



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 4, 2026

TO: Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board

FROM: Christina Buck, Assistant Director

RE: Update on Floodwater Recharge Pilot under Water Code Section 1242.1

During February 2026, Butte County's Department of Water and Resource Conservation (Department) in coordination with the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), implemented a small pilot project to test the diversion of high stormwater flows for groundwater recharge under California Water Code Section 1242.1. This recently enacted statute allows local public agencies to temporarily divert floodwater for groundwater recharge when flooding is imminent, providing the dual benefits of reducing flood risk and improving groundwater supplies. The pilot project was developed as part of the Vina GSA's SGM Program grant-funded groundwater recharge feasibility work being implemented by the Department. This work also supports implementation of the Butte County Recharge Action Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2024.

[February 2026 Recharge Pilot](#)

The pilot diversion was conducted along Comanche Creek on agricultural land adjacent to the creek. When storm forecasts and local flood conditions indicated that flooding of nearby roadways was likely, the Vina GSA issued public notices and began temporary diversions using screened pumps to apply water to nearby farmland for infiltration and recharge. Notices are posted here: <https://www.vinagsa.org/cwc-1242-1-floodwater-recharge-program>

Two short diversion events occurred during late February 2026 in response to storm conditions. The first diversion began on February 20 and operated for approximately 24 hours before being shut down once flood conditions subsided. A second diversion event began on February 25 following additional storms that caused localized flooding and closure of River Road, and diversions ceased on February 27 after river levels and roadway conditions improved.

This pilot project was intentionally small and experimental, designed to test operational procedures, evaluate site conditions, and collect information about infiltration rates and practical challenges associated with diverting sediment-laden floodwater for recharge. Results from the pilot diversions are currently being analyzed. Findings will be shared in a future project newsletter and documented in detail in the final report for the County's groundwater recharge feasibility project.

[Attachments:](#)

Water Quality Considerations document and Public Notices of diversions and ceased diversions.

Recharge Infiltration Testing and Groundwater Quality Impact Considerations

As part of the initial assessment of properties for potential recharge projects, California's GeoTracker webpage, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>, was reviewed for potential groundwater plumes within the area. For the specific recharge site adjacent to Comanche Creek, two nearby plume sites were identified: the Victor Industries 20th Street Site and the Chico Southwest Plume. Both of these sites are overseen by the California Department of Toxic Substances (DTSC) and more detailed information is provided on their webpage ENVIROSTAR, <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>. The most recent report for both sites providing information regarding groundwater impacts was reviewed.

For the Victor Industries site, the most recent report was the March 2024 Semi-Annual Groundwater Monitoring Report dated June 2024 and prepared by AECOM. For the Chico Southwest Plume, the most recent report is the Second Half 2024 Groundwater Monitoring Report dated February 2025 also prepared by AECOM. Recharge water for the pilot test will enter the first encountered groundwater zone. Review of the above reports indicate that water quality impacts to the first groundwater zone at the plume sites are north of Comanche Creek and do not go beneath our project site.

To further assess potential impacts, a temporary shallow monitoring well, designated MW-1, was installed in the pilot test area and equipped with a pressure transducer to record water levels at 15-minute intervals. A stilling well was also placed in Comanche Creek adjacent to the site to record water levels within the creek at the same time interval. Figure 1 shows the hydrographs for these wells recorded between December 5, 2025, and January 7, 2026. As seen on this figure, stage records within Comanche Creek tracks in step with MW-01 over the overlapping period; the time series are effectively 1:1 correlated (hourly correlation ≈ 1.0), indicating direct hydraulic connectivity between MW-01 and the creek (i.e., the well responds to creek stage rather than to distant groundwater conditions). As such, these data strongly suggest that Comanche Creek functions as a hydraulic boundary, and that recharge water applied on the south side of the creek during the pilot test is unlikely to migrate to the north side where the identified plume impacts are located. This preliminary finding will be further evaluated as part of the pilot project's final report.

A groundwater sample was also collected from the monitoring well in January 2026 and submitted for analysis of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that includes the constituents reported for the Victor Industries and Chico Southwest Plume. No VOCs were reported for this water sample.

This pilot diversion is experimental in nature, designed to establish infiltration rates, evaluate the effectiveness of reverse tile drain infrastructure for recharge, and assess challenges associated with sediment-laden flood water. The estimated volume of water to be diverted during this event is approximately 2.2 acre-feet over a 24-hour period, which is small relative to the natural recharge

occurring across the area from the forecasted precipitation event. Project feasibility analysis will more thoroughly evaluate the proximity of the identified plumes and determine whether their presence presents a constraint on future larger scale recharge operations at this site, and if so, what additional investigation would be required.

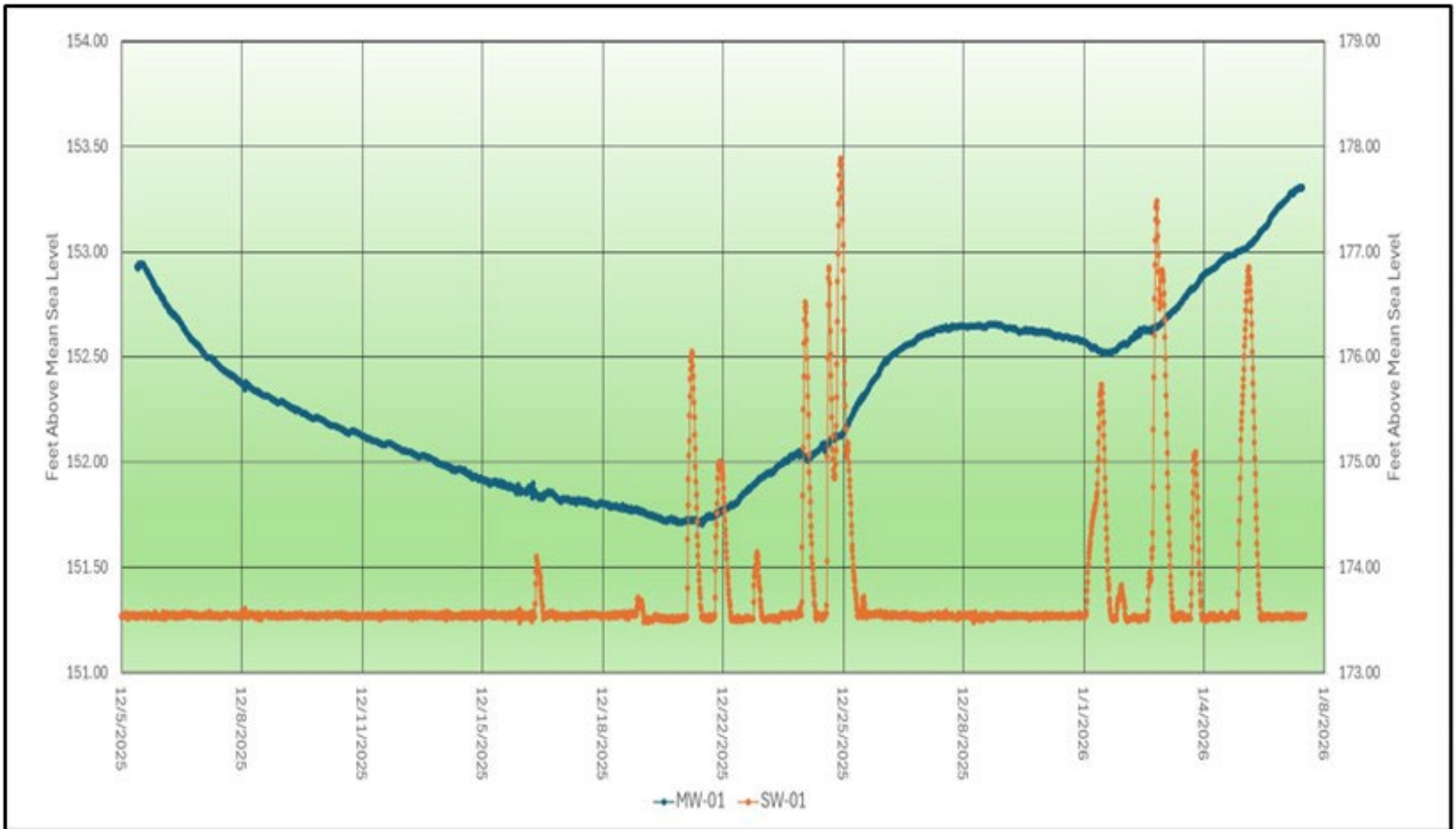


Figure 1. Hydrograph for monitoring well MW-1 and stilling well SW-01. Reported mean sea level elevations are approximate.



Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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February 19, 2026

NOTICE

DIVERSIONS FOR GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AND FLOOD MANAGEMENT

On or before February 20, 2026, the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) may begin diversions from Comanche Creek at the location depicted in Figure 1, for a groundwater recharge pilot project in accordance with California Water Code section 1242.1 (CWC 1242.1).

CWC 1242.1 allows for the diversion of flood water for groundwater recharge while also reducing flood risks and impacts. Furthermore, California Governor's Executive Order N-16-25 encourages local agencies to provide these dual benefits of improved groundwater levels and flood management in specified counties, including Butte County. The Vina GSA is issuing this notice in its capacity as a local public agency, under authority of the State of California, in coordination and communication with Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation and other County departments, such as Public Works and Butte County Emergency Management. Implementation of this pilot recharge project using floodflows is consistent with Action 1.1 described in the Butte County Recharge Action Plan, adopted by the Butte County Board of Supervisors in 2024.

Ord Ferry Road and River Road are downstream of the identified diversion location and are prone to road closures and flood conditions when there is at least 2 inches of rain in the 5-day forecast at the California Nevada River Forecast Center (CNRFC) [ORFC1 gage](#). An analysis of historic records of flooding downstream of the diversion point on Comanche Creek at Ord Ferry and River Road correlated with precipitation forecasts from CNRFC, determined that when at least 2-inches of precipitation falls over a 5-day period flooding is likely imminent. The current 5-day forecast shows 2.4 inches of rain at the CNRFC ORFC1 gage between February 18, 2026 and February 23, 2026. Because this threshold has been met, the Vina GSA has determined that flooding is likely imminent.

This floodflow diversion is expected to start shortly after 12:00 pm on February 20, 2026 and end after 24 hours or when observed flooding of roadways subsides. The Vina GSA will communicate the cessation of diversions via a notice posted to its website. The Vina GSA will divert floodflows utilizing temporary pumps, equipped with screens as required by CWC 1242.1(d), to adjacent farmland in the identified pilot area, where it will be applied for the purpose of groundwater recharge. Diverted water will be applied only to land that complies with the restrictions of CWC 1242.1(b), including actively cultivated agricultural fields.

Consistent with CWC 1242.1(f), no water right is claimed based on this diversion and recharge. Diverted water benefits the net groundwater balance of the Vina Subbasin.

In accordance with CWC 1242.1(g), the Vina GSA will file a Notice, Preliminary Report, and Final Report with the State Water Resources Control Board at FloodDiversion@waterboards.ca.gov, documenting the diversion including GPS coordinates, dates, maps, and estimated acre-feet diverted.

Questions regarding this notice may be directed to the Vina GSA at VinaGSA@gmail.com or (530) 552-3593.

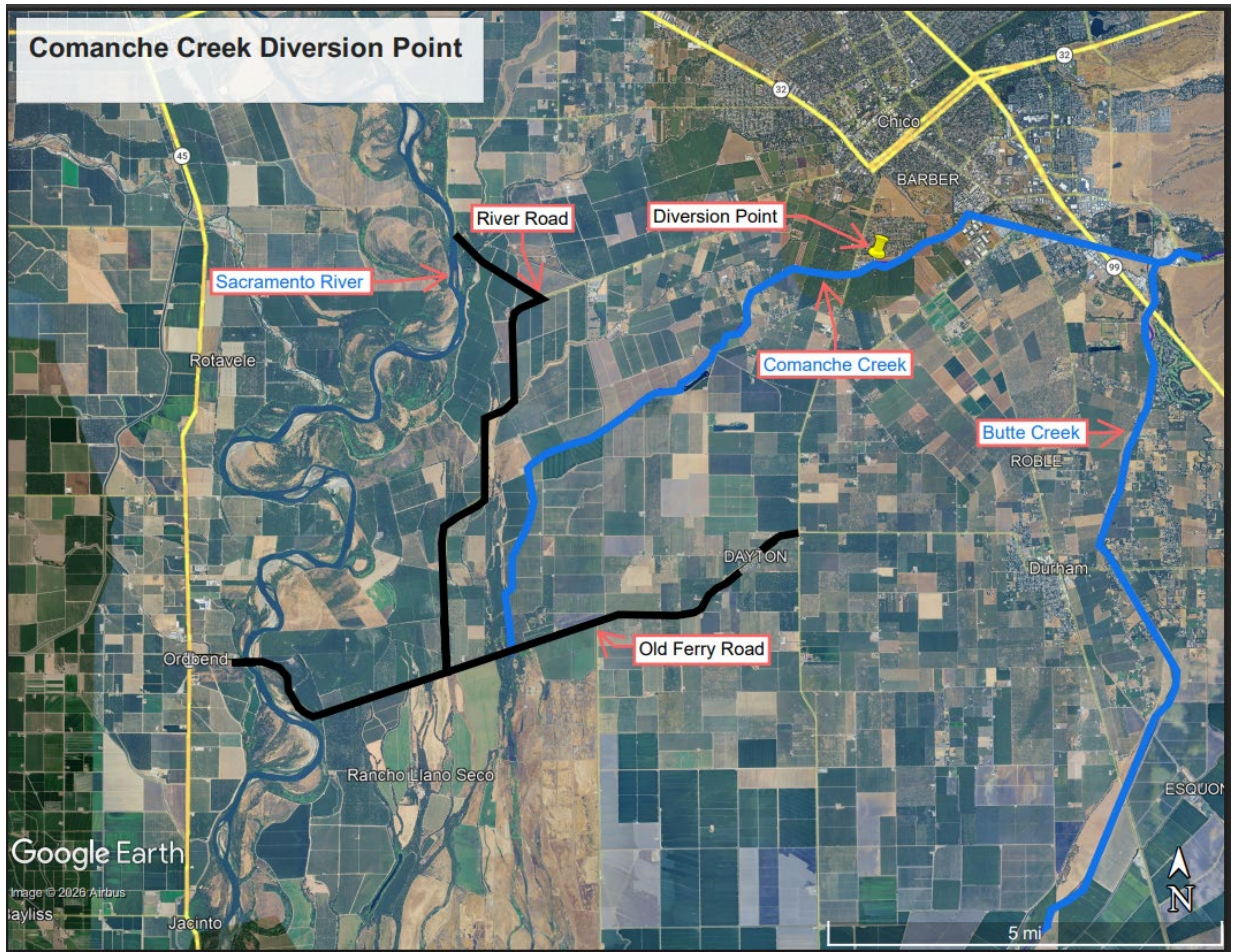


Figure 1: Map of Comanche Creek Pilot Project Area — showing point of diversion, Ord Ferry Road, River Road, and Comanche Creek



Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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February 23, 2026

NOTICE

DIVERSIONS FOR GROUNDWATER RECHARGE CEASED

Diversions from Comanche Creek by the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for a California Water Code section 1242.1 (CWC 1242.1) groundwater recharge project that also reduces flood risk, have ceased as of February 21, 2026 at approximately 12:00 pm.

The Vina GSA began diversions from Comanche Creek at the location depicted in Figure 1, for a small groundwater recharge pilot project in accordance with CWC 1242.1 on February 20, 2026 at approximately 12:00 pm. Between February 18, 2026 and February 23, 2026 the 5-day forecast showed 2.4 inches of rain at the California Nevada River Forecast Center (CNRFC) [ORFC1 gage](#), indicating that flooding was likely imminent. After 24 hours of diversion and with reduced precipitation forecasts, the Vina GSA determined flooding was no longer imminent and therefore ceased diversions.

Questions regarding this notice may be directed to the Vina GSA at VinaGSA@gmail.com or (530) 552-3593.

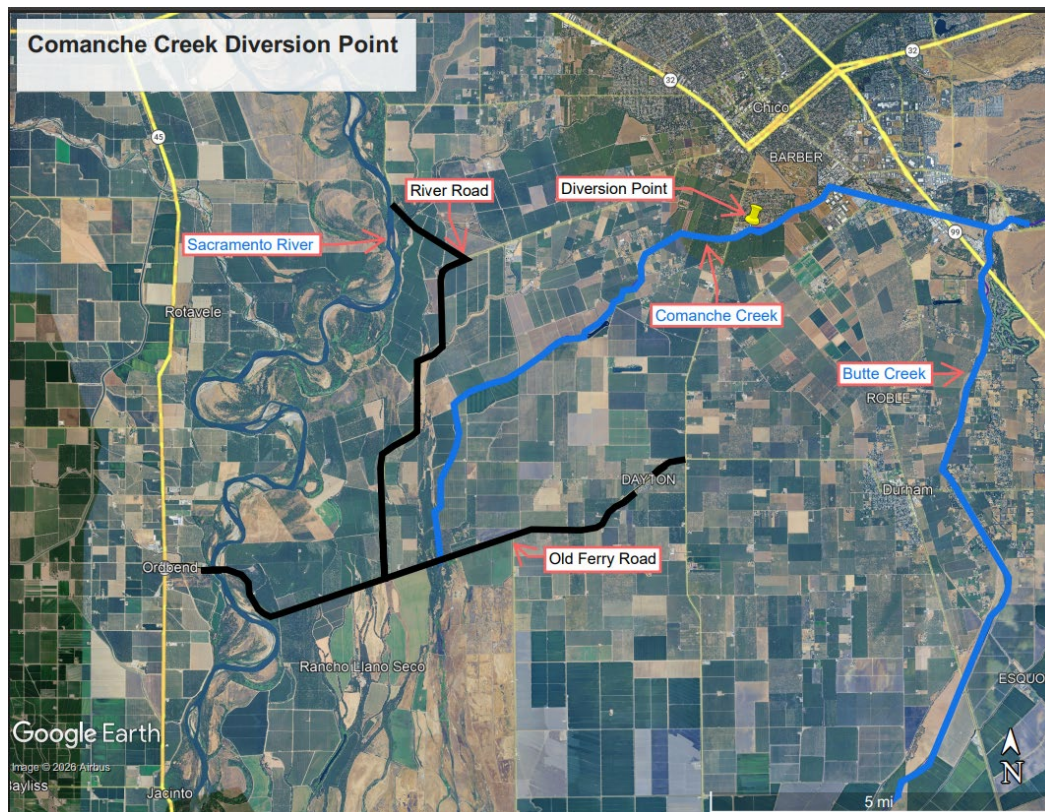


Figure 1: Map of Comanche Creek Pilot Project Area — showing point of diversion, Ord Ferry Road, River Road, and Comanche Creek



Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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February 25, 2026

NOTICE

DIVERSIONS FOR GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AND FLOOD MANAGEMENT

On February 25, 2026, the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) began diversions from Comanche Creek at the location depicted in Figure 1, for a groundwater recharge pilot project in accordance with California Water Code section 1242.1 (CWC 1242.1).

CWC 1242.1 allows for the diversion of flood water for groundwater recharge while also reducing flood risks and impacts. Furthermore, California Governor's Executive Order N-16-25 encourages local agencies to provide these dual benefits of improved groundwater levels and flood management in specified counties, including Butte County. The Vina GSA is issuing this notice in its capacity as a local public agency, under authority of the State of California, in coordination and communication with Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation and other County departments, such as Public Works and Butte County Emergency Management. Implementation of this pilot recharge project using floodflows is consistent with Action 1.1 described in the Butte County Recharge Action Plan, adopted by the Butte County Board of Supervisors in 2024.

River Road and Seven Mile Lane are downstream of the identified diversion location. On February 25, 2026 at 9:45 AM, River Road was closed due to flooding and Butte County Public Works issued a warning for unpredictable conditions on Seven Mile Lane, following several days of precipitation and high Sacramento River flows. Additionally, the California Nevada River Forecast Center (CNRFC) [ORFC1 gage](#) on the Sacramento River, downstream of Comanche Creek, is forecasted to reach 110 feet on February 25, 2026 and 114 feet on February 26, 2026. This location on the Sacramento River has an established "Action/Monitor" stage at 110 feet and "Minor Flooding" at 114 feet. At these levels the Sacramento River is known to flood Ord Ferry Road, River Road, and neighboring properties.

This floodflow diversion began at approximately 10:00 am on February 25, 2026 and will end after 24 hours or when observed flooding of roadways subsides. The Vina GSA will communicate the cessation of diversions via a notice posted to its website. The Vina GSA will divert floodflows utilizing temporary pumps, equipped with screens as required by CWC 1242.1(d), to adjacent farmland in the identified pilot area, where it will be applied for the purpose of groundwater recharge. Diverted water will be applied only to land that complies with the restrictions of CWC 1242.1(b), including actively cultivated agricultural fields.

Consistent with CWC 1242.1(f), no water right is claimed based on this diversion and recharge. Diverted water benefits the net groundwater balance of the Vina Subbasin.

In accordance with CWC 1242.1(g), the Vina GSA will file a Notice, Preliminary Report, and Final Report with the State Water Resources Control Board at FloodDiversion@waterboards.ca.gov, documenting the diversion including GPS coordinates, dates, maps, and estimated acre-feet diverted.

Questions regarding this notice may be directed to the Vina GSA at VinaGSA@gmail.com or (530) 552-3593.

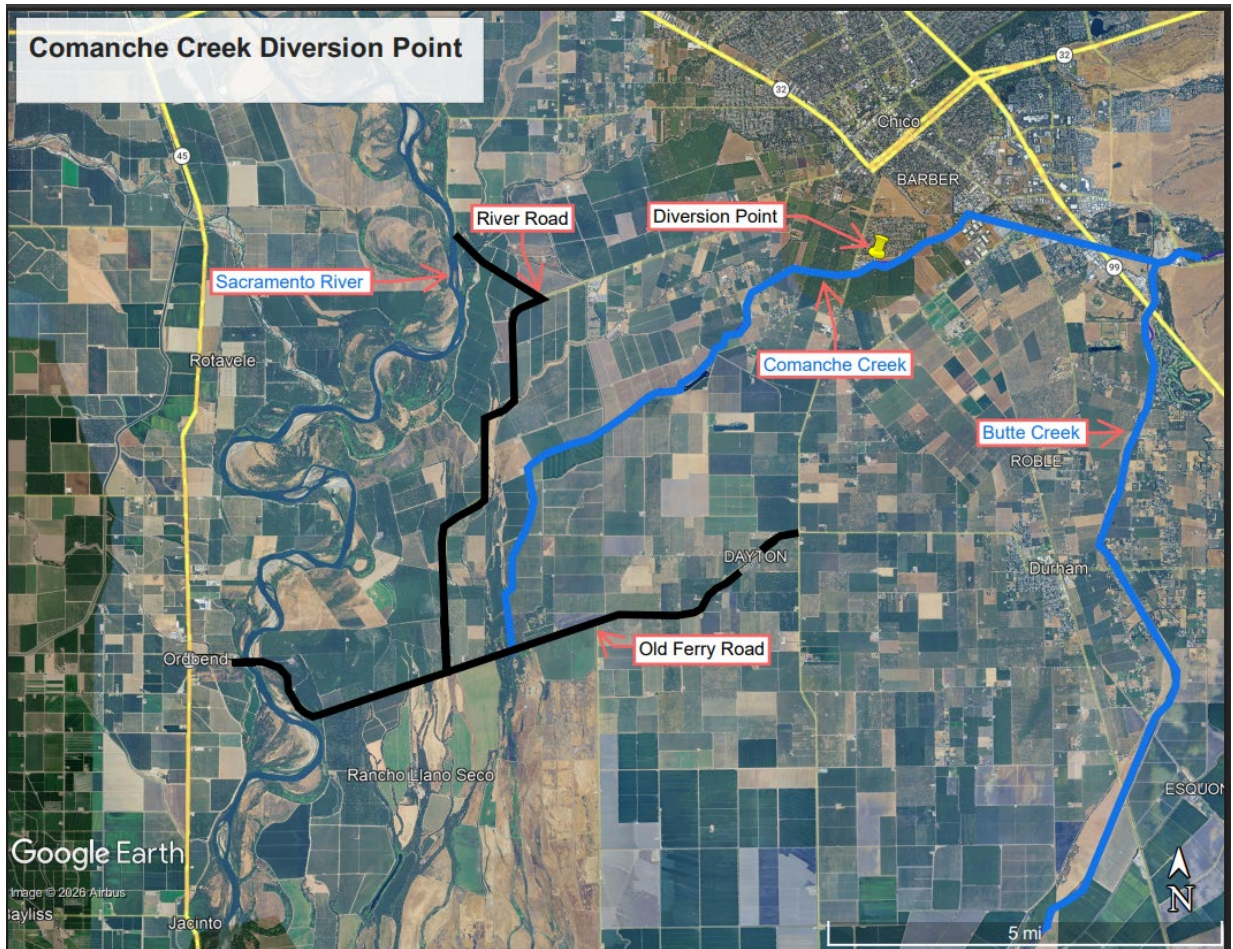


Figure 1: Map of Comanche Creek Pilot Project Area — showing point of diversion, Ord Ferry Road, River Road, and Comanche Creek



Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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February 27, 2026

NOTICE

DIVERSIONS FOR GROUNDWATER RECHARGE CEASED

Diversions from Comanche Creek by the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for a California Water Code section 1242.1 (CWC 1242.1) groundwater recharge project that also reduces flood risk, have ceased as of February 27, 2026 at approximately 10:35 am.

The Vina GSA began diversions from Comanche Creek at the location depicted in Figure 1, for a small groundwater recharge pilot project in accordance with CWC 1242.1 on February 25, 2026 at approximately 2:00 pm. River Road and Seven Mile Lane are downstream of the identified diversion location. On February 25, 2026 at 9:45 AM, River Road was closed due to flooding and Butte County Public Works issued a warning for unpredictable conditions on Seven Mile Lane, following several days of precipitation and high Sacramento River flows. Additionally, the California Nevada River Forecast Center (CNRFC) [ORFC1 gage](#) on the Sacramento River, downstream of Comanche Creek, was forecasted to reach 110 feet on February 25, 2026 and 114 feet on February 26, 2026. This location on the Sacramento River has an established “Action/Monitor” stage at 110 feet and “Minor Flooding” at 114 feet. At these levels the Sacramento River is known to flood Ord Ferry Road, River Road, and neighboring properties. At this time, Sacramento River and Comanche Creek levels have subsided and flooding on River Road has subsided. As a result, the Vina GSA has ceased diversions.

Questions regarding this notice may be directed to the Vina GSA at VinaGSA@gmail.com or (530) 552-3593.

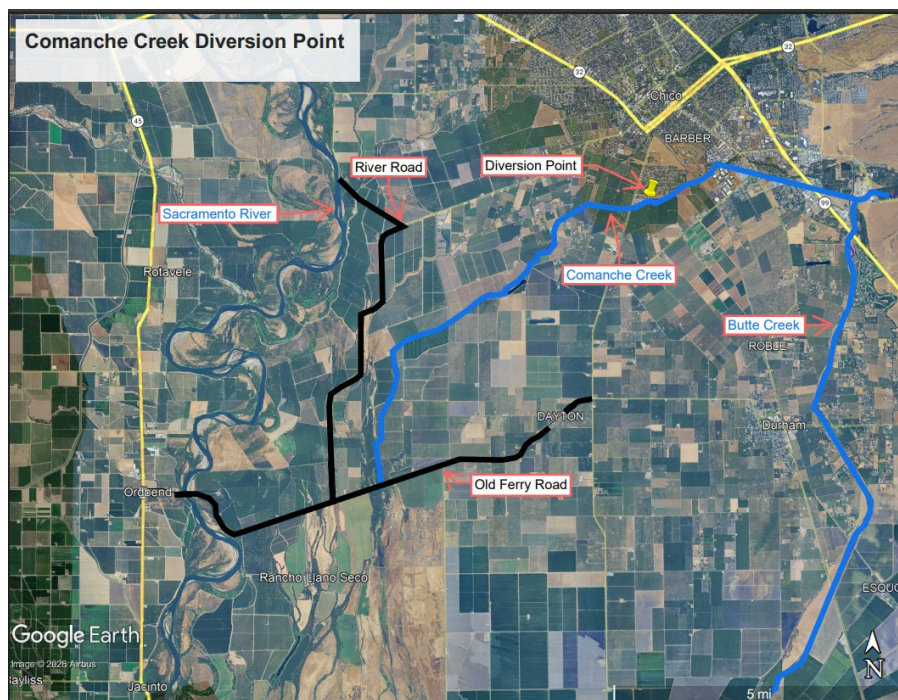


Figure 1: Map of Comanche Creek Pilot Project Area — showing point of diversion, Ord Ferry Road, River Road, and Comanche Creek