

MEMO: SVGSP Planning Committee Update, Outreach Update

To: SVGMD, Plumas County
From: Jenny Gant and Judie Talbot
Date: December 13, 2023
Re: Sierra Valley GSP – Planning Committee and Outreach Update

The Planning Committee submits the following informational items as a monthly update for February 2026:

UPDATE: Coordination on Drought Contingency Planning

Sharon Johnson, Sierra County Environmental Health, scheduled a meeting on February 19, 2026 to discuss the Drought Contingency Plans for Sierra and Plumas counties. Sharon Johnson and LeTine Vanetti attended on behalf of Sierra County, Rob Thorman and Lori Pini attended on behalf of Plumas County, and members of the technical team (Stantec) were also on the call.

A representative for the District was invited to participate on part of the call to discuss possible opportunities to coordinate GSP efforts with the Drought Contingency Plans.

1. Tracking of dry domestic wells / applications for replacement domestic wells

There was a question as to whether the District had records of domestic wells that went dry. It was noted that the counties submit domestic well applications to the Board for review and approval.

It was my understanding that the Board typically approved domestic well applications with minimal review. With de minimis groundwater use, providing less than 2 AF annually for domestic use, domestic wells were exempt from Executive Order N-7-22 permitting requirements. Additionally, the current domestic well applications do not ask if a replacement well is being requested as the result of a well going dry – or whether a replacement is needed due to well failure.

The counties are discussing adding an item to well applications to clarify was a replacement well is being requested.

2. Loaner program for sounders

This was related to loaning out sounders so that domestic well owners and users can measure well water levels themselves. The counties inquired whether those outside of Sierra Valley boundaries might be eligible to borrow the sounders.

The counties would appreciate an update once the loaner program is finalized, with details about long the sounder can be borrowed for, what the process is, etc.

3. Outreach related to drought resilience planning

The counties asked if there were opportunities to share information about the drought contingency plans. I explained that the District maintains a listserve for emails and updates to interested parties – and that any requests to share information could be sent to Jenny. Additionally, if the GSAs again sponsored a booth at the fair, we could include handouts and materials regarding the drought planning efforts.

4. Technical assistance for domestic well users

Both counties are working to identify financial and technical resources for domestic well users. I explained that GSP implementation efforts are being funded through grant programs – and that in the most current round, a well inventory was conducted.

Also, I mentioned that the District has a part-time well technician who supports the metering for high-capacity wells. Are there technical resources that the District might suggest for domestic well owners?

LEGISLATIVE CONCEPTS: Removing Impediments to Remove Recharge

Draft legislation is being prepared, drawing on the work by NCWA and the Regional Water Authority. NCWA has information on its website at: <https://norcalwater.org/2026/03/13/ab-2026-creating-more-groundwater-recharge-opportunities-for-the-sacramento-valley/>

Preliminary legislative concepts include the following:

Introduced by Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry

February 17, 2026

An act relating to groundwater.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2026, as introduced, Aguiar-Curry. Groundwater recharge.

Existing law, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, requires all groundwater basins designated as high- or medium-priority basins by the Department of Water Resources to be managed under a groundwater sustainability plan or coordinated groundwater plans, except as specified.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact future legislation to further increase groundwater storage and remove impediments to recharge in a way that will maximize groundwater recharge while protecting water rights and communities, state and federal water projects, and environmental needs, as provided.

Digest Key

Vote: MAJORITY Appropriation: NO Fiscal Committee: NO Local Program: NO

Bill Text

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1.

(a) The Legislature finds and declares as follows:

(1) The Governor, over the past decade, has issued several executive orders to maximize every opportunity to recharge our groundwater supplies, thereby boosting our water supplies for communities and farms throughout the state and preparing for our hotter, drier future.

(2) The recommendations of the Governor and state agencies implementing these programs and working with local groundwater sustainability agencies and water suppliers will guide legislation to advance groundwater recharge and better prepare our communities and farms for our hotter, drier future.

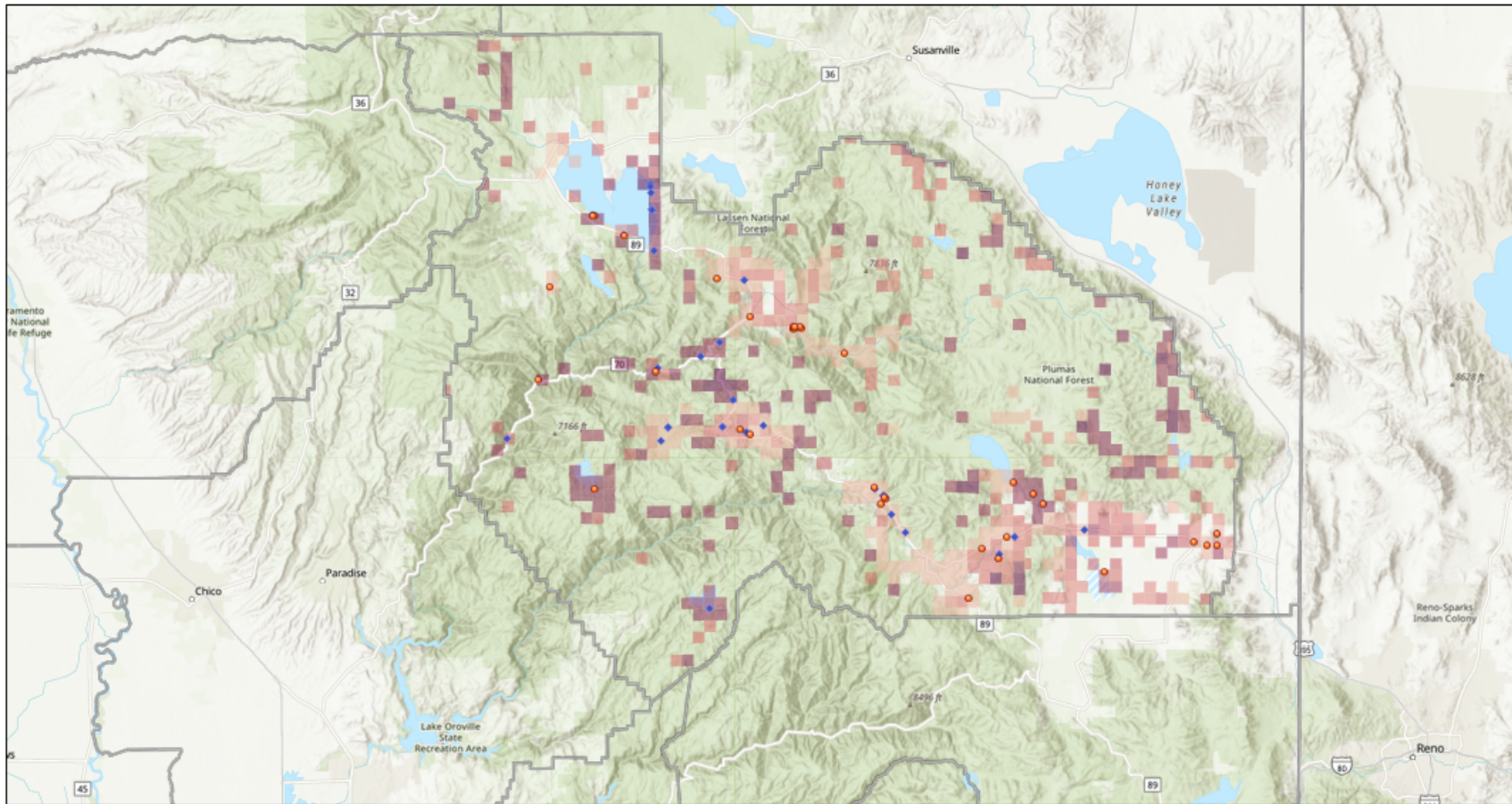
(b) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact future legislation to further increase groundwater storage and remove impediments to recharge in a way that will maximize groundwater recharge while protecting water rights and communities, state and federal water projects, and environmental needs, including changes to the temporary urgency permitting for groundwater recharge, refining the process for unpermitted diversion of flood flows, and improving the process for permitted groundwater recharge.

FOLLOW-UP: The Year of the Watershed (Grade 6)

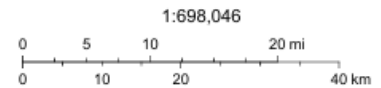
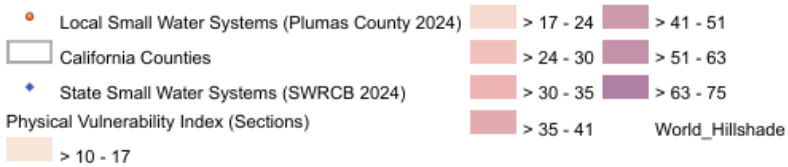
At the fair, we heard from a teacher that Grade 6 science curriculum is focused on the “Year of the Watershed.” We’ll be connecting with them on some handouts and suggesting who they could contact for additional resources.

NOTE: Key factors for determining physical vulnerability to drought are: temperature shifts and wildfire risk.

3.0 Drought and Water Shortage Risk Assessment



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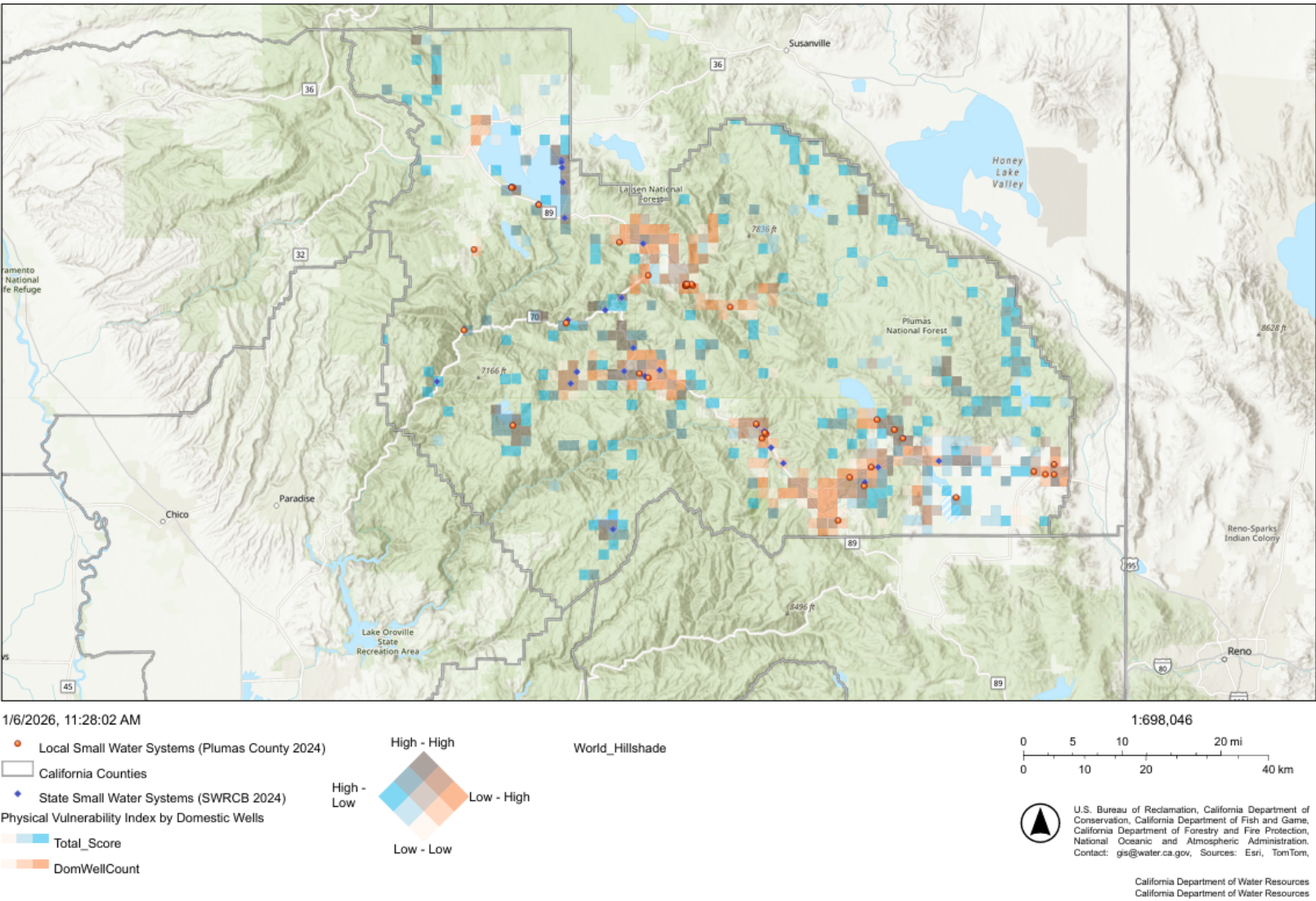


U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, California Department of Conservation, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Contact: gis@water.ca.gov. Sources: Esri, TomTom.

California Department of Water Resources
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Source: DWR 2024b, Accessed: 01/2026

Figure 3-6. Physical Vulnerability to Drought and Water Supply Shortage in Plumas County

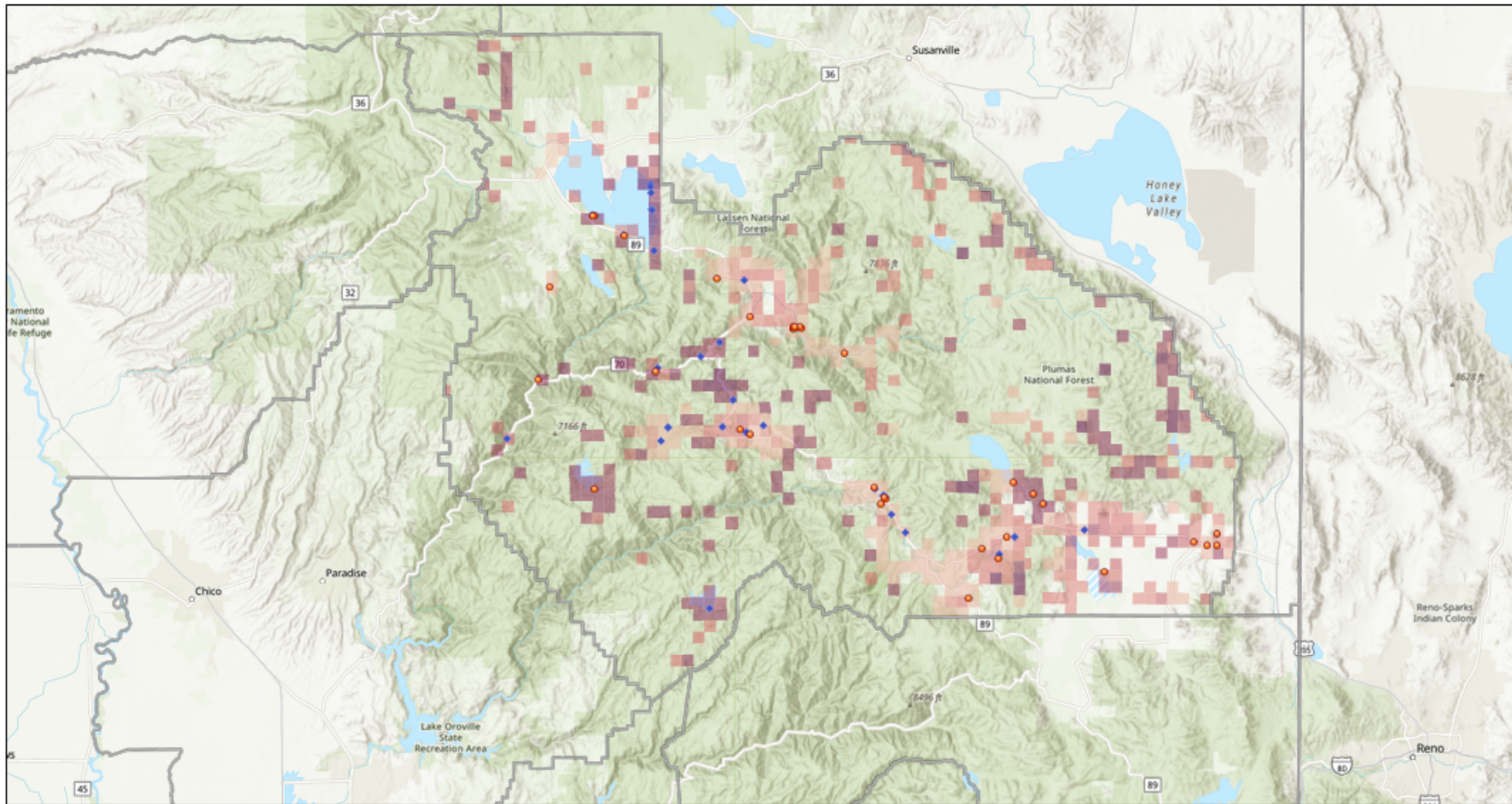


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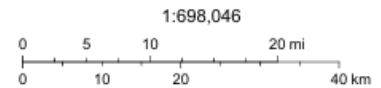
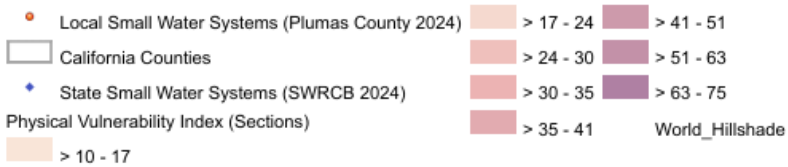
Figure 3-7. Intersection of Physical Vulnerability and Density of Domestic Wells, Local Small Water Systems, and State Small Water Systems in Plumas County

NOTE: Key factors for determining physical vulnerability to drought are: temperature shifts and wildfire risk.

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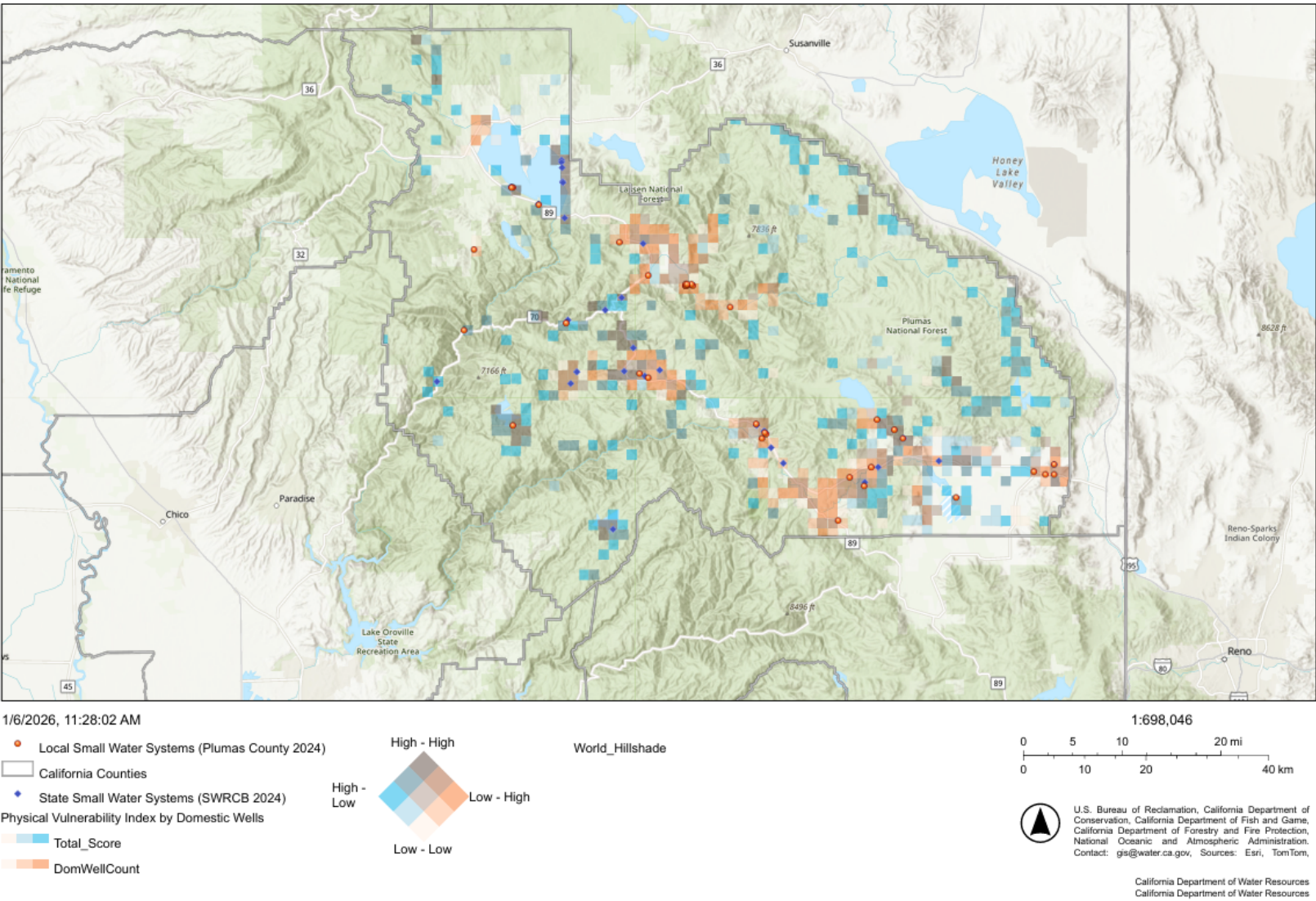


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