

**California Department of Conservation  
FARMLAND MAPPING AND MONITORING PROGRAM**

**2014 FIELD REPORT**

**COUNTY:** Butte

**FIELD MAPPER(S):** Michael Kisko

**IMAGE DATA USED:**

Source: National Agriculture Imagery Program, USDA
Acquisition date: Summer 2014
Data description: True color mosaic, 1 meter resolution
Coverage gaps: None
Additional imagery used: None

**WRITTEN, DIGITAL & ORAL INFORMATION SOURCES:**

*The following entities and individuals provided information used to conduct 2014 mapping.*

<b>Local Review Comments</b> (submitted by cities, counties, & others on 2012 maps)
City of Chico
<b>Personal Contacts</b>
Robert C. Hill, Interim Agricultural Commissioner Dan Efseaff, Park and Natural Resource Manager for the City of Chico Joe Silveira, Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge
<b>Websites Used for Reference</b>
Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge Wildlife Habitat Objectives: <a href="http://www.sacramentoriver.org/forum/subs/sacon/materials/pres/SRNWR_Wildlife_Habitat_Objectives.pdf">http://www.sacramentoriver.org/forum/subs/sacon/materials/pres/SRNWR_Wildlife_Habitat_Objectives.pdf</a> Google Maps: <a href="http://www.google.com/maps">www.google.com/maps</a>
<b>GIS Data Used for Reference</b>
California City Boundary Layer California Protected Areas Database (2014)

**2012-2014 CHANGE SUMMARY:**

*Changes made during the map update are summarized by type and location. Particular attention is paid to large or unusual changes and their estimated acreages. Please note that land use type, size of land use unit, soil quality, and Farmland of Local Importance*

definition (if any) determines the final Important Farmland (IFL) category. [See definitions at bottom of table.](#)

<b>Conversions to Urban Land</b>	
Irrigated Farmland to Urban Land	3 changes
<p>Conversions from irrigated farmland to Urban Land were due to two additions of solar panels and a couple of new buildings.</p> <p>New solar panels were added adjacent to the Stapleton's packing facility near Gridley (~15 acres) and, also, adjacent to Miners Ranch Storage (~10 acres), east of Oroville. Lastly, new structures were added on former irrigated farmland in the form of a couple of buildings (~10 acres) for Helena Chemical in Nelson.</p>	
Nonirrigated Land Uses and Other Land to Urban Land	35 changes
<p>New homes and apartments as well as increased density of homes and the use of parcel data to identify dense clusters of homes were the primary causes of the urbanization of nonirrigated and Other Land.</p> <p>New homes and buildings were in evidence throughout the Chico area with approximately 110 acres of nonirrigated and Other Land converting to Urban Land with the largest conversion taking place in the North Chico area in the form of new homes in the Sierra Moon development (~35 acres). Meanwhile, new homes and apartments were also added in Oroville (~10 acres), Biggs (~5 acres) and Paradise (~5 acres), along with a new baseball field (~5 acres) in Gridley.</p> <p>Finally, approximately 110 acres of Urban Land was added due to increased density of existing homes and the use of parcel data to facilitate the delineation of dense clusters of homes, especially in heavily vegetated, foothill areas.</p>	
<b>Conversions from Irrigated Farmland aside from urbanization</b>	
Irrigated Farmland to Nonirrigated Land Uses	43 changes
<p>The three primary reasons for the conversion of irrigated farmland and pastureland to nonirrigated land uses were the lack of irrigation of fields for three update cycles, a switch from cultivation of irrigated crops to nonirrigated grain crops over time and the correction of a misidentification.</p> <p>First, the majority of these conversions (29) were simply due to plots of irrigated farmland or pastureland having been fallow for three or more update cycles. The majority of these changes were for 30 acres or less with many of them occurring in the southern end of the county on the Palermo (6), Gridley (5), Honcut (3), Biggs (3) and Chico (3) quads. The largest change of this type occurred on the Llano Seco quad northwest of Doggeland, converting approximately 150 acres.</p> <p>Second, areas of irrigated farmland or pastureland were identified that were no longer being irrigated but, instead, were being used for the cultivation of nonirrigated grain crops. These areas had not been irrigated for multiple update cycles. There were ten instances of this type of conversion with the Biggs quad exhibiting the most conversions (4), including one change for approximately 160 acres near Gridley.</p> <p>Third, there was an area on the Ord Ferry quad that had been misidentified as an irrigated orchard but was actually restored riparian forest land. The misidentification was likely made due to the way the riparian forest had originally been planted in rows,</p>	

resembling an orchard planting. This change was located in the Pine Creek Unit of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge (SNWR) and accounted for the conversion of approximately 370 acres to nonirrigated land uses. The change was verified by a field visit, internet research and consultation with SNWR staff.

**Irrigated Farmland to Other Land**

13 changes

A majority of these conversions (7) were simply due to the delineation of farmsteads, ranchettes, ag staging areas or rural commercial uses through the use of high resolution imagery or parcel data. Further conversions (5) were due to small plots of farmland that had been fallow for three update cycles and were either disturbed or natural vegetation.

**Conversions to Irrigated Farmland**

**Nonirrigated Land Uses and Other Land to Irrigated Farmland**

39 changes

Additions of irrigated farmland were primarily due to new row crops, walnut and other orchards, some rice and a bit of irrigated pasture. The most notable additions occurred on the Llano Seco (~700 acres), Nord (~340 acres), Honcut (~240 acres), Palermo (~120 acres) and Biggs (~90 acres) quads. The largest, single addition of irrigated farmland occurred on the Llano Seco quad where a large field of tomatoes and vine seeds (~500 acres) was planted, according to the Butte County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Two other notable additions included a new walnut orchard (~100 acres) near Anita and another new walnut orchard (~100 acres) in the North Chico area.

**Unusual Changes**

(Types of change not already described or special circumstances during the 2014 update.)

Conversions from Grazing Land to Other Land: The largest conversion of this type was prompted by a comment from the City of Chico that resulted in a shift of Upper Bidwell Park from the Grazing Land category to Other Land (~1,340 acres). Consultations were made with park staff to confirm that the upper park was not generally grazed, there are no plans for future grazing and the primary use of the area is recreation. Further conversions were largely due to the delineation of ranchettes through the use of high resolution imagery and parcel data.

Conversions between Important Farmland Categories: There were 3 conversions between important farmland categories due to the discovery of nonirrigated orchards that had previously been mapped as irrigated. These discoveries were due to tracking of the orchards through time, the use of imagery from previous years, field checks and the local knowledge of nearby residents.

Conversions between Other Land and Water: These conversions were due to updating the boundary of the Sacramento River, primarily on the Foster Island and Ord Ferry quads.

Conversions from Urban Land: There were 20 conversions totaling approximately 140 acres due to a lack of sufficient infrastructure and the use of detailed digital imagery to delineate more distinct urban boundaries.

### Areas of Concern for Future Updates

(Locations or map categories noted as needing careful checking during 2016 update, and reasons.)

None

#### Definitions:

**Irrigated Farmland** includes most irrigated crops grown in California. When combined with soil data, these farmed areas become the Important Farmland (IFL) categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance & Unique Farmland. Because of the nature of the IFL definitions, some irrigated uses, such as irrigated pastures or nurseries, may not be eligible for all three IFL categories.

**Nonirrigated land uses** include grazing areas, land used for dryland crop farming, and formerly irrigated land that has been left idle for three or more update cycles. These uses are frequently incorporated into county Farmland of Local Importance definitions.

**Other Land** includes a variety of miscellaneous uses, such as low density rural residential development, mining areas, vacant areas and nonagricultural vegetation. Confined animal agriculture facilities are mapped as Other Land unless incorporated into a county Farmland of Local Importance definition.

**Urban Land** includes residential, industrial, recreational, infrastructure and institutional uses.

For more on map categories, including Farmland of Local Importance definitions, visit the [FMMP web site](#).

#### LABOR ESTIMATE:

*Time estimates for conducting the 2014 update.*

Image interpretation, start date: 9/9/15
Image interpretation, number of days: 8
Ground truth dates: November 18-20, 2015
Number of days for post-ground truth clean-up: 4

Further information on the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program can be found at:  
<http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Index.aspx>