Print Form

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: Siskiyou
311 Fourth Street, Room 201
Yreka CA 96097

From: (Public Agency): Environmental Health Division
806 South Main Street
Yreka CA 96097
(Address)

FILED
Siskiyou County
AUG 14 2025
LAURA BYNUM, CLERK
By ENDORSED-W. WINNINGHAM
Deputy Clerk

Project Title: Water Well Permit #25022

Project Applicant: Doug Hale

Project Location - Specific:

Near 441 Holzhauser Road, Etna, CA (APN: 023-440-250)

Project Location - City: Etna Project Location - County: Siskiyou

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
Approval of a production well replacement.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Siskiyou County Community Development

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Environmental Health Division

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15302 and 15061(b)(3)
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:
See attachment.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Rick Dean Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-841-2100

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?. ☒ Yes ☐ No

Signature: _____ Date: 8/14/2025 Title: Director

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Revised 2011

Reason why project is exempt:

Larry Walker and Associates preformed a hydrogeological analysis utilizing their hydrologic modeling tool from which Natural Resources and Community Development has concluded the separation distance and well pumping drawdown indicates that the replacement well will not have a significant adverse impact on public trust resources. The subject well is to replace an existing collapsed well to maintain existing dairy operations. County staff has determined that the well does not pose any threat to human health, safety, or the environment. Per the Siskiyou County Flood Control District, this well is consistent with historic activity occurring on the parcel and is also consistent with the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for Scott Valley. See memorandum for additional details.

August 12, 2025

MEMORANDUM

MEMO TO: RICK DEAN, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT; DAN WESSELL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT, SISKIYOU COUNTY

FROM: MATT PARKER, NATURAL RESOURCES SPECIALIST, NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

RE: PUBLIC TRUST CONSIDERATION: DOUG HALE PRODUCTION WELL PERMIT APPLICATION, APN: 023-440-250

Whereas the counties, as subdivisions of the State of California have a fiduciary duty to consider the public trust before authorizing the drilling of groundwater well whose extractions might have an adverse impact on public trust resources.

The Siskiyou County Natural Resources Department (Department) has reviewed the above entitled well permit application for a production well to serve the purpose of providing an estimated 23 acre-ft of water per year for industrial use in the Scott Valley. The Department has reviewed 1) the information in the application, and 2) the technical memorandum (Attachment #1) prepared by Larry Walker Associates to aid in its evaluation of Public Trust Doctrine consideration.

<u>The Department finds</u>:

- The well location is approximately 12,448' from the nearest navigable waterway (Scott River).

- The professional technical memorandum prepared by Larry Walker Associates, which models impacts from the proposed replacement well, along with the other materials reviewed, do not indicate that extraction of water from the proposed well would substantially impair or interfere with public trust uses or values within interconnected downstream navigable waters, including the Scott River.

- More specifically, under the conditions specified below, the limited pumping from this use in the Scott Valley watershed will not substantially impair or interfere with public trust uses or values within interconnected downstream navigable waters, including the Scott River.

- To the extent the use of groundwater from this site may ultimately contribute to cumulative reductions in surface waters in downstream navigable waters, the production of groundwater for use on this parcel in the Scott Valley is within the public interest because this parcel holds groundwater rights intended to be put to beneficial use consistent with Article X, section 2 of the California Constitution.

- The issuance of this permit for a replacement well is exempt from CEQA because the activity is covered by the common sense exemption (Cal. Code Regs. Title. 14 Sec. 15061(b)(3)). CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The County has determined that the issuance of this permit qualifies under the common sense exemption because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.

Replacement Well water use (well permit conditions):

- The subject well shall be in compliance with current and any future directives put forth by the Scott Valley Groundwater sustainability Agency (GSA) to maintain groundwater sustainability, including monitoring and addressing impacts to Public Trust Resources. In the Scott Valley the project and management actions may include but are not limited to reporting of pumping volume, strategic groundwater pumping restrictions, voluntary well metering

Attachment:

- Attachment #1 - LWA Technical Memorandum

ATTACHMENT #1

LARRY WALKER ASSOCIATES

1480 Drew Avenue
Suite 100
Davis, CA 95618

530. 753. 6400
info@lwa.com
www.lwa.com

August 11, 2025

To: Matt Parker, Siskiyou County

From: Laura Foglia, Larry Walker Associates

Copy To: Rick Dean, Siskiyou County
Jerry O'Neill

Subject: Preliminary evaluation of proposed well DH1, APN 023-440-250, Scott Valley, CA

Introduction

This technical memorandum (TM) describes a preliminary modeling analysis of the effects of pumping proposed well DH1 in Scott Valley, California (Figure 1) on Scott River streamflow.

The Scott Valley Integrated Hydrologic Model (SVIHM), documented in the basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)[1], was used to simulate pumping from the proposed well. SVIHM represents the best currently available scientific tool for this purpose. The model is presently being updated, and the most recent version available at the date of this memo (referred to herein as the baseline model) was used for the analysis presented in this TM.

SVIHM was applied to evaluate impacts of the proposed pumping on streamflow in the Scott River. Location, depth, pumping rate, and period of pumping, along with use information, were provided by the applicant and are listed in Table 1.

SVIHM grid cell location for the pumping was determined from the well location provided by the applicant, and model layer for the pumping from DH1 was determined from the land surface elevation at the proposed well site and the expected completion depth of the well.

Streamflow impacts were evaluated by comparing model results with well DH1 pumping to results of the baseline scenario. The estimated pumping rate of DH1 is 75 gallons per minute (gpm), and the well is planned to operate year-round (Table 1), which yields a total annual volume of groundwater pumped of approximately 121 acre-feet. However, Table 1 also indicates the estimated annual extraction volume for dairy - agricultural use is 7.5 million gallons, or approximately 23 acre-ft, which suggests that pumping would not occur continuously at 75 gpm year-round. If 7.5 million gallons were pumped over the year, the average pumping rate would be approximately 14.26 gpm. Thus, to evaluate streamflow impacts, DH1 pumping was simulated to occur continuously at a rate of 14.26 gpm for each year in the model simulation.

[1] Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water District Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Scott Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan, December 2021, Scott Valley FINAL GSP | Siskiyou County California

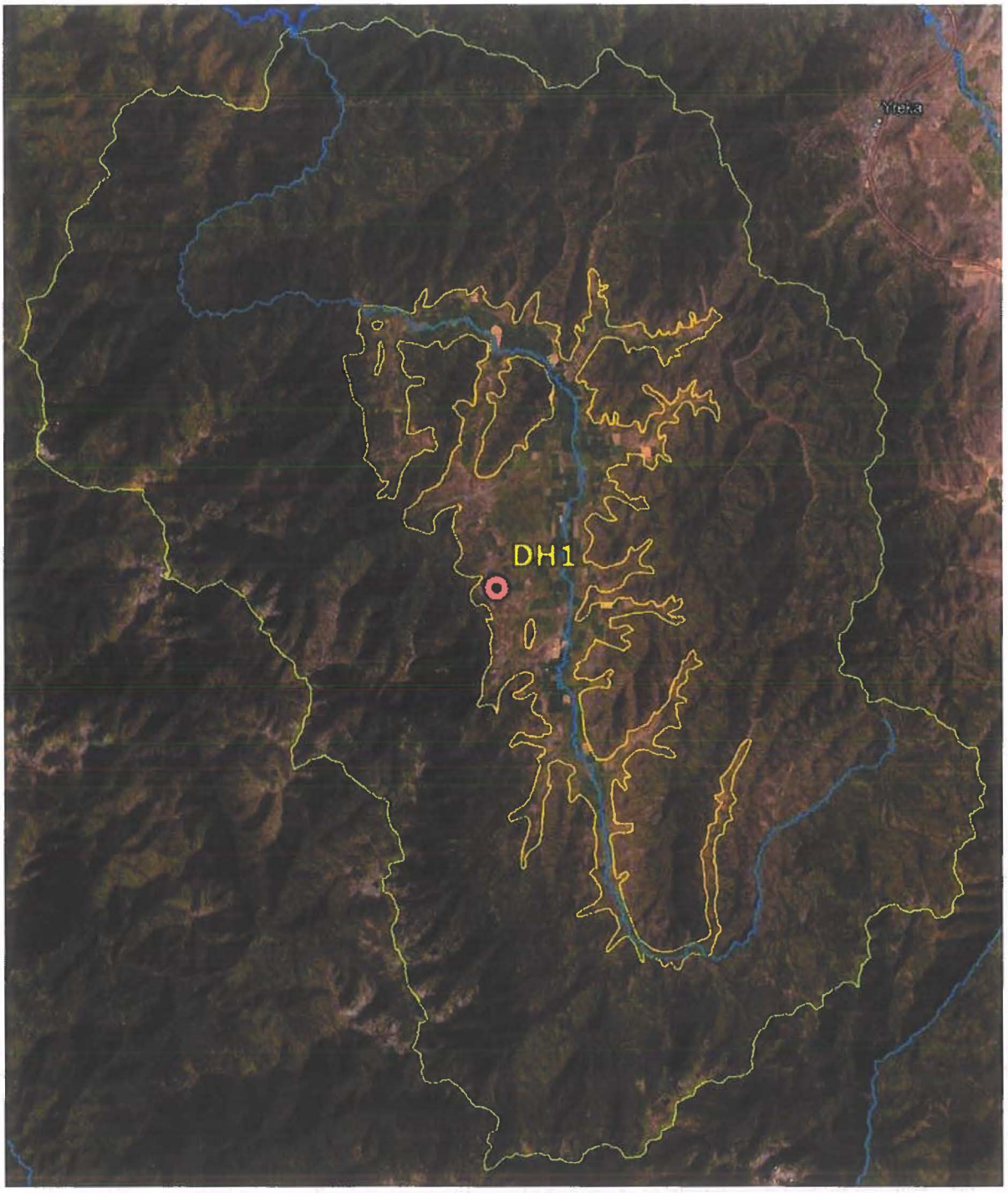


Figure 1. Map showing Scott River Valley Groundwater Basin and watershed, major rivers, and location of proposed well DH1.

Table 1. Proposed well information.

Well Code	Lat	Long	Estimated Pumping Rate (gal/min)	Estimated Depth (feet)	Estimated Time Frame of Use	Estimated Acreage of Use (acres)	Estimated Annual Extraction Volume (acre/ft)
DH 1	41° 29.627'N	122° 53.923'W	75	140	Year-round	Agricultural Facility Use	23

DH1 well location coordinates (NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N)

x: 508455

y: 4593580

SVIHM model row: 218

SVIHM model column: 85

Evaluation of Proposed Well DH1

Figure 2 shows the location of the proposed pumping well DH1, along the western boundary of the groundwater basin between Crystal Creek to the south and Patterson Creek to the north. Blue shaded cells represent the Scott River, Big Slough and its tributaries, and red shaded cells represent virtual agricultural pumping wells[2] in SVIHM. Distance from well DH1 to the Scott River is approximately 2.66 miles to the east.

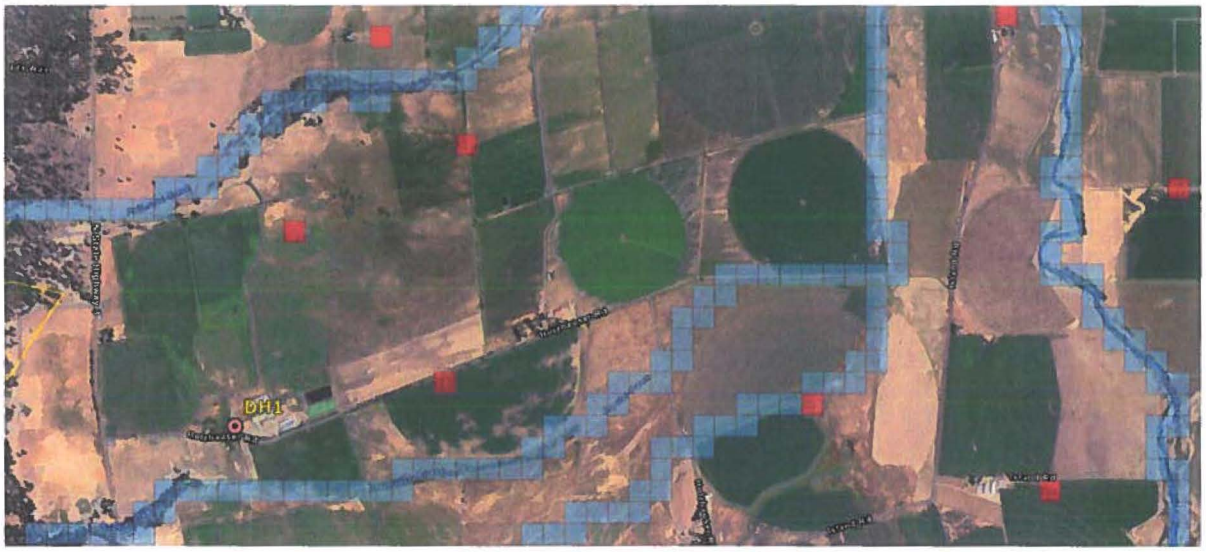


Figure 2. Map showing location of proposed well DH1, tributaries to Big Slough, the Scott River, and SVIHM stream and well boundary conditions.

[2] Actual agricultural irrigation well locations were not determined in the current model configuration; thus, virtual wells were used to distribute the irrigation pumping estimated by University of California, Davis and Larry Walker Associates.

Figure 3 shows an east-west cross-section along the SVIHM in the vicinity of well DH1. Model grid cells are uniform in map view with an area of 100 m^2, but are variable in thickness. In the vicinity of well DH1, model layer 1, the uppermost layer, is 15.24 m or 50 ft in thickness; model layer 2 is about 38 m or about 125 ft in thickness. In this view, the model representation of the Scott River is indicated with a green shaded cell in layer 1. The location of Well DH1 is shown by the blue circular symbol with an "X" inside. Yellow shaded cells represent SVIHM drain boundary conditions, and light blue shaded cells represent Big Slough and its tributaries. The screen interval of DH1 is determined to be located within SVIHM model layer 2, which corresponds with the expected depth of DH1.

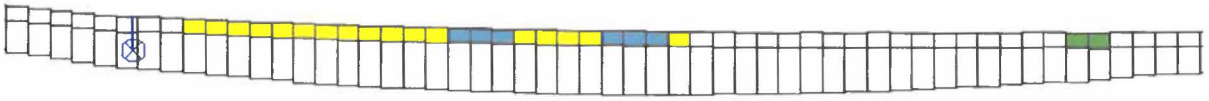


Figure 3. Cross-section of model grid in vicinity of well DH1. Model rows are oriented along east-west cardinal directions on a compass: east is to the right and west is to the left.

Figure 4 shows contours of the difference in the computed water table elevation with well DH1 pumping compared to the baseline model. Maximum drawdown along tributaries to Big Slough, which drains into Scott River, is about 0.1 m (10 cm or 3.94 inches).

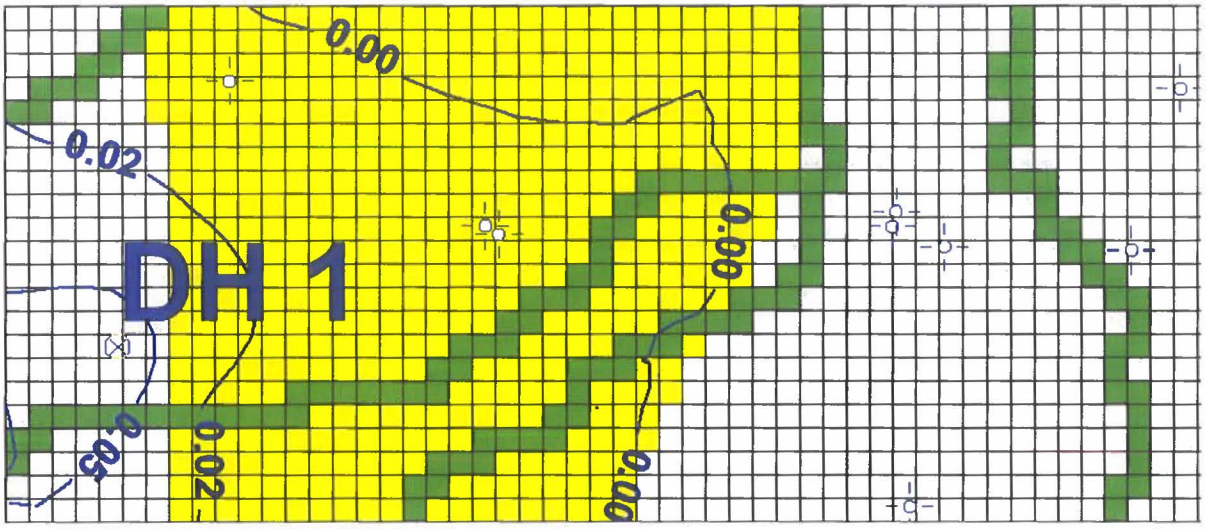


Figure 4. Contours of water table difference, in meters, due to pumping Well DH1. Green shaded cells represent Scott River, Big Slough and tributaries; yellow shaded cells represent drains in SVIHM; symbols represent monitoring wells used in model calibration.

Streamflow depletion along Big Slough and the Scott River due to pumping from DH1 varies through time. Initially, the water pumped by the well comes from groundwater storage corresponding with groundwater level declines but, with time, an increasing amount of the pumped water is derived from reduced discharge to the streams and induced infiltration from the stream.

Based on comparison of model computed streamflow over 34 years in the baseline vs. DH1 pumping scenario at an SVIHM gage location downstream of the confluence of Big Slough and Scott River (SVIHM segment 23, reach 10), average annual streamflow depletion is estimated to be about 70 percent of the annual pumping of well DH1, which is approximately 23 acre-ft (Table 1). The maximum streamflow depletion represents 0.01 percent of average annual streamflow at this location.

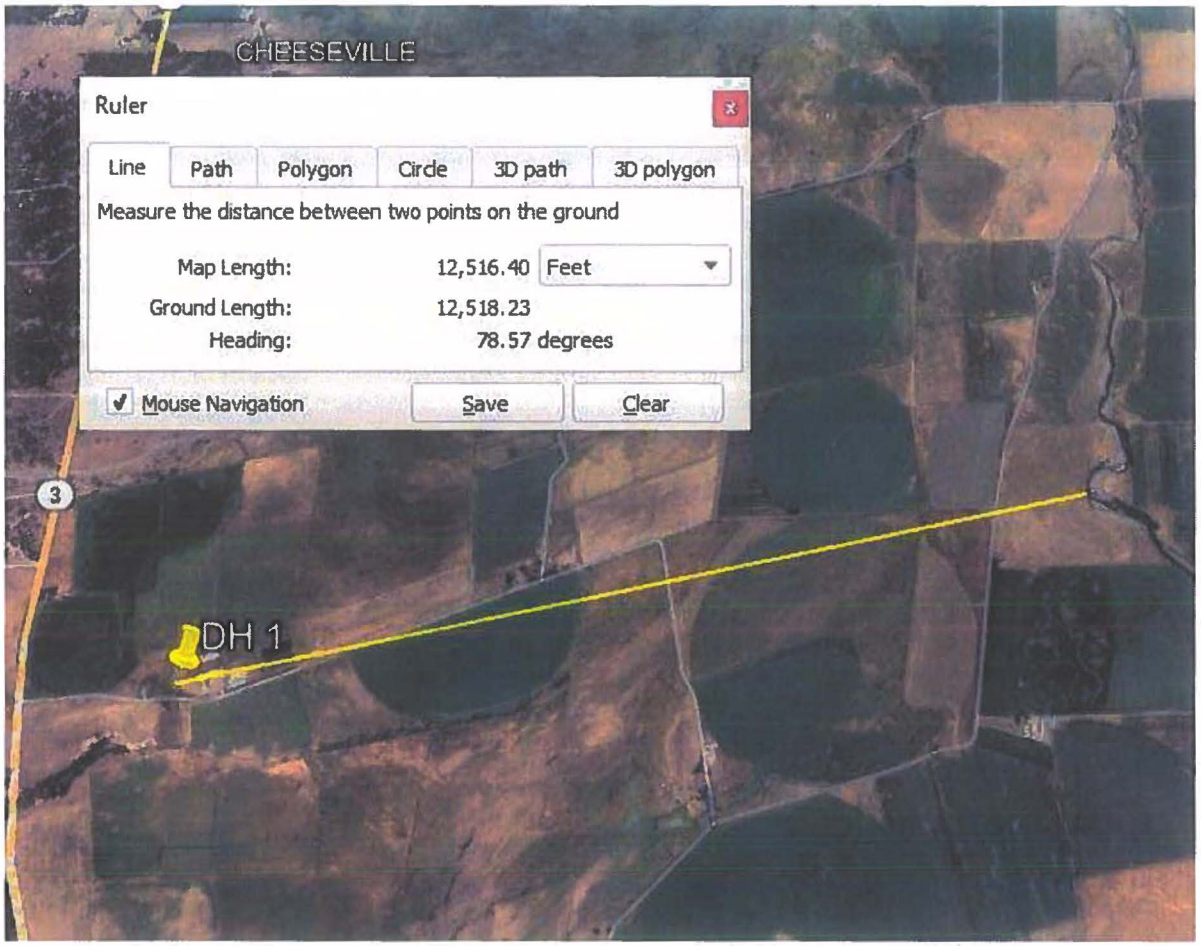
Limitations

SVIHM is presently being updated and recalibrated. Currently, some areas of the model are better calibrated than others. Thus, computed groundwater levels and flows, and stream flows, may change as improvements are included in the model. However, the evaluation described herein is based on changes in heads and streamflow from the baseline model, which should help minimize issues with the current status of calibration. An additional limitation of this analysis is that, currently, pumping from individual wells is evaluated separately; however, the effects of permitting multiple new wells are additive. Further, this simple approach assumes that the recharge, due to climatic variations over the past 34 years, will follow the same pattern with the same rates in the future. It also assumes that, except for the addition of DH1, future pumping will occur at the same locations, unchanged from historical values.

Future hydrology (wet or dry years), if different than the period simulated, could result in more or less computed streamflow depletion due to differences in accompanying aquifer recharge rates. A future simulation with projected hydrology could address this limitation on estimating long-term impacts from the proposed pumping.

Conclusions

The SVIHM was used to compute groundwater level and streamflow impacts, due to pumping proposed well DH1, on the Scott River and adjacent tributaries. Results based on the current model suggest that pumping at the proposed location, depth, pumping rate and duration, would have minimal impact on streamflow in the Scott River.


CHEESEVILLE
Ruler
Line
Path
Polygon
Circle
3D path
3D polygon
Measure the distance between two points on the ground
Map Length:
12,516.40
Feet
Ground Length:
12,518.23
Heading:
78.57 degrees
Mouse Navigation
Save
Clear
3
DH 1