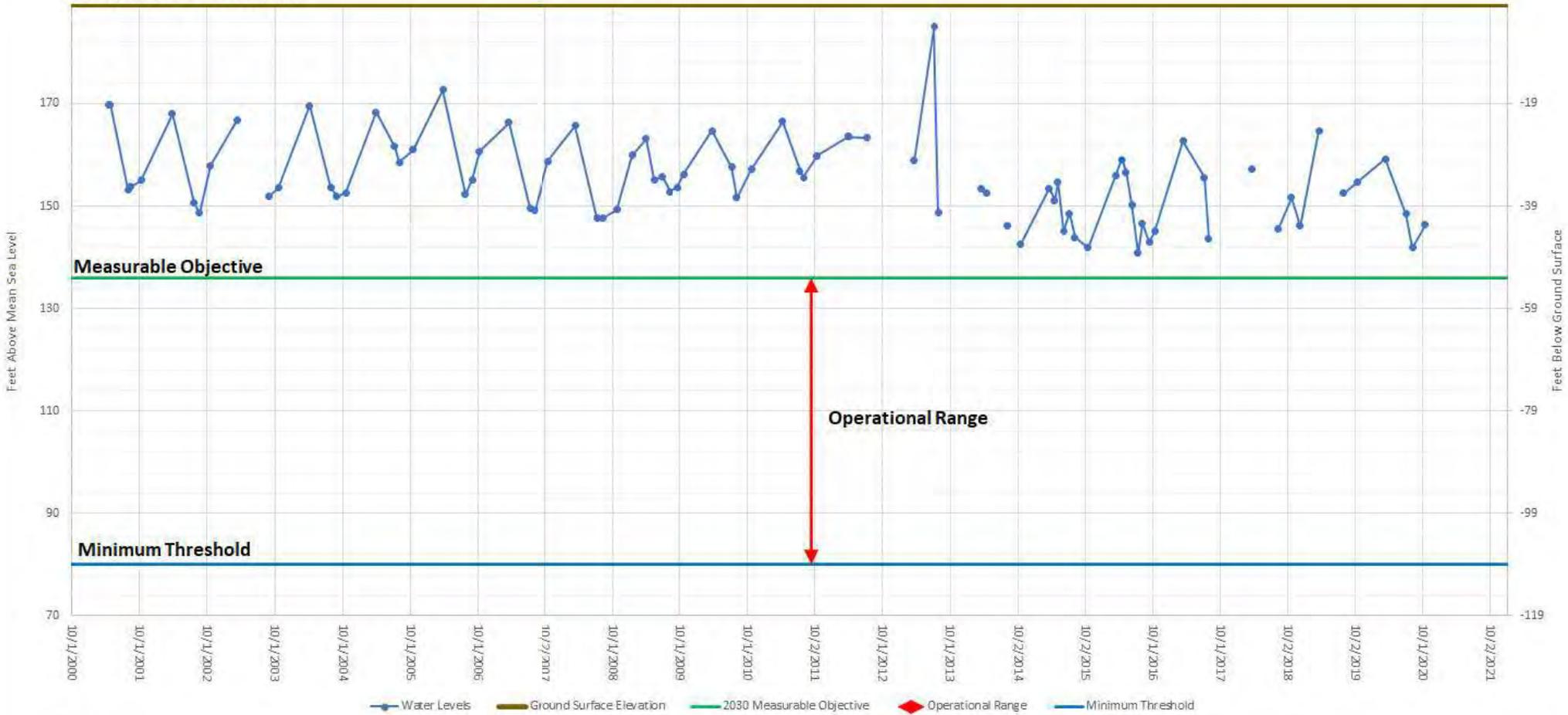
North Management Area

# RMS Well 25C001M

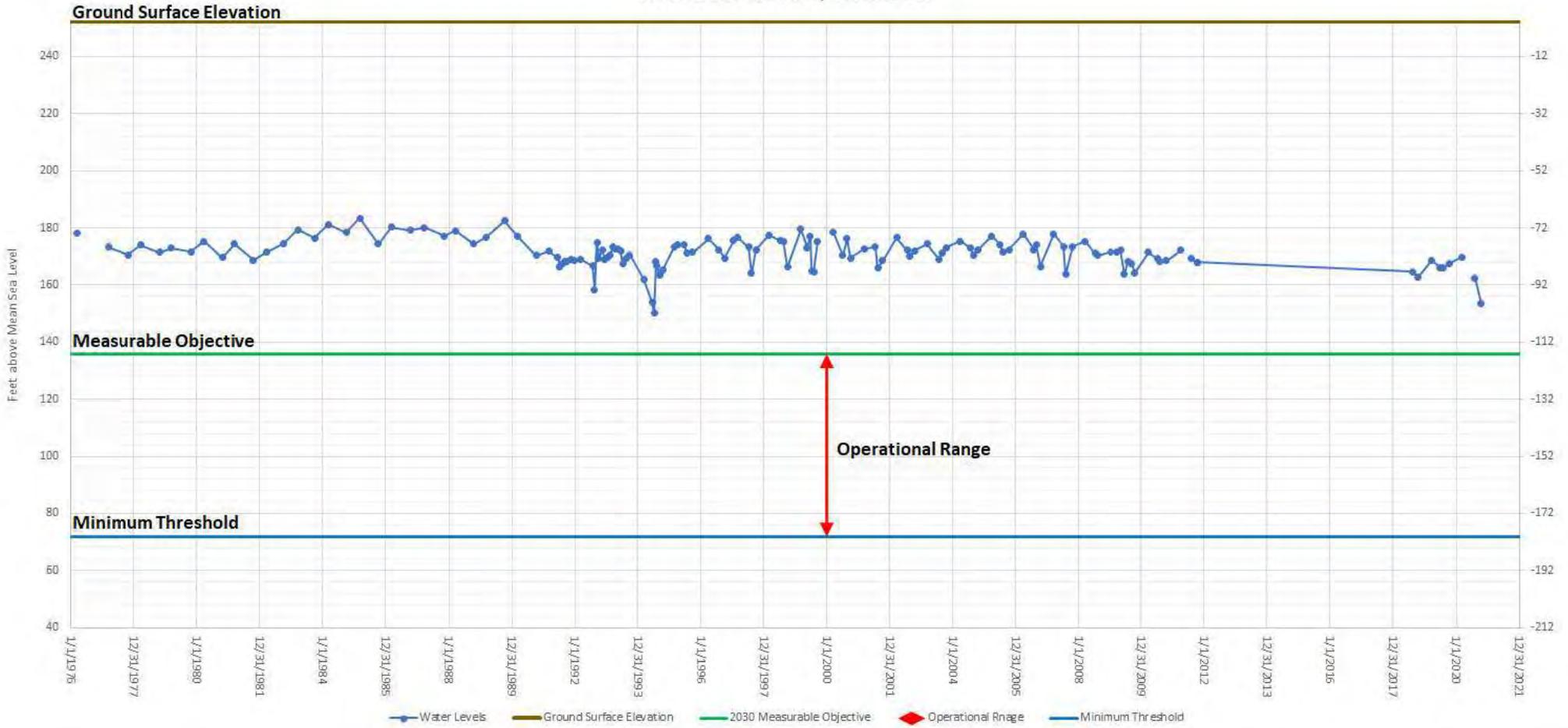


# RMS Well 10E001M

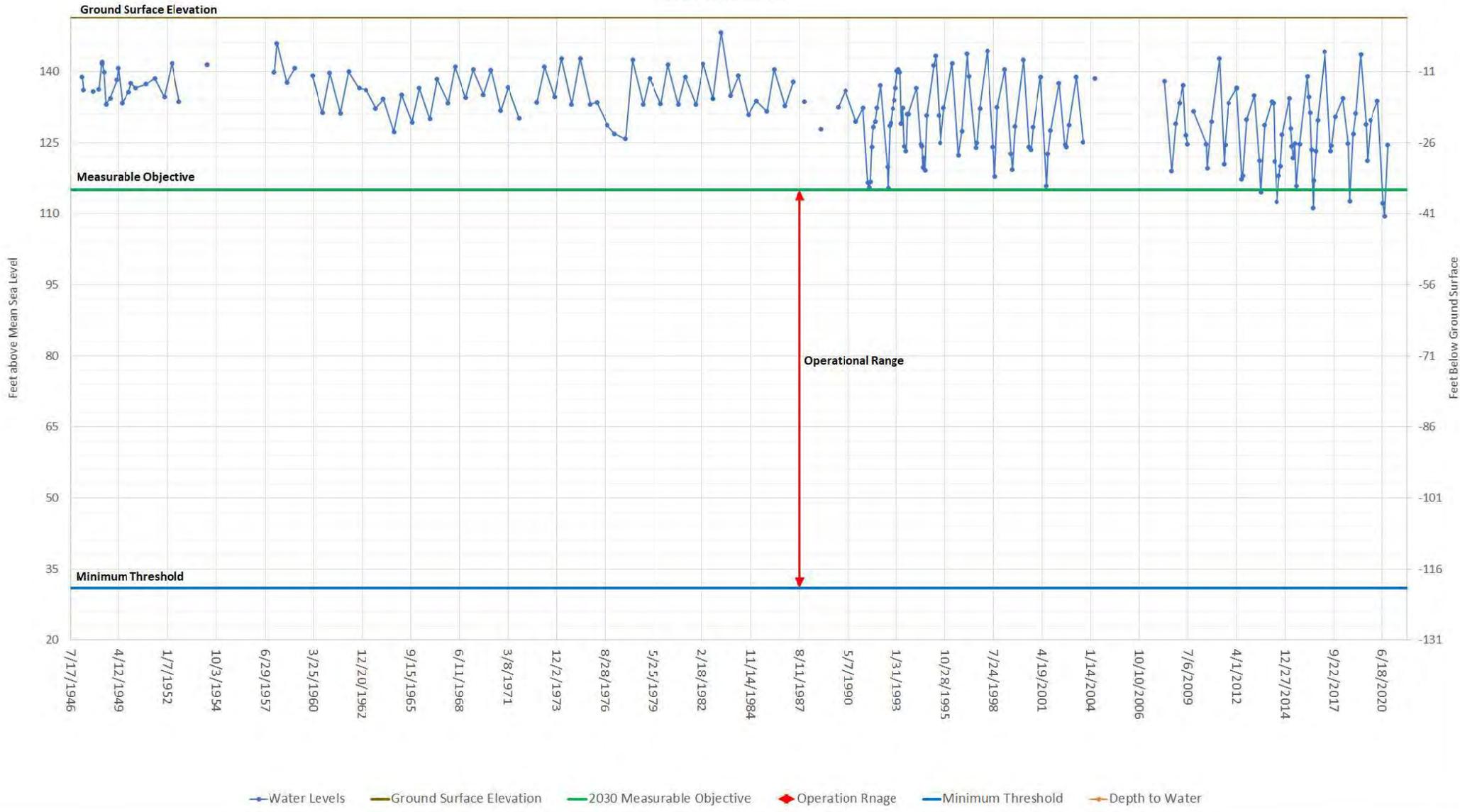
## Ground Surface Elevation



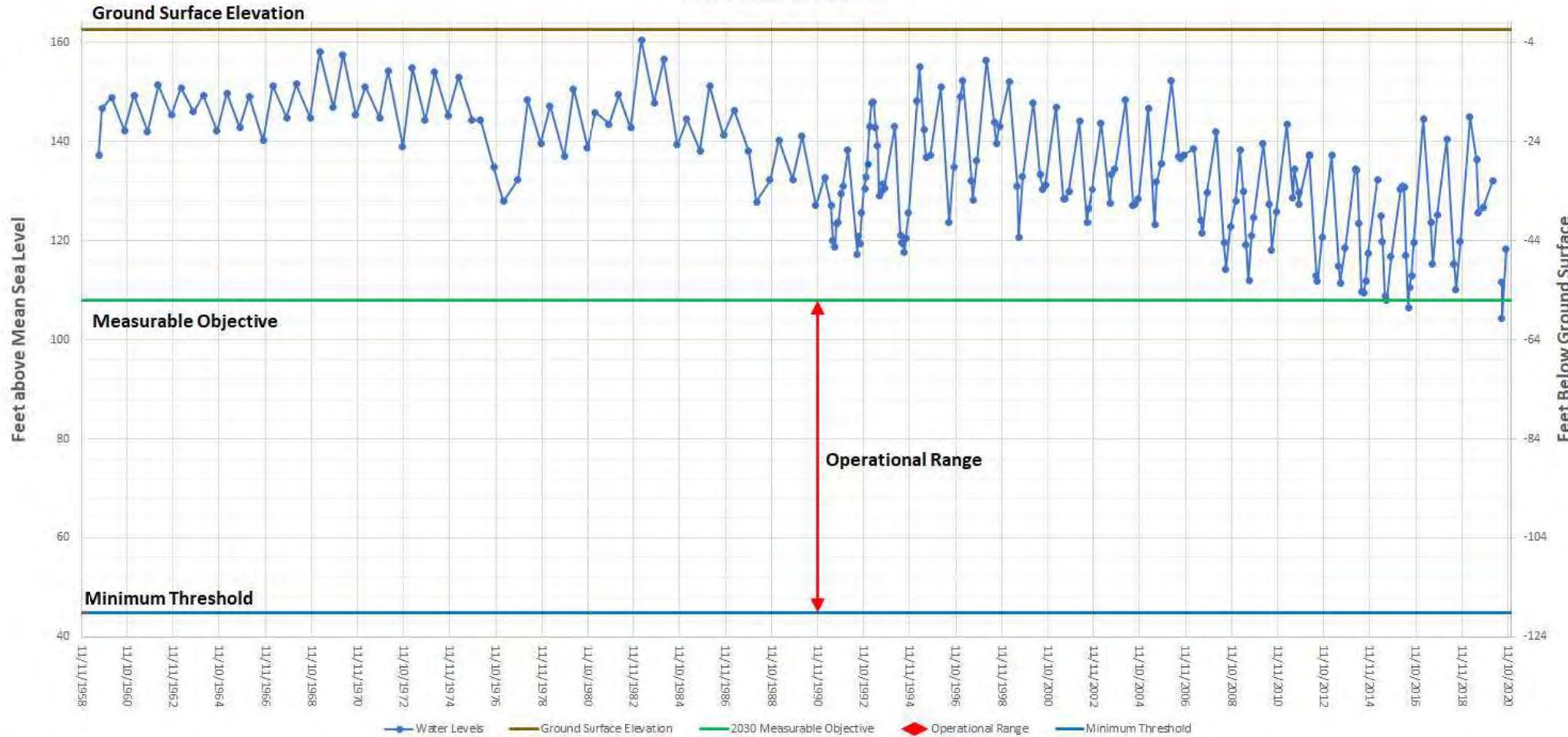
# RMS Well 07H001/18A001M



### RMS Well 05M001M

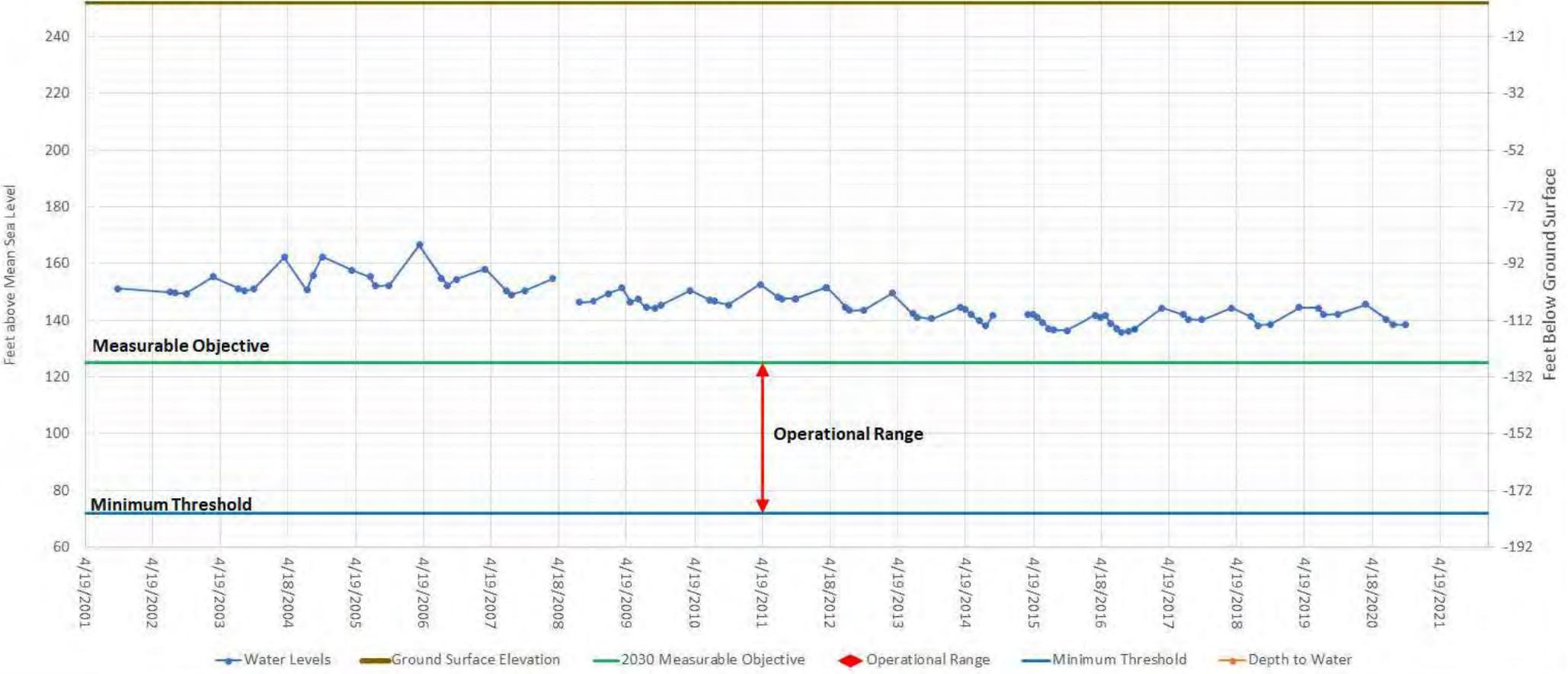


# RMS Well 36P001M



# RMS Well 33A001M

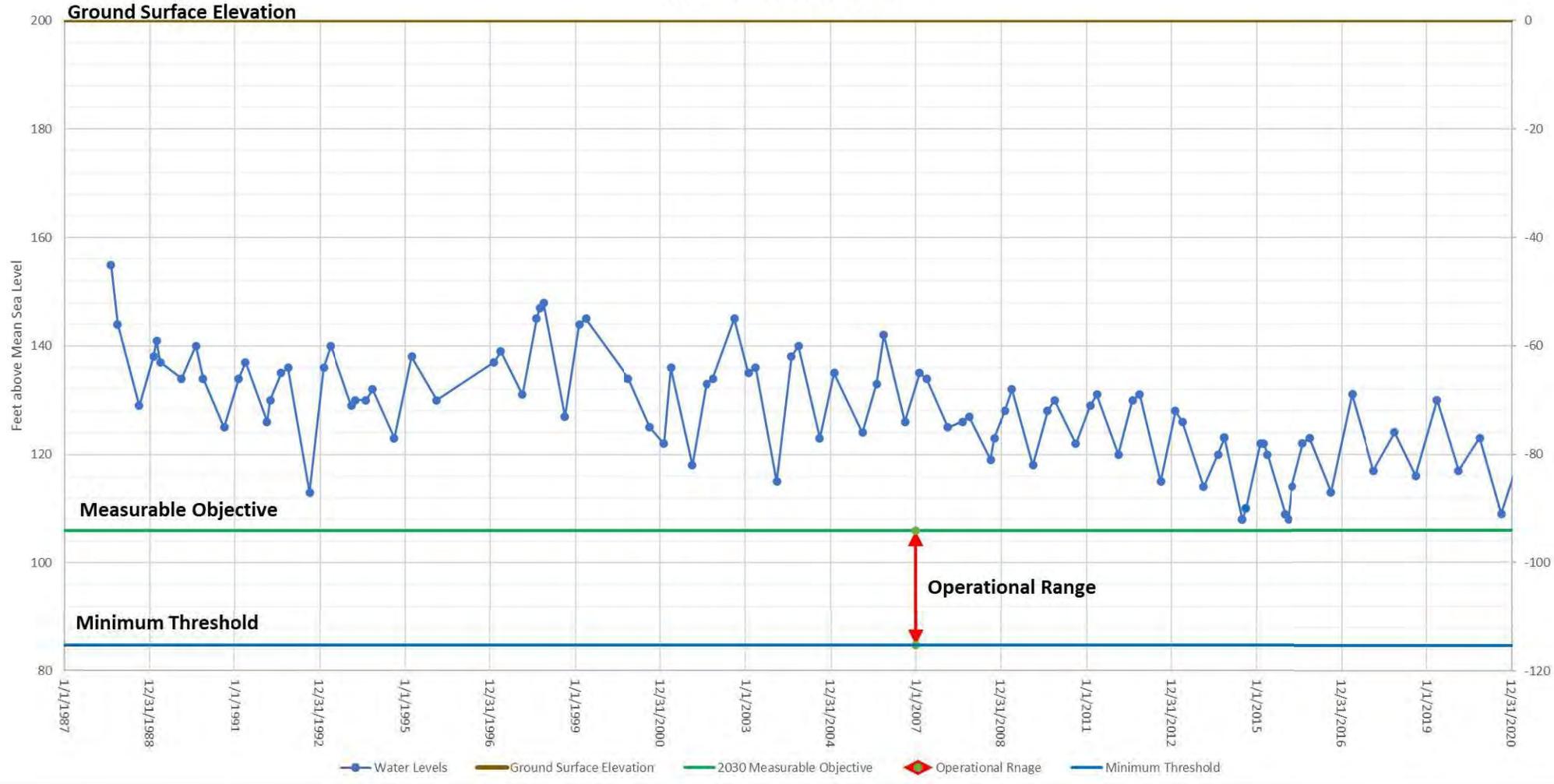
## Ground Surface Elevation



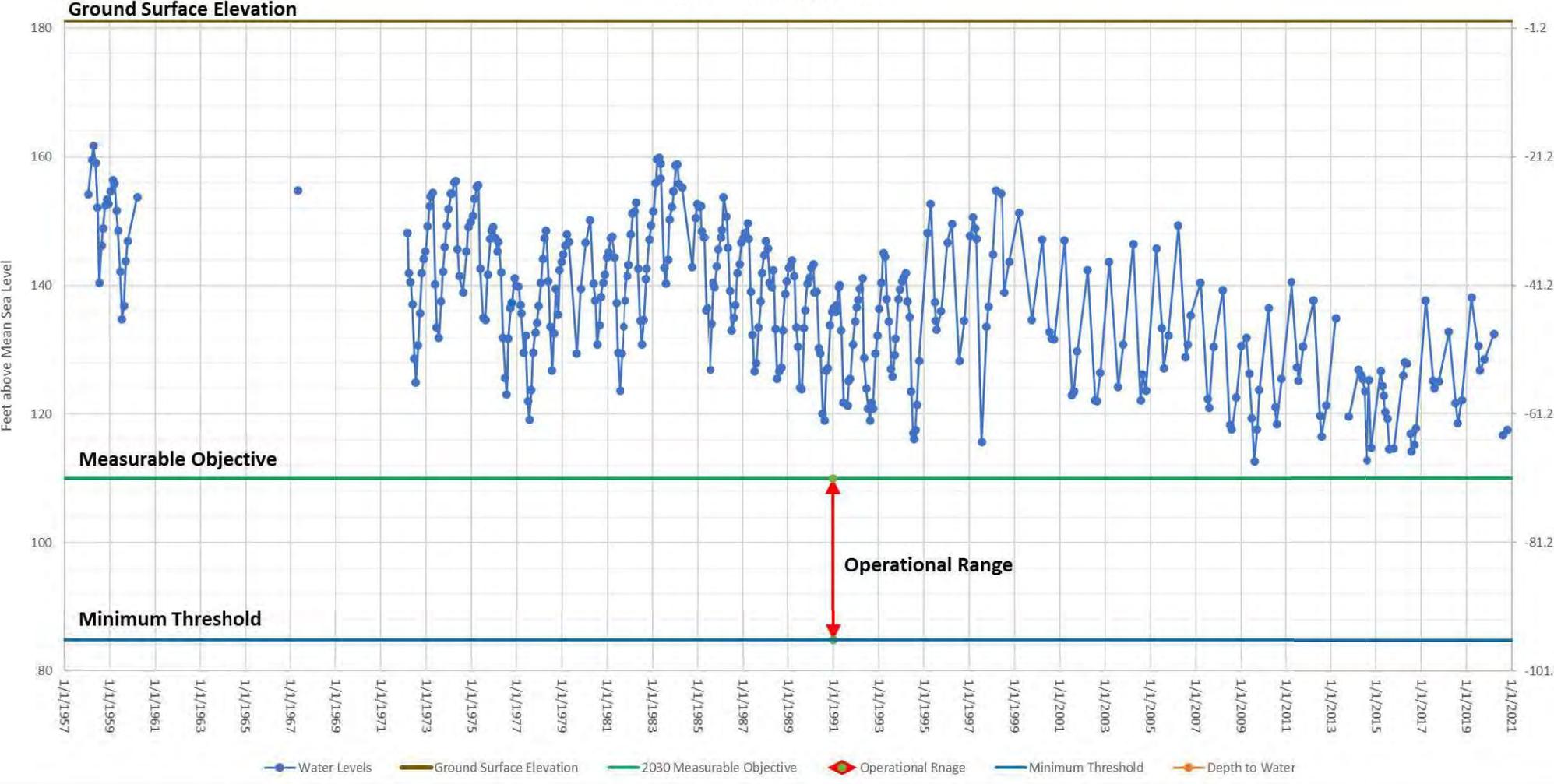
# Vina Subbasin

Chico Management Area

# RMS Well CWSCH01b

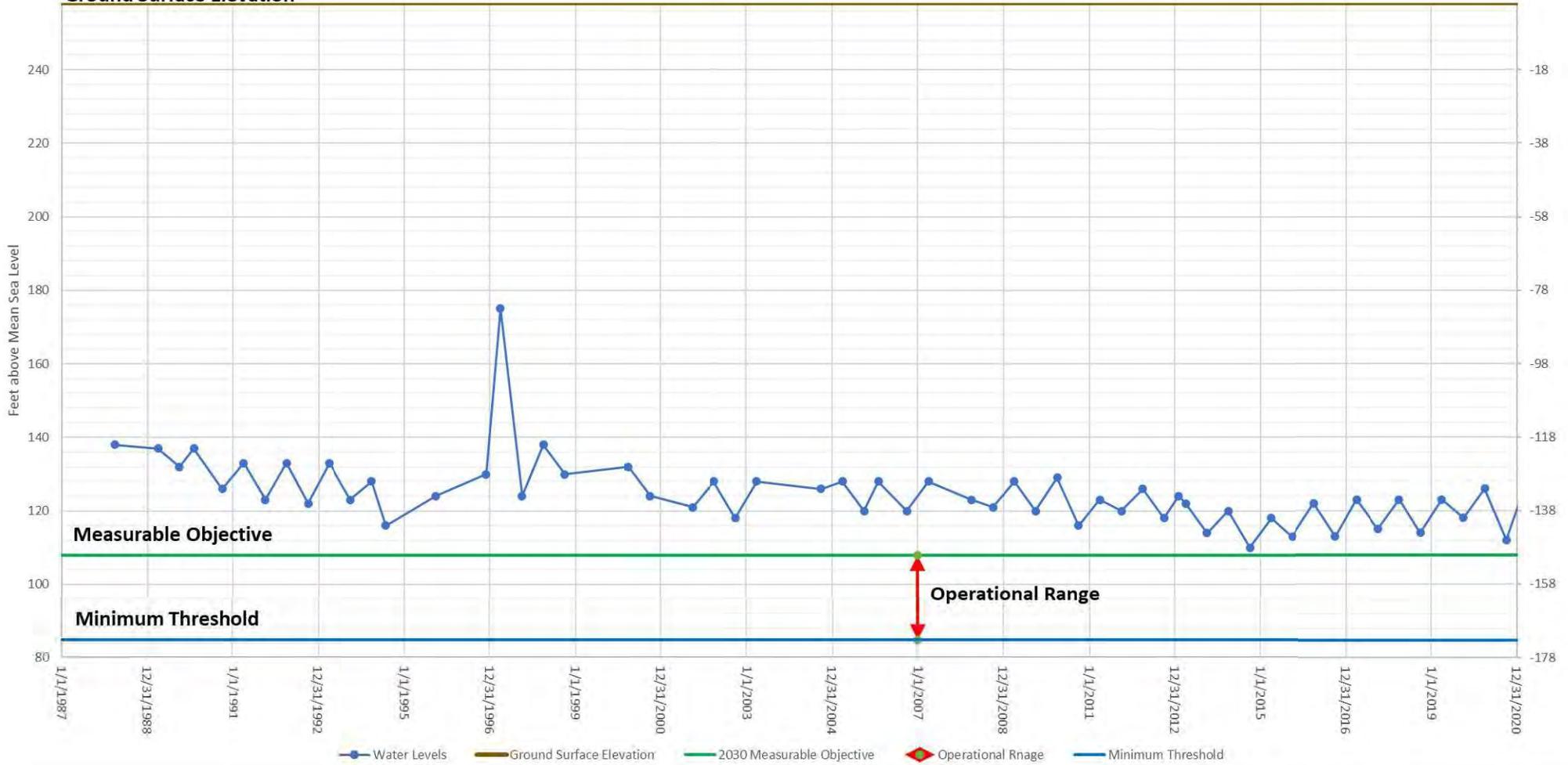


# RMS Well 28J001M



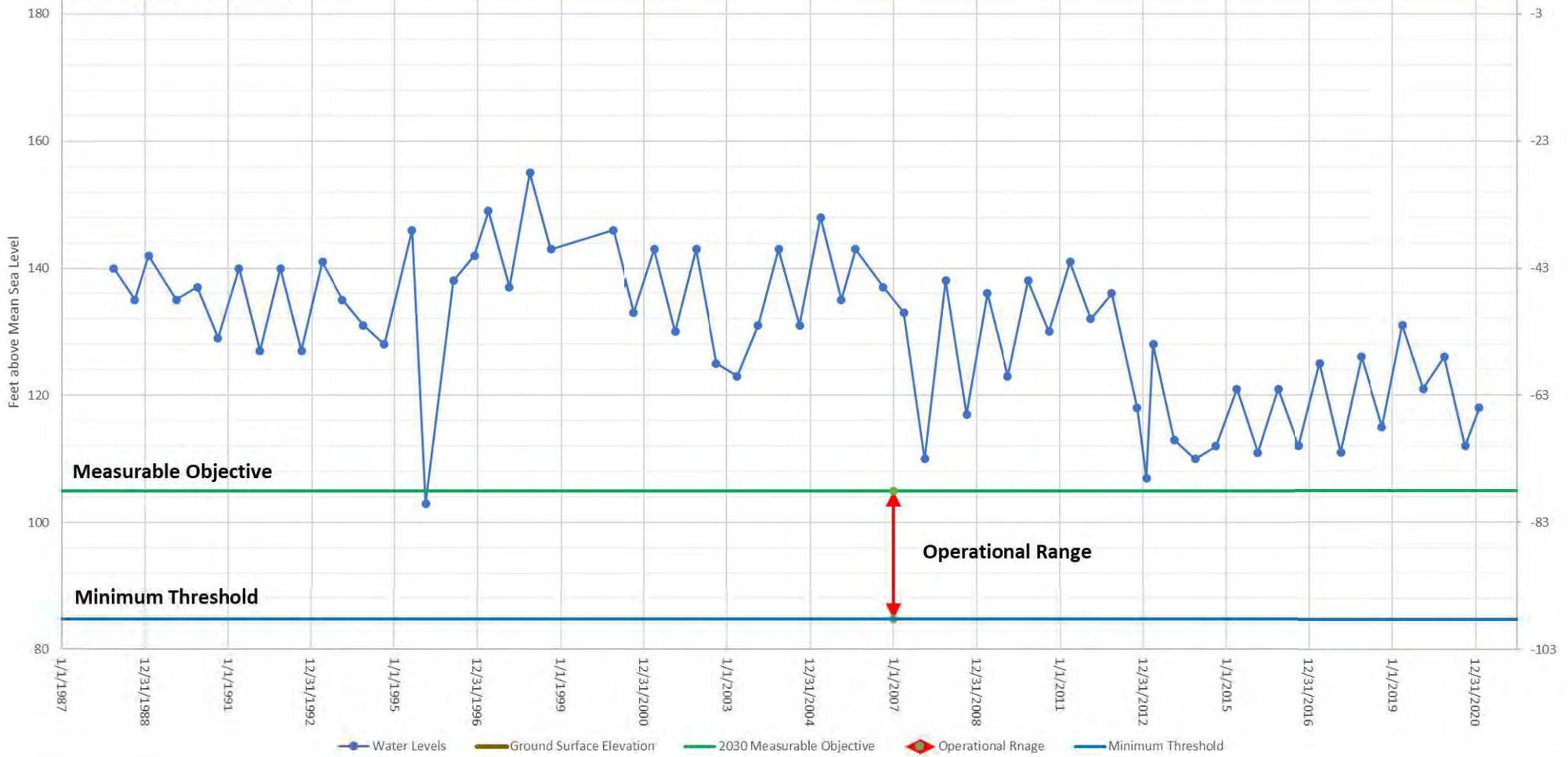
# RMS Well 18N001M

## Ground Surface Elevation



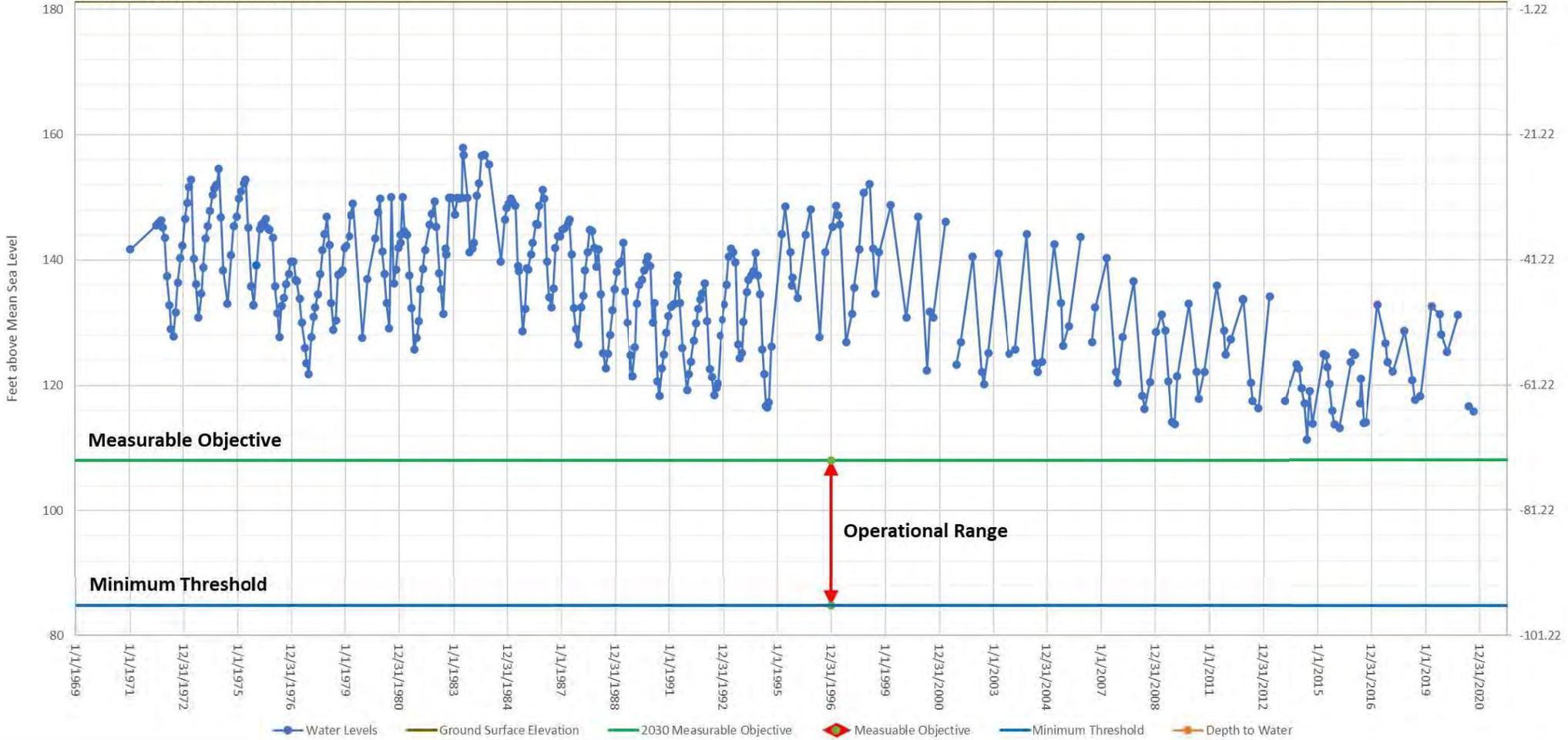
# RMS Well 16H001M

## Ground Surface Elevation



# RMS Well 28J005M

## Ground Surface Elevation





**Vina  
Groundwater Sustainability Agency  
Agenda Transmittal**

**Agenda Item: 3.1.2**

**Subject:** Draft Project and Management Actions Chapter of the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan

**Contact:** Kelly Peterson

**Phone:** 530-552-3595

**Meeting Date:** 7-14-21

**Regular Agenda**

**Department Summary:** The draft Projects and Management Actions Chapter of the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan is now available for review and comment and available here:

[https://www.vinagsa.org/files/5b8723dc2/Chapter+6\\_V1+draft.pdf](https://www.vinagsa.org/files/5b8723dc2/Chapter+6_V1+draft.pdf)

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be discussing this chapter at their next meeting, July 20, 2021, and considering recommendations to the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board.

Public comments on this draft are accepted through July 23, 2021 to be included for consideration by the Groundwater Sustainability Agency Boards at their August 11th meeting. Comments can be submitted using the Comment Tracking Spreadsheet or any preferred format. Please send comments to [VinaGSA@gmail.com](mailto:VinaGSA@gmail.com).

This is not the final opportunity to comment on the Projects and Management Actions Chapter. The complete Groundwater Sustainability Plan, including this chapter, will be released for a 60 day public comment period in early September.

Staff will provide an overview of the chapter components.

**Fiscal Impact:** None

**Staff Recommendation:** Informational only.

**DRAFT**

**VINA GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN (GSP) REVIEW AND ADOPTION**

**Tentative Status and Meetings Schedule**

**v. July 9, 2021**

**JULY 14, 2021 JOINT VINA/RCRD BOARD MEETING**

- Sustainable Management Criteria Chapter, Monitoring Network Chapter and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (appendix) – Review and consideration of SHAC & public comments received. Provide direction on key issues and approve to be included in draft GSP.
- Projects and Management Actions Chapter – Update only – release of 14-day public review period.

**JULY 20, 2021 STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

- Projects and Management Actions Chapter - SHAC to review and make recommendations to the Boards.
- Implementation Chapter - discuss and review outline (nuts and bolts) of the Implementation chapter and provide recommendation to the Vina Boards.
- Interbasin Coordination Chapter - discuss Interbasin Coordination report and provide recommendations to the Vina Boards.

**AUGUST 11, 2021 JOINT VINA/RCRD BOARD MEETING**

- Projects and Management Actions Chapter Review - Review and consideration of SHAC & public comments received.
- Implementation Chapter -. Staff will present SHAC recommendations and key issues. The Boards will provide direction for Implementation Chapter to be included in complete GSP for release in September.
- Interbasin Coordination Chapter - Review and consideration of SHAC & public comments received.

**AUGUST 17, 2021 STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

- Draft Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan - SHAC receives a high-level overview of draft GSP components.

**SEPTEMBER 8, 2021 JOINT VINA/RCRD BOARD MEETING**

- *Draft Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan* - Staff will provide an overview of the draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan and request approval to release the draft for a 60-day public comment period.

**NO SEPTEMBER SHAC MEETING - A SEPARATE PUBLIC WORKSHOP WILL BE SCHEDULED FOR LATE SEPTEMBER OR EARLY OCTOBER**

**OCTOBER 19, 2021 STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

- *Draft Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan* - SHAC will discuss and review the draft GSP and continue to give feedback. Staff will present public comments received to date.

**NOVEMBER SHAC MEETING - TBD-staff recommends moving the 11/16/21 SHAC meeting to earlier in the month, during the week of November 8-12**

- *Draft Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan* - SHAC will discuss draft GSP, public comments received, and make recommendations to the Boards.

**NOVEMBER JOINT VINA/RCRD BOARD MEETING – Staff recommends moving the 11/10/21 to 11/15/21**

- *Draft Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan* - Boards will conduct a public hearing to discuss draft GSP, and consider public comments received, and SHAC recommendations.

**DECEMBER JOINT VINA/RCRD BOARD MEETING – Staff recommends moving 12/8/21 meeting to 12/15/21.**

- *Final Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan* - The Boards will consider adopting the final Vina GSP and directing staff to submit the GSP to DWR by the January 31, 2022 deadline.



**Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency**  
308 Nelson Avenue, Oroville, California 95965  
(530) 552-3592 • [VinaGSA@gmail.com](mailto:VinaGSA@gmail.com)

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June 24, 2021

To: Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board

From: Paul Gosselin, Administrator

Re: Acting Administrator

I was designated as Administrator for the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) pursuant to the Joint Powers Agreement. I will be leaving Butte County effective July 2, 2021 and thus will not be the Administrator. I am designating Kelly Peterson as Acting Administrator. The appointment of an Administrator will be put on the July, 2021 Vina GSA Board meeting agenda.



**Vina Groundwater  
Sustainability Agency**  
308 Nelson Avenue  
Oroville, CA 95965  
(530) 552-3592

## **VINA GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting of  
June 9, 2021, 5:30 p.m.  
**ONLINE MEETING ONLY VIA ZOOM**

### **1. VINA GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY (GSA) REGULAR BOARD MEETING.**

#### **1.1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Chair Tuchinsky at 5:33 p.m.

#### **1.2. Roll Call**

##### **Board Members Present:**

Evan Tuchinsky  
Jeffrey Rohwer  
Raymond Cooper  
Tod Kimmelshue  
Kasey Reynolds

##### **Staff Present:**

Paul Gosselin and Kelly Peterson, (BCDWRC), Kamie Loeser (Durham Irrigation District), Valerie Kincaid (Attorney O’Laughlin & Paris LLP), Erik Gustafson and Linda Herman (City of Chico).

### **2. CONSENT AGENDA** - all matters listed under the consent agenda are to be considered routine and enacted by one motion.

#### **2.1. APPROVAL OF 5/12/21 VINA GSA BOARD MEETING MINUTES.**

**Action:** Approve minutes of Vina GSA Board meeting held on 5/12/21.

Board Member Cooper motioned to approve the 5/12/21 Meeting Minutes. Motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Rohwer. Board Member Kimmelshue and Board Member Reynolds abstained from this motion because they were not present at the meeting.

Motion carried as follows:

AYES: Board Member Cooper, Vice Chair Rohwer, and Chair Tuchinsky

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: Board Member Kimmelshue and Board Member Reynolds

#### **2.2. APPROVAL OF MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT.**

**Action:** Approve the Vina GSA Financial Status Report as of 6/03/2021.

Chair Tuchinsky motioned to approve the Financial Status Report. Motion was seconded by Board Member Kimmelshue.

Motion carried as follows:

AYES: Board Member Cooper, Board Member Kimmelshue, Board Member Reynolds, Vice Chair Rohwer, and Chair Tuchinsky

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

3. **ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT** – NONE

4. **BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

Members of the public may address the Board at this time on any matter not already listed on the agenda; comments are limited to three minutes. The Board cannot take any action at this meeting on requests made under this section of the agenda.

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Public comments were received from Debra Lucero.

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5. **NOTICED PUBLIC HEARINGS** - NONE

6. **REGULAR AGENDA**

6.1. **APPROVAL OF THE VINA GSA 2021-22 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET.**

The Board considered the proposed Vina GSA budget for the 2021-22 Fiscal Year. Pursuant to Section 9.3 of the Vina GSA Joint Powers Agreement, approval of the budget requires a supermajority (4/5) affirmative vote.

**Action:** Approve the Vina GSA 2021-22 fiscal year budget.

Board Member Kimmelshue motioned to approve the 2021-22 budget. Motion was seconded by Vice Chair Rohwer.

Motion carried as follows:

AYES: Board Member Cooper, Board Member Kimmelshue, Board Member Reynolds, Vice Chair Rohwer, and Chair Tuchinsky

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

6.2. **UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VINA GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN (GSP).**

Staff provided a status update and a schedule for the completion of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Vina subbasin. **(Report- Paul Gosselin).**

**Recommendation:** None, this was an informational item only.

7. **COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS.**

These items were provided for the Board's information. Although the Board may discuss the items, no action can be taken at this meeting. Should the Board determine that action is required, the item or items may be included for action on a subsequent posted agenda.

7.1 Vina GSA Management Committee Updates:

7.1.1 Vina Stakeholder Advisory Committee Update **(Written Report -Kelly Peterson)**

8. **ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m. to a joint meeting of the Vina GSA Board and the Rock Creek Reclamation District GSA Board to be held on July 14, 2021.



**Vina  
Groundwater Sustainability Agency  
Agenda Transmittal**

**Agenda Item: Vina GSA  
Consent Item 3.4**

**Subject: Vina GSA Financial Report**

**Contact: Kelly Peterson**

**Phone: 530-552-3595**

**Meeting Date: 7-14-21**

**Consent Agenda**

**Department Summary:** Attached is the financial report for the 2020-2021 fiscal year for the Vina GSA as of 7/9/21.

**Fiscal Impact:** None

**Staff Recommendation:** The Management Committee recommends approval of the financial report.



<b>Vina GSA Financial Report</b> FY 2020-2021 (7/1/2020 - 6/30/2021)	<b>Fund Balance:</b>	\$	<b>9,129.58</b>
	<b>Balance Date:</b>		<b>7/9/2021</b>

<b>Expenditures</b>			
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Budget Item	Date	Amount	Notes
<b>Legal</b>			
O'Laughlin & Paris	8/25/20	\$ 1,785.00	
O'Laughlin & Paris	10/6/20	\$ 1,330.00	
O'Laughlin & Paris	11/10/20	\$ 630.00	
O'Laughlin & Paris	12/15/20	\$ 595.00	
O'Laughlin & Paris	1/5/21	\$ 2,065.00	
O'Laughlin & Paris	1/19/21	\$ 770.00	
O'Laughlin & Paris	2/19/21	\$ 1,260.00	
O'Laughlin & Paris	3/9/21	\$ 2,065.00	
O'Laughlin & Paris	4/20/21	\$ 980.00	
O'Laughlin & Paris	6/1/21	\$ 630.00	
Total Legal Spent		\$ 12,110.00	
Legal Budget		\$ 16,000.00	
% of Legal Budget Spent		76%	
<b>Insurance</b>			
Golden State Risk Management Authority	7/7/20	\$ 1,800.00	GSA insurance
Total Insurance Spent		\$ 1,800.00	
Insurance Budget		\$ 1,800.00	
% of Insurance Budget Spent		100%	2020 fees increased by \$300
<b>Audit</b>			
Total Audit Spent		\$ -	
Audit Budget		\$ 2,000.00	
% of Audit Budget Spent		0%	
<b>Contingency</b>			
Ca. Newspaper Partnership (Chico ER)	4/20/21	\$ 618.51	SHAC Ad
Ca. Newspaper Partnership (Chico ER)	4/27/21	\$ 618.50	GSP Meeting Ad
Total Contingency Spent		\$ 1,237.01	
Contingency Budget		\$ 1,080.00	
% of Contingency Budget Spent		115%	
<b>Website</b>			
Digital Deployment		\$ 240.00	Website Hosting Services
Total Website Spent		\$ 240.00	
Website Budget		\$ 240.00	
% of Website Budget Spent		100%	
<b>All Expenditures</b>		<b>\$ 15,387.01</b>	
<b>Total Budget for Expenditures</b>		<b>\$ 21,120.00</b>	
<b>% of Budget Spent</b>		<b>73%</b>	



**Vina GSA Financial Report**  
 FY 2020-2021 (7/1/2020 - 6/30/2021)

<b>Revenue</b>			
Budget Item	Date	Amount	Notes
<b>Member Agency Contributions</b>			
City of Chico	7/28/20	\$ 5,000.00	
Durham Irrigation District	9/17/20	\$ 1,000.00	
Durham Irrigation District	9/17/20	\$ 1,000.00	
Durham Irrigation District	9/29/20	\$ 1,000.00	
Durham Irrigation District	10/29/20	\$ 1,000.00	
Durham Irrigation District	11/30/20	\$ 1,000.00	Final Payment
Butte County	5/12/21	\$ 5,000.00	Contribution for FY 21-22
Total Member Agency Contributions Received		\$ 15,000.00	Note: Butte County's FY 20-21 contributions (\$7K) were posted in previous FY and included in carry over balance
Total Member Agency Contributions Budget		\$ 15,000.00	
% of Member Agency Contributions Budget Received		133%	
<b>Interest</b>			
	7/1/20	\$ (168.80)	Unrealized Gain/Loss
	7/1/20	\$ 41.99	Interest-4th quarter FY20
	10/15/20	\$ 36.55	Interest-1st quarter FY21
	1/15/21	\$ 30.41	Interest-2nd quarter FY21
	4/1/21	\$ 30.13	Interest-3rd quarter FY21
Total Interest Received		\$ 139.08	
Total Interest Budget		\$ 120.00	
% of Interest Budget Received		116%	
<b>All Revenue</b>		<b>\$ 15,139.08</b>	
<b>Total Budget for Revenue</b>		<b>\$ 15,120.00</b>	
<b>% of Budget Received</b>		<b>133%</b>	Includes the Butte County contribution made last FY
<b>Fund Balance</b>			
<b>Starting Balance 7/1/2020</b>	\$		9,377.51
<b>Expenses</b>	\$		15,387.01
<b>Revenue</b>	\$		15,139.08
<b>Fund Balance 7/9/21</b>	\$		<b>9,129.58</b>



Vina  
Groundwater Sustainability Agency  
Agenda Transmittal

Agenda Item: 5.1.1

Subject: Management Committee Report - Vina GSA Stakeholder Advisory Committee Update

Contact: Kelly Peterson      Phone: (530) 552-3595      Meeting Date: July 14, 2021      Regular Agenda

Department Summary: The Vina GSA Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SHAC) met virtually last month on June 15, 2021, the draft meeting notes are attached.

At the last meeting, the SHAC:

- Received an overview presentation of the public comments received to date, discussed and reviewed the Draft Monitoring Networks Chapters, Draft SMC, and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDE) Appendix, and made recommendations to the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Board of Directors.

SHAC membership details, meeting materials, detailed meeting notes and recordings of the meetings are on the Vina GSA website: <https://www.vinagsa.org/>. All SHAC meetings are open to the public and scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. however, the July 2021 meeting will be running an extra 30 minutes until 12:30 pm. in an online format using Zoom.

The SHAC will meet again via video conference on July 20, 2021 at which time they will consider in addition to other items, approval of the draft June 2021 meeting summary, discuss, review and provide input on PMA draft chapter and consider recommendations to the Vina GSA Board on project rankings and PMAs for inclusion in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). They will also discuss the draft Implementation Chapter outline and consider recommendations on implementation components and discuss Inter-basin Coordination Framework.

Fiscal Impact: None

Staff Recommendation: Accept as an information item.



1 **Meeting Brief**

- 2 ➤ The Vina Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SHAC) met virtually on June 15, 2021.
- 3 ➤ **Monitoring Networks Draft Chapter & Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) Chapter:**
- 4 The SHAC received an overview presentation of the public comments received to date,
- 5 discussed and reviewed the Draft Monitoring Networks Chapters, Draft SMC, and
- 6 Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDE) Appendix, and made recommendations to the
- 7 Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Board of Directors. The public had an
- 8 opportunity to provide comment [Access [Public Release Draft Chapters, SMC Summary Table,](#)
- 9 [and Presentation on Draft Monitoring Networks Chapters, Draft SMC, and GDE Appendix](#)].
- 10 ➤ **Next Meeting:** The SHAC will meet again via video conference on July 20, 2021, from 9:00-
- 11 12:30.

12 **Action Items**

Item	Lead	Completion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect with Bruce Smith regarding digitized well logs.</li> </ul>	Christina Buck, Butte County	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise and upload approved Vina SHAC notes (5/18/21) to the website.</li> </ul>	CBI & Management Committee	<a href="#">[Access Here]</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and ensure consistency in GDE maps and figures (Figure 4 and Figure 6)</li> </ul>	Butte County	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post June SHAC meeting recording on the website.</li> </ul>	CBI & Management Committee	<a href="#">[Access Here]</a>

13 **Summary**

14 The Vina SHAC met on June 15, 2021, via video conference, as a result of COVID-19. Participants

15 included Vina SHAC members, GSA member agency staff, technical consultants, representatives

16 from the CA Department of Water Resources (DWR), and members of the public. Below is a

17 summary of key themes and next steps discussed at the meeting. This document is not intended

18 to be a meeting transcript. Rather, it focuses on the main points covered during the group’s

19 discussions. The video-conference meeting recording is available on the Vina GSA website

20 [\[Access Here\]](#).

21

22 1. **Introductions & Agenda Review (0:00:00)**

23 The SHAC members, facilitator, technical consulting teams, and staff introduced themselves. The

24 facilitator gave a brief overview of the agenda.

25



1 2. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda (0:06:06)

2 *SHAC Comments:*

- 3 • J. Brobeck (environmental rep) shared an update that Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District (GCID)
- 4 recently turned on their Tuscan Aquifer pumps. He asked whether GCID has been in
- 5 communication with the Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation.
- 6 • G. Sohnrey (ag representative) and B. Smith (business rep) expressed disappointment with
- 7 DWR’s response not to extend the GSP deadline. Further, they would like greater emphasis
- 8 placed on investments to expand storage and increase desalination plants, as part of the
- 9 state’s infrastructure investment.
- 10 • S. Goepf (domestic well user) shared concern with the state’s use and management of
- 11 water storage and water transfers, as well as the lack of regional benefits from the water
- 12 bond, beyond low-flow fixtures.

13

14 *Public Comments:*

- 15 • A member of the public shared an update on a report received during the last Board of
- 16 Supervisors’ meeting related to Oroville Dam, which highlighted concerns related to DWR’s
- 17 handling of the SGMA process and the quality of technical information related to domestic
- 18 wells.

19

20 3. Meeting Notes (00:15:00)

21 The Vina SHAC reviewed and approved the 5/18/21 SHAC meeting notes.

22

23 *SHAC Comments:*

- 24 • S. Lewis (ag representative) would like to ensure consistency in the Vina SHAC process
- 25 (e.g., conduct a vote before extending the meeting time, keeping public comment to 3
- 26 minutes) and in the meeting notes (e.g., attribute all comments to individual SHAC
- 27 members).
- 28 • B. Smith (business rep) asked for access to digitized well log information and provided
- 29 edits to P. 2 Line 28 in the meeting notes to properly describe the information he
- 30 received.

31

32 The Vina SHAC voted on the approval of the 5/18/21 SHAC meeting notes, pending the minor

33 changes made. The meeting notes were approved.

34

Yes	A. Dawson, J. Brobeck, G. Sohnrey, B. Smith, C. Chastain, G. Barber,
Abstain	C. Madden, S. Lewis, S. Goepf

35

36 4. Monitoring Networks Draft Chapter & Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) Chapter

37 (0:23:00)

38



1 C. Buck (Butte County) provided an overview presentation of the public comments received to  
 2 date. The SHAC discussed and reviewed the Draft Monitoring Networks Chapters, Draft SMC, and  
 3 GDE Appendix, and had an opportunity to make recommendations to the Vina GSA Board of  
 4 Directors. The public had an opportunity to provide comment. P. Gosselin clarified the GSP  
 5 chapters will remain in draft form until the entire GSP is adopted in December [Access [Public](#)  
 6 [Release Draft Chapters, SMC Summary Table](#), and [Presentation on Draft Monitoring Networks](#)  
 7 [Chapters, Draft SMC, and GDE Appendix](#)].

8  
 9 *a. Sustainability Goal (00:23:35)*  
 10 “To ensure that groundwater is managed to provide a water supply of adequate quantity and  
 11 quality to support rural areas and small communities, the agricultural economic base of the  
 12 region, and environmental uses now and in the future.”

13  
 14 *Comments & Recommendations*

- 15 • S. Goepf (domestic well user) expressed his concern that water quality and pollution  
 16 from the homeless community residing by waterways is not emphasized enough. He  
 17 would like to ensure groundwater quality remains front and center. P. Gosselin (Butte  
 18 County) shared that under SGMA the GSA is not responsible for water quality impacts  
 19 from human activities, other than those related to groundwater pumping.
- 20 • C. Chastain (CSU Chico) stated water quality can be addressed elsewhere. Further, the  
 21 sustainability goal statement as presented is too restrictive, leaving out large  
 22 communities and other businesses besides agriculture. The goal should be inclusive of  
 23 all communities and users. G. Barber echoed those concerns and suggested not  
 24 mentioning “the agricultural economic base of the region” and maintaining broader and  
 25 more inclusive language.
- 26 • S. Lewis (ag representative), S. Goepf (domestic well user), and G. Sohnrey (ag.  
 27 representative) would like to retain language valuing agriculture’s economic contribution.
- 28 • J. Brobeck (environmental rep) suggested removing the word “small” to be inclusive of  
 29 all communities.
- 30 • A. Dawson (domestic well user) felt unsure about including the word “now,” since it may  
 31 imply the basin will be sustainable from January 2022 on.

32  
 33 Vina SHAC members voted on a recommendation to delete the word “small” and retain, for the  
 34 time being, “now and in the future.”

35  
 36 “To ensure that groundwater is managed to provide a water supply of adequate  
 37 quantity and quality to support rural areas and ~~small~~ communities, the agricultural  
 38 economic base of the region, and environmental uses now and in the future.”

39

Vote	SHAC Members
Yes	C. Madden, A. Dawson, J. Brobeck, G. Sohnrey, B. Smith, C. Chastain, G. Barber, S. Lewis



Yes, tentatively S. Goepp (in favor of removing small but would also like to remove now and in the future)

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*b. Groundwater Levels SMC (00:38:48)*

<b>Definition</b>	An Undesirable Result is experienced if sustained groundwater levels are too low to provide a water supply of adequate quantity and quality to support rural areas and small communities, and the agricultural economic base of the region, or if significant and unreasonable impacts to environmental uses of groundwater occur.
<b>Identification</b>	<b>Two RMS wells within a management area reach their MT for two consecutive non-dry year-types.</b>
<b>Minimum Thresholds</b>	S. Vina: 15th percentile of shallowest domestic wells within a 3-mile radius of the RMS well. N. Vina: Elevation protective of sustainably constructed domestic wells within the polygon associated with the RMS well.
<b>Measurable Objectives</b>	The groundwater level based on the groundwater trend line for the dry periods (since 2000) of observed short-term climatic cycles extended to 2030.

4

**Undesirable Results (UR) Definition**

5

*SHAC Comments & Recommendations*

6

- C. Chastain (CSU Chico) expressed concern with tying the SMC to water year type (dry or critically dry year), given that drought is in a way “the new normal.” P. Gosselin (Butte County) shared this language is in alignment with the regulatory language.
- J. Brobeck (environmental rep) believes the MOs and MTs are not protective enough to protect streams, vegetation, and well elevations; therefore, he is highly concerned about the UR statement.
- A. Dawson (domestic well user) would like to remove “non-dry year,” so it is just “two consecutive years.” She is concerned with sustained drought conditions and the impacts on the groundwater levels. The MT does not feel protective enough.
- G. Sohnrey (ag representative) would like to maintain “non-dry year” for the moment, and he asked to refrain from making formal recommendations until the SHAC has reviewed the public comments received. In response, P. Gosselin shared the public comment period ends on Friday and asked the SHAC for initial or tentative recommendations to bring to the board in July.
- S. Goepp (domestic well user) asked for examples of unreasonable impacts to the environment. C. Buck (Butte County) clarified that what is unreasonable is determined locally by the GSA. Focus for this SMC has been related to domestic well users and the impacts on GDEs are captured in the depletion of interconnected surface water SMC.
- G. Cole (ag representative) shared concerns on the definition and determination of year type (state level, region, etc.). He suggested adding definitions and details about year types in the chapter. C. Buck (Butte County) indicated the chapter describes the definition

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- 1 of year type which comes from DWR. More details on the index can be included in the  
 2 chapter.
- 3 • S. Lewis (ag representative) would like to make formal recommendations after reviewing  
 4 public comments and ensure the basin remains as flexible as possible to avoid state  
 5 intervention.
  - 6 • C. Madden highlighted the distinction between acute and chronic. He is supportive of  
 7 including non-dry year types, but proposed adding additional language:  
 8 ○ “Two non-dry year types or one non-dry year type if proceeded by two dry year  
 9 types if aquifer does not show recovery in non-dry year type years.”
  - 10 • P. Gosselin shared the GSA could add language to trigger a Board Review prior to reaching  
 11 the MT.
  - 12 • A. Dawson (domestic well user) is concerned with the possibility of multiple years of  
 13 drought not triggering a response to reverse the trend. P. Gosselin responded that the  
 14 triggers would come in the five-year updates and annual reports. She would like to add  
 15 language that shows a commitment to action and urgency if the MT is approaching.
  - 16 • J. Brobeck (environmental rep) echoed A. Dawson’s concerns. He suggested switching the  
 17 emphasis towards the MO not the MT in the UR statement to signal concern prior to  
 18 enforcement mechanisms.
  - 19 • S. Lewis (ag representative) would like to maintain flexibility in the MT to avoid state  
 20 intervention. She would not like to make significant changes to the language at this time.
  - 21 • G. Stone (ag representative) suggested addressing multiple factors beyond year type,  
 22 such as a significant water transfer by an adjacent subbasin.

23  
 24 *SHAC Poll on removing “dry-year type” from UR Statement*

Vote	SHAC Members
Remove “dry-year type”	A. Dawson, B. Smith, C. Chastain, G. Cole, and J. Brobeck
Retain “dry-year type”	G. Barber, S. Lewis, S. Goepf, G. Sohnrey
Other suggestion	C. Madden (“Two non-dry year types or one non-dry year type if proceeded by two dry year types if aquifer does not show recovery in non-dry year type years.”)

26  
 27 **Approach to setting the Minimum Threshold**

28 C. Buck (Butte County) asked for the SHAC’s preference on the two approaches to setting the MT,  
 29 described in the chapter. Specifically, the Management Committee would like input on how to  
 30 identify the set of domestic wells associated with a given representative monitoring well (polygon  
 31 vs 3-mile radius) and the statistical approach used to set the MT. For Vina North, the proposal is  
 32 to use a graphic method to capture and be protective of domestic wells within a polygon, while  
 33 acknowledging ground surface elevation changes and there may be outliers. In Vina South and  
 34 Vina Chico, the approach is to use the 15th percentile of shallowest domestic wells within a 3-  
 35 mile radius of the RMS wells.



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2 *SHAC Comments & Recommendations*

- 3 • B. Smith (business rep) would like clarification on the dots indicated as “bottom of well.”
- 4 C. Buck stated each of the dots represents wells associated with a given RMS well and the
- 5 distribution of their depths. Wells drilled prior to 1980 are not included.
- 6 • J. Brobeck (environmental rep) asked for clarification on the anticipated impacts on the
- 7 eastern part of the subbasin P. 28 and P. 31 of the SMC chapter. He asked whether the
- 8 technical team anticipates those wells to go dry first and the potential impacts of
- 9 increased pumping on the western side of the subbasin on the eastern wells. C. Buck
- 10 (Butte County) shared impacts on the western side of the basin could impact the eastern
- 11 part of the region with significant gradient changes.
- 12 • B. Smith (business rep) would like to know which RMS wells are monitored hourly.
- 13 • A. Dawson (domestic well user) is in favor of the polygon approach, as it is much easier to
- 14 understand. She asked for more information on how the approach for Vina North was
- 15 developed. C. Buck (Butte County) shared that following the SMC Joint Board workshop,
- 16 the Management Committee worked closely with the Rock Creek GSA to refine the
- 17 approach and address their concern with the domestic well database. Other subbasins,
- 18 such as the Butte Subbasin, are following the polygon approach. The Management
- 19 Committee decided to put out both approaches for public input.
- 20 • A. Dawson (domestic well user) asked why the document states the GSA Board has
- 21 recommended and approved a certain percentile. She would prefer using the 10%
- 22 percentile not 15% but recognizes differing viewpoints. P. Gosselin (Butte County)
- 23 clarified that the language has not been finalized and the document will remain in draft
- 24 form and open to changes and edits based on the GSA Board’s decision.
- 25 • J. Brobeck (environmental rep) shared his perspective related to the groundwater
- 26 dependent ecosystems (GDEs), specifically on pages 39 and 70, as levels are 80 ft. below
- 27 root depth for upland valley oaks. In addition, he believes the operational ranges seem
- 28 too wide and not sustainable for the MTs on pages 47 and 51-57. He’s concerned these
- 29 MTs would negatively impact perennial streams. He would like to avoid a continued
- 30 downward trend of groundwater levels, particularly given climate impacts. He believes
- 31 that the focus should be on demand management to minimize impacts.
- 32 • B. Smith (business rep) would like to know additional well characteristics and well
- 33 locations to evaluate the water sources and assess the impacts.

34

35 *Public Comment:*

- 36 • D. Rice (Rock Creek Reclamation District GSA) provided context from RCRD’s experience
- 37 using polygon approach, due to elevation changes. This approach reduced duplication of
- 38 counting wells and can be adapted along the way.

39



1 *SHAC Recommendations: MT approach to set of domestic wells associated with a given*  
 2 *representative monitoring well*

- 3 • S. Lewis (ag representative) supports a consistent approach across the basin. She would  
 4 lean towards the polygon approach.
- 5 • A. Dawson (domestic well user) would support the polygon approach and would like to  
 6 minimize impacts to domestic wells by potentially following a percentile approach  
 7 (prefers 10<sup>th</sup> percentile).
- 8 • J. Brobeck (environmental rep) asked for clarification related to “sustainably constructed  
 9 wells.” C. Buck (Butte County) shared the partial intent is to describe wells that meet  
 10 certain well construction standards, recognizing the MT is not meant to protect all existing  
 11 wells, including very old, shallow wells.
- 12 • C. Madden (Butte College) prefers the polygon approach since the wells can be grouped  
 13 closer together by elevation. He also acknowledged the benefits of the three-mile radius  
 14 approach.
- 15 • G. Cole (ag representative) would prefer the polygon method. He would like to ensure  
 16 accurate representation in the eastern border by adding another monitoring well.  
 17 Further, he would like to see the polygons drawn for Vina South before offering a  
 18 recommendation.
- 19 • G. Sohnrey (ag representative) prefers the polygon approach.
- 20 • J. Brobeck (environmental rep) abstained from making a recommendation. He remains  
 21 concerned whether either approach can adequately capture impacts to domestic wells.

23 *Public Comment:*

- 24 • A member of the public suggested adding defining “sustainably constructed well” in the  
 25 glossary.

27 *SHAC Poll on Polygon Approach*

Vote	SHAC Members
In support	A. Dawson, S. Lewis, G. Barber, S. Goepp, G. Sohnrey
Uncertain, leaning towards polygon approach	B. Smith, C. Chastain, G. Cole
Uncertain	J. Brobeck, C. Madden

30 *SHAC Comments & Recommendations on direction to set MTs and MOs*

- 31 • G. Cole (ag representative) shares A. Dawson’s concern about the percentage of domestic  
 32 wells not in the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile range. He also echoed J. Brobeck’s concern with oak valley  
 33 rooting depth and would like greater consideration for environmental impacts.
- 34 • S. Goepp (domestic well user) is still absorbing the information provided.
- 35 • S. Lewis (ag representative) does not have any suggested changes.
- 36 • G. Barber (CalWater) is in support of the current direction, acknowledging the plan can  
 37 be adapted and revised along the way.



- 1 • C. Chastain (CSU Chico) generally in support of the direction but would prefer the MT
- 2 closer to the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- 3 • B. Smith (business rep) echoed concerns related to the environmental and domestic well
- 4 impacts.
- 5 • G. Sohnrey (ag representative) comfortable with approach and would like to review
- 6 progress along the way. He would like to have opportunities to evaluate and modify the
- 7 GSP on a yearly basis.
- 8 • J. Brobeck (environmental rep) concerned with tying GDEs solely to interconnected
- 9 surface water. He feels uncomfortable with the approach to establish the MT and
- 10 frustrated with the technical consultants’ insufficient consideration and follow up related
- 11 to urban canopy. The GDE maps are too narrowly focused on riparian habitat, leaving out
- 12 areas dependent on shallow groundwater levels. The operational range is in his
- 13 perspective too broad and not protective enough of the natural environment.
- 14 • A. Dawson (domestic well user) in favor of the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and consider revisiting the
- 15 threshold with improved information. As a domestic well representative, she is very
- 16 concerned with drought impacts. A recent PPIC study estimates many wells going dry this
- 17 year. The plan should consider climate impacts on groundwater conditions. Further, she
- 18 recommends investing in an assessment of domestic wells and newly constructed wells
- 19 to have an accurate depiction of current domestic wells in the subbasin.
- 20 • C. Madden (Butte College) supports the current approach for MOs. Consider establishing
- 21 specific thresholds for areas with GDEs and other specific conditions that require lower
- 22 operational flexibility and more stringent MTs.

23 *Public Comment:*

- 24 • A member of the public asked for clarification related to what circumstances would
- 25 trigger state intervention. The MT must be tied to one of the groundwater users. The Vina
- 26 GSA chose domestic wells as the indicator for undesirable results in the subbasin. The
- 27 state could come in if the GSA violates the undesirable results statement, which is tied to
- 28 the groundwater elevation established as the MT. Further, the state may act if the basin
- 29 is not meeting interim milestones as established in the GSP. This member of the public
- 30 expressed serious concern with potential irreversible environmental impacts if the
- 31 subbasin reaches the MT, as proposed.
- 32 • Two members of the public suggested clarifying the definition for “reasonable or
- 33 unreasonable impacts to environmental uses,” anticipating future legislation. There are a
- 34 series of ambiguous terms added to the SGMA terminology, for example, section
- 35 “suitable habitat” in sections 3.4.

37 *c. Interconnected Surface Water SMC (2:50:54)*

38

<p><b>Definition</b></p>	<p>Avoiding significant and unreasonable depletion of surface water flows caused by groundwater pumping that significantly impacts beneficial uses</p>
--------------------------	--



<b>Identification</b>	Groundwater Level SMC are used by Proxy: Two RMS wells reach their MT for two consecutive non-dry year-types.
<b>Minimum Thresholds</b>	Groundwater Level MTs are used by proxy
<b>Measurable Objectives</b>	The groundwater level based on the groundwater trend line for the dry periods (since 2000) of observed short-term climatic cycles extended to 2030.
<b>Data Gap</b>	<b>Data needed to develop this SMC includes: definition of stream reaches and associated priority habitat, streamflow measurements to develop profiles at multiple time periods, and measurements of groundwater levels directly adjacent to stream channels, first water bearing aquifer zone, and deeper aquifer zones.</b>

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*Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems*

The GDE Appendix released for public comment will be included in the Basin Setting Chapter. C. Buck (Butte County) shared that many of the data gaps associated with the surface water SMC are related to the data gaps tied to GDEs.

*SHAC Comments & Recommendations on Interconnected Surface Water SMC and GDEs*

- C. Buck (Butte County) will make changes consistent with the modifications made for Groundwater Levels SMC.
- J. Brobeck (environmental rep) expressed concern with not including enough areas as GDEs. The current approach is too restrictive to riparian areas, along streams, and are not inclusive of urban canopy and upland forests. C. Buck (Butte County) clarified that the coupling of this SMC and GDEs relate to the data gaps that apply to both.
- B. Smith (business rep) suggests labeling all “potential GDEs” as GDEs to avoid future removal from the plan. The plan should acknowledge existing available data sources.
- S. Lewis (ag representative) highlighted inconsistencies in Figure 4 and Figure 6, particularly related to whether her property is considered a GDE or not. Butte County staff will review and confirm. Both maps should be consistent since they are derived from the same data source.
- J. Brobeck (environmental rep) would like further information on the location and intervals of well screening for the representative monitoring wells, which seems like a data gap for the urban forest areas.

SHAC Vote on approach and framework to address data gaps

<b>Vote</b>	<b>SHAC Members</b>
In support	G. Barber, S. Lewis, S. Goepf, C. Madden, G. Cole, A. Dawson, G. Sohnrey, J. Brobeck, B. Smith,
Uncertain	C. Chastain

25



1 *Public Comment:*

- 2 • A member of the public requested that Butte County include addressing the data gaps  
3 above mentioned in the general plan update.

4  
5 *d. Water Quality SMC (3:12:00)*  
6

<b>Definition</b>	An Undesirable Result is experienced if groundwater pumping compromises the long-term viability of rural areas and small communities, the agricultural economic base of the region, and environmental uses for suitable habitat.
<b>Identification</b>	Two RMS wells exceed their MT for two consecutive non-dry years.
<b>Minimum Thresholds</b>	The upper limit of the Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (1,600 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ) for specific conductance based on the State Secondary Drinking Water Standards.
<b>Measurable Objectives</b>	The recommended Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (900 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ) based on State Secondary Drinking Water Standards

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8 *SHAC Comments & Recommendations on Water Quality SMC*

- 9 • SHAC members would like to make sure the SMC consistently refer to the sustainability  
10 goal, removing the word “small” from the definition.
- 11 • G. Barber (CalWater) highlighted the need to mention water contamination plumes and  
12 the movement of those plumes through groundwater pumping in the plan. P. Gosselin  
13 (Butte County) shared that those plumes are incorporated in the Basin Setting Chapter.
- 14 • B. Smith (business representative) echoed the need to emphasize the need to monitor  
15 the movement of existing plumes in the GSP.
- 16 • J. Brobeck (environmental rep) asked whether there are agencies monitoring the plumes.  
17 G. Barber (CalWater) shared they work with the Department of Toxic Substance Control  
18 (DTSC) and other agencies to monitor and clean existing plumes.
- 19 • S. Lewis (ag representative) would like to highlight the contamination by the City of Chico.  
20 She would like to continue this conversation as part of the PMA discussion and consider  
21 shifting the City of Chico to surface water, in her perspective, could solve the issue. G.  
22 Barber (CalWater) clarified CalWater operations help clean up existing plumes.
- 23 • G. Cole (ag representative) asked whether the water quality wells selected represent  
24 domestic water wells. C. Buck (Butte County) shared that the goal for the monitoring wells  
25 is to be able to trace potential upwelling of saline water. Further, G. Cole highlighted  
26 concern with “non-dry years.”

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28 *SHAC Vote on approach to Water Quality SMC*  
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<b>Vote</b>	<b>SHAC Members</b>
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In support G. Barber, S. Lewis, S. Goepf, C. Madden, G. Cole, A. Dawson, G. Sohnrey, J. Brobeck, B. Smith, C. Chastain

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*Public Comment*

- A member of the public asked about monitoring the movement of existing plumes, which are monitored by DTSC.

*e. Groundwater Storage and Land Subsidence SMC (3:29:00)*

	<b>Groundwater Storage SMC</b>	<b>Land Subsidence SMC</b>
<b>Definition</b>	An Undesirable Result is experienced if sustained groundwater storage volumes are insufficient to support rural areas and small communities, the agricultural economic base of the region, and environmental uses for suitable habitat.	An Undesirable Result is experienced if groundwater pumping leads to changes in the ground surface elevation severe enough to disrupt critical infrastructure, development of projects that enhance the viability of rural areas, small communities, and the agricultural economic base of the region.
<b>Identification</b>	Two RMS wells reach their MT for two consecutive non-dry year-types.	Occurs when two RMS wells reach their MT for two consecutive non-dry year-types.
<b>Minimum Thresholds</b>	Groundwater Level MTs are used by proxy	Groundwater Level MTs are used by proxy
<b>Measurable Objectives</b>	The groundwater level based on the groundwater trend line for the dry periods (since 2000) of observed short-term climatic cycles extended to 2030.	The groundwater level based on the groundwater trend line for the dry periods (since 2000) of observed short-term climatic cycles extended to 2030.

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*SHAC Comments & Recommendations on Land Subsidence and Groundwater Storage*

- G. Sohnrey (ag representative) would like to remove the words “severe enough to disrupt critical infrastructure.” In his perspective, any land subsidence in the subbasin is an issue.

*Public Comment*

- A member of the public echoed concerns with land subsidence and called for close monitoring to understand causes.

*Next Steps*

The SHAC will meet again via video conference on July 20, 2021, from 9:00-12:30.



1 **Participants**

Participant	Representation/Affiliation	Present
<b>Vina Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SHAC) Members</b>		
Anne Dawson	Domestic well user	Y
Bruce Smith	Business representative	Y
Cheri Chastain	CSU Chico	Y
Christopher Madden	Butte College	Y
Gary Cole	Agricultural well user	Y
George Barber	California Water Service	Y
Greg Sohnrey	Agricultural well user	Y
James Brobeck	Environmental representative	Y
Sam Goepp	Domestic well user	Y
Samantha Lewis	Agricultural well user	Y
<b>Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Member Agency Representatives</b>		
Christina Buck	Butte County	Y
Paul Gosselin	Butte County	Y
Kelly Peterson	Butte County	Y
Linda Herman	City of Chico	Y
Erik Gustafson	City of Chico	Y
Jeff Carter	Durham Irrigation District	Y
Kamie Loeser	Durham Irrigation District	Y
Colin Klinesteker	Mechoopda Indian Tribe	Y
Darren Rice	Rock Creek Reclamation District GSA	Y
<b>Technical Consultants</b>		
Joe Turner	Geosyntec	Y
Amer Hussain	Geosyntec	Y
Kristin Reardon	Geosyntec	Y
<b>Other Representatives</b>		
Debbie Spangler	CA Department of Water Resources	Y
<b>Facilitator</b>		
Tania Carlone	Consensus Building Institute	Y
Stephanie Horii	Consensus Building Institute	Y

2 Approximately five members of the public attended the meeting.

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## DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

1416 NINTH STREET, P.O. BOX 942836  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94236-0001  
(916) 653-5791



June 3, 2021

Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency  
ATTN: Chair Ann Schwab  
308 Nelson Avenue  
Oroville, CA 95965

Dear Chair Schwab,

On behalf of Governor Newsom, I first want to thank you for your dedicated leadership in your community during these challenging times. The COVID-19 pandemic is a continuing and unprecedented global crisis and it has impacted our communities across California in many ways. I appreciate your attention to these impacts weighing on your community.

Your recent letter(s) submitted to the Governor requests an extension of the deadline for submitting your groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and highlights your concerns over your ability to ensure robust public outreach and stakeholder engagement with the limitations on public interaction resulting from COVID-19. We recognize the limitations all state and local entities have experienced with holding meetings virtually, especially in rural and mountainous areas where internet connectivity is less available and reliable. Despite these COVID-19 challenges, public agencies, such as yours, are continuing to provide their best efforts to ensure public engagement and oversight of activities in the public's interest.

With this in mind, a suspension or change to the submittal deadline cannot be granted. The GSP submittal process and deadline is in the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which cannot be changed without an amendment to the law and approval by the Legislature. If a local agency does not submit a GSP by the statutory deadline, DWR is required to refer the basin to the State Water Board for intervention.

The Administration is committed to the central tenant of SGMA which is local control. To facilitate such, SGMA establishes a timeframe of 20 years for basins to achieve their sustainability goals and provides an outcome-based process for SGMA implementation to occur. Through this outcome-based process, local agencies have an opportunity to improve plans and continue public outreach over time. A number of DWR and other state agency assistance programs have been established to help with public outreach and to assist groundwater managers in maintaining local control throughout GSP development and implementation.

DWR values the working partnership with water managers in your basin, which have been established through continued dialogue and dedicated planning and financial assistance (summarized in Attachment A) to support your plan development and facilitate engagement among stakeholders. If you find your local outreach efforts lacking, even with this assistance and the efforts we have collectively undertaken, I encourage you to review the attached summary of state assistance (Attachment B) and reach out to my staff (identified below) so you can use all applicable programs that will aid in your local SGMA efforts.

For these reasons, I encourage you to continue working towards submitting your GSP by the statutory deadline. Within that plan, you may identify any data gaps, including how stakeholder engagement has been impacted by COVID-19, and document the next steps that will be taken to fill those gaps. As locals continue to conduct engagement efforts, GSAs can amend their plans at any time to reflect stakeholder input. This documentation in the GSP will allow DWR to understand your planning efforts and complete the

evaluation of your plan. Given this information, DWR will be able to align future assistance to continue to support locals in implementing their GSP and filling the specified data gaps.

Please contact Acting Deputy Director Steven Springhorn ([Steven.Springhorn@water.ca.gov](mailto:Steven.Springhorn@water.ca.gov)) or DWR's Northern Region Office Chief Teresa Connor ([Teresa.Connor@water.ca.gov](mailto:Teresa.Connor@water.ca.gov)) if you have any additional questions, or if you need help in navigating moving forward.

Sincerely,



Karla A. Nemeth

cc:

The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California

The Honorable Jim Nielsen, California State Senate

The Honorable James Gallagher, California State Assembly

Christine Hironaka, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor

Angela Pontes, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor

Sidd Nag, Legislative Advocate, Rural County Representatives of California

Catherine Freeman, Legislative Representative, California State Association of Counties

Paul Gosselin, Water and Resource Conservation Director, Butte County

Enclosure:

Attachment A: Summary Table of DWR Facilitation and Grant Funding Support

Attachment B: Summary of Statewide SGMA Assistance (June 2021)

Attachment A:

Summary Table of DWR Facilitation and Grant Funding Support				
Subbasin	Funding Recipient	DWR Facilitation Funding	DWR Planning Funding	Total DWR Funding Support
Vina Subbasin, Butte Subbasin, Wyandotte Creek Subbasin	Butte County	\$173,000	\$1,498,800	\$1,725,800
Vina Subbasin	Vina GSA	\$54,000	--	
Big Valley Basin	County of Modoc GSA	\$82,000	\$987,660	\$2,068,845
	Lassen County	--	\$999,185	
Colusa Subbasin	Colusa County	\$112,000	--	\$2,171,600
	Colusa Groundwater Authority	\$60,000	\$1,999,600	

Attachment B:

## Summary of Statewide SGMA Assistance (As of June 2021)

The State is committed to supporting locals to develop and implement their Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). In addition to the two agencies (Department of Water Resources and State Water Resources Control Board) with defined roles in SGMA, there are other State agencies with existing programs that support local groundwater management. The following summarizes that assistance.

### Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Since 2015 DWR has provided planning, technical, and financial assistance to support locals with SGMA implementation.

#### Planning Assistance

- Basin Points of Contact/Regional Coordinators: Each of the 94 high- and medium- priority basins are assigned a Point of Contact (POC) and a Regional Coordinator (RC) from DWR Region Offices. POCs and RCs assist Ground Sustainability Agencies and stakeholders in the basin to connect with DWR and locate resources for assistance. The following links contain each basin's POC and their respective contact information:
  - [Northern Region](#) – RC: Pat Vellines ([Patricia.Vellines@water.ca.gov](mailto:Patricia.Vellines@water.ca.gov))
  - [North Central Region](#) – RC: Chelsea Spier ([Chelsea.Spier@water.ca.gov](mailto:Chelsea.Spier@water.ca.gov))
  - [South Central Region](#) – RC: Amanda Peisch-Derby ([Amanda.Peisch@water.ca.gov](mailto:Amanda.Peisch@water.ca.gov))
  - [Southern Region](#) – RC: Brian Moniz ([Brian.Moniz@water.ca.gov](mailto:Brian.Moniz@water.ca.gov))
- Facilitation Support Services (FSS): Provides professional facilitators to help Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) foster discussions among diverse water management interest groups.
  - GSAs or other groups coordinating with the GSAs to develop GSPs, are eligible to apply on a continuous basis using the following link:  
<https://sgma.gsa.water.ca.gov/SGMPUB/Facilitation/2020/FSSApp2020.aspx>
- Written Translation Services (WTS): Available to help GSAs, or other groups assisting in local SGMA implementation efforts, to communicate the groundwater planning activities with their non-English speaking constituents.
  - GSAs or other groups coordinating with the GSAs to develop GSPs, are eligible to apply on a continuous basis using the following link:  
<https://sgma.gsa.water.ca.gov/SGMPUB/Translation/TranslationServiceRequest.aspx>

#### Technical Assistance

- Technical Support Services (TSS): Provides DWR technical staff and drilling and other contractors to assist GSAs with the installation of dedicated groundwater monitoring wells and other monitoring stations to fill data gaps identified in the basins.
  - For more information or help starting a TSS application, contact DWR's Region Coordinators at [sgmp\\_rc@water.ca.gov](mailto:sgmp_rc@water.ca.gov)
- Data and Tools: Statewide datasets and models have been developed to assist GSAs and the public by providing information to help inform the development of GSP elements. The following datasets and tools have been made available:

- Eight new online interactive maps for the public to view and download SGMA datasets: groundwater levels, wells, environmental, land use, and subsidence data
- A water resources management and planning model that simulates groundwater, surface water, stream-groundwater interaction (C2VSim-FG)
- <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Data-and-Tools>
- Guidance and Education:
  - [Six Best Management Practices \(BMPs\) and five Guidance Documents](#) to provide clarification, guidance, and examples to help GSAs develop elements of a GSP.
  - [California's Groundwater Update](#): State's official publication on the occurrence and nature of groundwater in California.

### Financial Assistance

- Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Grant Programs:
  - SGM Planning Grant Program: provides funds to develop and implement sustainable groundwater planning and projects. Approximately \$150 million (M) has been awarded to date through three rounds of solicitations. Funding has been provided by Proposition 1 and Proposition 68.
  - SGM Implementation Grant Program: designed to fund projects and programs that will assist GSAs implement their GSPs. Proposition 68 authorized ~\$100M for this new program.
    - The FY 20/21 Budget directed the acceleration of \$26M for the critically overdrafted (COD) basins responsible for implementing GSPs or Alternatives to a GSP. Final awards for this first round were announced April 23, 2021.
    - The second round for the remaining funds will begin in early 2022.
- Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Implementation Grant Program: provides funding for projects and programs that implement an IRWM Plan, including groundwater management projects. Approximately \$220M of Proposition 1 funding has been awarded in 2019/2020.
  - Another \$180M in Proposition 1 funds will be available in 2021-2022 timeframe.
- Drainage Reuse Grant Program: provides funds to local public agencies, including public universities, in the state of California for research and/or programs that resolve agricultural subsurface drainage water issues. The program is funded by Proposition 204, through the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), who has entered into a memorandum of understanding to transfer the funds, as well as the responsibility for implementing the programs required by the legislation, to DWR. Approximately \$1.1M was awarded in 2020.

### State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board)

SGMA requires the State Water Board protect basins that are not managed sustainably through a process called State Intervention. In addition to this responsibility, the State Water Board has initiated assistance that will support locals with SGMA implementation. Assistance has been organized and distributed by the following categories:

#### Planning Assistance

- Recharge Permitting Options: Capturing surface water to artificially recharge groundwater aquifers is a potential method for improving groundwater basin conditions. To help support this method, the Division of Water Rights has developed a streamlined permitting process for diversions of water from high flow events to underground storage.

- Streamlining is primarily achieved through identifying eligibility criteria and a simplified water availability analysis targeting diversion of high flow events during winter.
- Temporary water right permits for groundwater recharge may be appropriate for short-term projects where an urgent need exists.
- New legislation through AB 658 gave the State Water Board a new 5-year temporary permitting option, also authorizing a 5-year temporary change petition.

#### Technical Assistance

- [Water Availability Tool](#): State Water Board staff has developed an interactive Fully Appropriated Stream Systems (FASS) GIS Web Map, which provides users with information on fully appropriated stream systems, including seasonal limitations, relevant court references, and Board decisions/orders.
  - The interactive map can be accessed online and includes an overview and quick reference guide.
  - State and Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers are included as separate layers in the web map, as those systems also have limitations on new water right applications.

#### Financial Assistance

- [Groundwater Grant Program](#): will administer a total of \$800M to prevent and cleanup contamination of groundwater that serves (or has served) as a source of drinking water. The funds are available as planning grants and construction grants.
  - Round 3 Solicitation is expected to open in Summer 2021.
- [Water Recycling Funding Program \(WRFP\)](#): promotes the beneficial use of treated municipal wastewater to augment fresh water supplies in California, by providing technical and financial assistance to agencies and other stakeholders in support of water recycling projects and research. The funds are available as planning grants and construction grants.
- [Clean Water State Revolving Fund \(CWSRF\) Program](#): provides low-interest loans to public agencies for planning, design, and construction of water recycling projects.
- [Small Community Funding](#): is available to help small DACs, providing drinking water service to less than 10,000 people or wastewater service to less than 20,000 people, with: technical assistance needs, interim water supplies, and implement eligible drinking water or wastewater capital improvement projects. The funds are available as planning grants and construction grants.
- [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund \(DWRSF\) program](#): assists public water systems in financing the cost of drinking water infrastructure projects needed to achieve or maintain compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act requirements. The funds are available as planning grants and construction grants.
- [Groundwater Treatment and Remediation Grant Program](#): will administer \$74M in grants from Proposition 68 for treatment and remediation activities that prevent or reduce the contamination of groundwater that serves as a source of drinking water.

### Department of Conservation (DOC)

The DOC offers financial incentive programs to further California's goals to conserve agricultural lands, restore and manage watersheds, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- [2020 Sustainable Groundwater Management Watershed Coordinator \(SGMA\) Grant Program](#): awards funding for watershed coordinators that will build broad coalitions of

government, stakeholders, and communities to develop plans and projects to improve watershed health and meet California's groundwater sustainability goals. Awarded \$1.5M in January 2021.

- [Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation \(SALC\) Program](#): SALC is a component of the SGC's Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program. SALC complements investments made in urban areas with the purchase of agricultural conservation easements, development of agricultural land strategy plans, and other mechanisms that result in GHG reductions and a more resilient agricultural sector.
  - Draft Guidelines for Round 7 were released February 19, 2021

## Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)

CDFA supports agricultural production by incentivizing practices resulting in a net benefit for the environment through innovation, efficient management and science.

- [State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program \(SWEEP\)](#): provides grant funding to implement irrigation systems that reduce greenhouse gases and save water on California agricultural operations. Eligible system components include (among others) soil moisture monitoring, drip systems, switching to low pressure irrigation systems, pump retrofits, variable frequency drives and installation of renewable energy to reduce on-farm water use and energy. Approximately, \$81.1M has been awarded to date to nearly 835 projects, covering over 137,000 acres. CDFA estimates that over 81,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be reduced annually.
- [Healthy Soils Program \(HSP\)](#): consists of two components: the HSP Incentives Program and the HSP Demonstration Projects.
  - HSP Incentives Program provides financial assistance for implementation of conservation management that improve soil health, sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The 2020 HSP Incentives Program selected 324 projects for award, requesting almost a total of \$22M.
  - HSP Demonstration Projects showcase California farmers and rancher's implementation of HSP practices. The 2020 HSP Demonstration Projects selected 20 projects for award, requesting a total of over \$2.9M.