

**Notice of Exemption**

**Appendix E**

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

**From: (Public Agency):** CA Dept. Water Resources  
2440 Main Street  
Red Bluff, CA 96080

Project Title: Big Chico Creek and Butte Creek Stream Gage Installation - CalSIP

Project Applicant: California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

**Project Location - Specific:**

Big Chico Creek at Manzanita Avenue bridge crossing within the City of Chico (39.758174, -121.795754) and Butte Creek at Nelson Road bridge crossing, located approximately six miles southwest of the town of Durham (39.551585, -121.839774). See attached figures.

Project Location - City: Chico, Durham Project Location - County: Butte

**Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:**

As part of the California Stream Gage Improvement Program, DWR is proposing to install stream gages at two locations on Big Chico Creek and Butte Creek. Proposed activities include the installation of flow measurement devices on existing bridge structures. A steel enclosure would be mounted to the existing bridge structure at each location to house a data logger, battery, and radio equipment with an antenna and solar panel attached above the enclosure. Conduit would be routed along the underside of the bridge structure from the steel enclosure to the flow measurement device. At each location a staff gage would either be painted or attached to the existing bridge columns. See attached Project Description.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Water Resources

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Water Resources

**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: 15306, Information Collection
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

The proposed stream gage installation would provide real-time data and monitor hydrologic conditions within Big Chico Creek and Butte Creek. The proposed stream gage assembly would be mounted to the existing bridge structures with no anticipated ground disturbance or vegetation removal. Proposed activities qualify for categorical exemptions 15306, Information Collection. Proposed activities will not result in a significant impact to the environment and none of the exceptions described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply.

Lead Agency  
 Contact Person: Brian Humphrey Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-317-8623

**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: Brian Humphrey Date: 3/27/2026 Title: Sr. Environmental Scientist

■ Signed by Lead Agency      Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.      Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

# Big Chico Creek and Butte Creek Stream Gage Installation – CalSIP

## Proposed Project Locations and Activities

### Project Location

The proposed project would install a stream gage at two locations on Big Chico Creek at Manzanita Avenue and Butte Creek at Nelson Road located within and approximately 12 miles southwest of the City of Chico in Butte County (Figure 1).

Big Chico Creek Site: A new stream gage would be installed on Big Chico Creek on the downstream side of the Manzanita Avenue bridge crossing, located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Manzanita Avenue and Centennial Avenue within the City of Chico (39.758174°, -121.795754°), see Figure 2.

Butte Creek Site: A new stream gage would be installed on Butte Creek on the upstream side of the Nelson Road bridge crossing, located approximately 6 miles southwest of the town of Durham (39.551585°, -121.839774°), See Figure 3.

### Project Description

CalSIP aims to improve stream gage infrastructure and data availability. Through CalSIP, DWR is actively improving California's stream gage network by upgrading existing gages, reactivating historical gages, and installing new gages on waterways across the state. Access to reliable, real-time information about the conditions and amount of water flowing into rivers and streams is critical to better manage water resources for public safety, water supply, and the conservation of freshwater species. Through the proposed stream gages and flow meters, DWR would be able to monitor water level and stream flow to better understand the watershed's hydraulics.

The descriptions below further describe the locations, construction activities, and types of stream gage technology and assembly (single stream gage assembly or flow meter assembly) that DWR proposes to install at the two locations listed above. Each individual gage installation would take approximately one day. There would be no potential for hazardous fluids such as fuel or flaked concrete to enter adjacent waterways.

Figure 1. Project Location Map

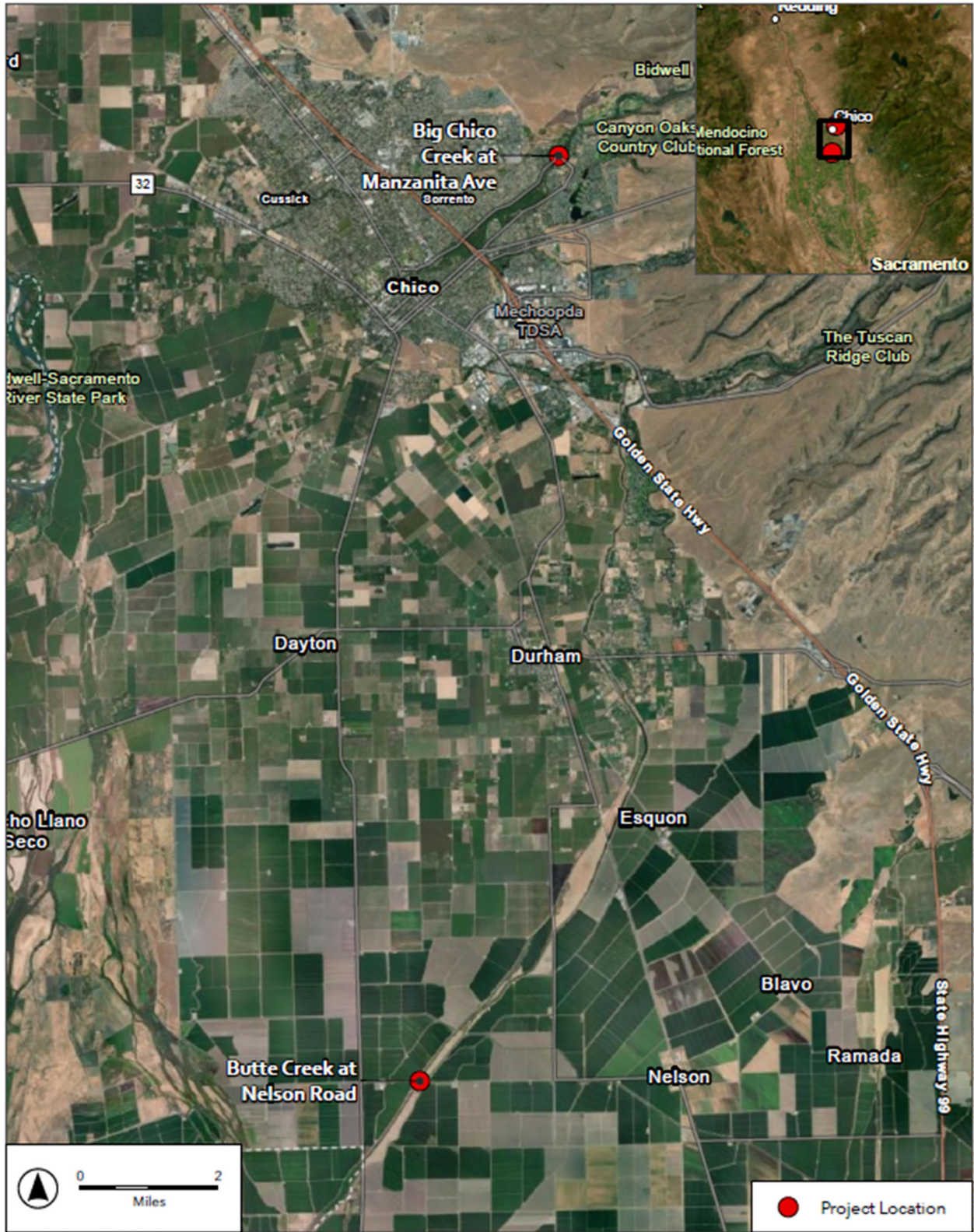
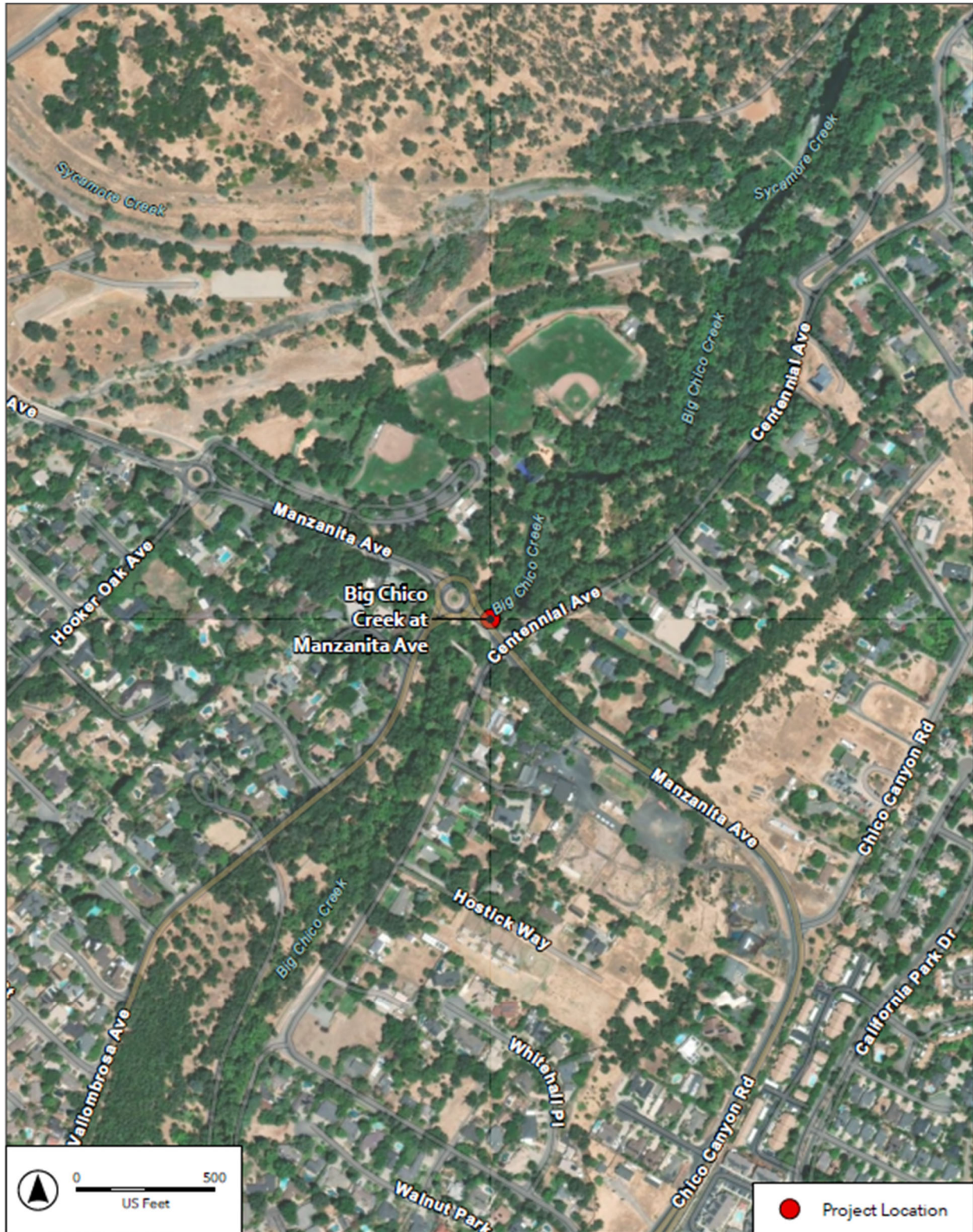


Figure 2. Big Chico Creek at Manzanita Avenue Site Location



Source: ESA, 2025; USGS, 2025

Figure 3. Butte Creek at Nelson Road Site Location



## Big Chico Creek at Manzanita Avenue

At this location, DWR would install a new stream gage assembly mounted to the existing Manzanita Avenue Bridge spanning Big Chico Creek within Chico. The stream gage assembly would include: (1) a remote terminal unit (RTU) that consists of a data logger, battery, and radio equipment housed in a steel enclosure, (2) Sontek acoustic doppler flow measurement device, and (3) a staff gage. The RTU enclosure would be mounted to the existing bridge structure. A solar panel and radio antenna would be mounted to the top of the RTU enclosure.

Conduit would be routed from the RTU enclosure, along the underside of the bridge deck, down a bridge column where the Sontek flow measurement device would be located. The conduit and Sontek flow measurement device would be strapped to the existing bridge column with stainless steel straps. The staff gage would either consist of painted gradations on the bridge column, or a staff gage would be strapped to the existing bridge column.

No ground disturbance is anticipated; the stream gage assembly would be mounted to the existing bridge. There is no earthwork, nor vegetation removal proposed as part of this installation. Staging areas are not expected to be needed due to the minimal size of equipment and materials. All tools used for installation would be handheld.

## Butte Creek at Nelson Road

At this location, DWR would install a new assembly mounted to the existing Nelson Road Bridge spanning Butte Creek, approximately 12 miles south of Chico. The stream gage assembly would include: (1) a RTU that consists of a data logger, battery, and radio equipment housed in a steel enclosure; (2) Sontek acoustic doppler flow measurement device; and (3) a staff gage. The RTU enclosure would be mounted to the existing bridge structure. A solar panel and radio antenna would be mounted to the top of the RTU enclosure.

Conduit would be routed from the RTU enclosure, along the underside of the bridge deck, down a bridge column where the Sontek flow measurement device would be located. The conduit and Sontek flow measurement device would be strapped to the existing bridge column with stainless steel straps. The staff gage would either consist of painted gradations on the bridge column, or a staff gage would be strapped to the existing bridge column.

No ground disturbance is anticipated; the stream gage assembly would be mounted to the existing bridge. There is no earthwork, nor vegetation removal proposed as part of this installation. Staging areas are not expected to be needed due to the minimal size of equipment and materials. All tools used for installation would be handheld.