



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Main page
Contents
Current events
Random article
About Wikipedia
Contact us
Donate

Contribute

Help
Learn to edit
Community portal
Recent changes
Upload file

Tools

What links here
Related changes
Special pages
Permanent link
Page information
Cite this page
Wikidata item

Print/export
Download as PDF
Printable version

In other projects
Wikimedia Commons
Wikivoyage

Languages

Boarisch
Deutsch
Español
Français
Italiano
Nederlands
Plattdütsch
Pycckий
Türkçe

🇺🇸 43 more

 Eedit links

## Butte County, California

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Coordinates: 39°56′N 121°50′W

**Butte County** is a county in northern California. In the 2010 census, the population was 220,000.<sup>[k]</sup> The county seat is Oroville.<sup>[l]</sup> Butte County comprises the Chico, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area. It is in the California Central Valley, north of the state capital of Sacramento. Butte County is known as the "Land of Natural Wealth and Beauty."<sup>[*citation needed*]</sup>

Butte County is watered by the Feather River and the Sacramento River. Butte Creek and Big Chico Creek are additional perennial streams, both tributary to the Sacramento. The county is the home of California State University, Chico and of Butte College.

There are four major hospitals and the State of California defines Butte County as being inside Health Service Area 1. A special district, the Butte County Air Quality Management District, regulates airborne pollutant emissions in the county. It does this following regional regulations, state, and federal laws. For example, in recent years, the agency changed rules that once allowed residents to burn household trash outdoors.

<div><span><span> </span></span></div> <span>Contents</span> <span> </span> <span>[</span> hide <span>]</span>
<div> <div>1 History</div> <div>2 Geography <div> <div>2.1 National protected areas</div> <div>2.2 Adjacent counties</div> </div> </div> </div> <div> <div>3 Demographics <div> <div>3.1 2011 <div> <div>3.1.1 Places by population, race, and income</div> </div> </div> <div>3.2 2010</div> <div>3.3 2000</div> </div> </div> </div> <div> <div>4 Crime <div> <div>4.1 Cities by population and crime rates</div> </div> </div> </div> <div> <div>5 Government <div> <div>5.1 Voter registration statistics <div> <div>5.1.1 Cities by population and voter registration</div> </div> </div> <div>5.2 Local</div> <div>5.3 Tribal</div> <div>5.4 State</div> <div>5.5 Federal</div> </div> </div> </div> <div> <div>6 Education <div> <div>6.1 Public schools</div> <div>6.2 Colleges and universities</div> <div>6.3 Public libraries</div> </div> </div> </div> <div> <div>7 Transportation <div> <div>7.1 Major highways</div> <div>7.2 Public transportation</div> <div>7.3 Airports</div> </div> </div> </div> <div> <div>8 Communities <div> <div>8.1 Cities</div> <div>8.2 Towns</div> <div>8.3 Census-designated places</div> <div>8.4 Unincorporated communities</div> <div>8.5 Ghost towns</div> <div>8.6 Population ranking</div> </div> </div> </div> <div> <div>9 In popular culture</div> </div> <div> <div>10 See also</div> </div> <div> <div>11 Sources</div> </div> <div> <div>12 Notes</div> </div> <div> <div>13 References</div> </div> <div> <div>14 External links</div> </div>

### History

Butte County is named for the Sutter Buttes in neighboring Sutter County; *butte* means "small knoll" or "small hill" in French.<sup>[k]</sup> Butte County was incorporated as one of California's 19 original counties on 18 February 1850. The county went across the present limits of the Tehama, Plumas, Colusa, and Suter counties.<sup>[l]</sup> The first sheriff was Joseph Q. Wilbur.<sup>[k]</sup>

Between November 8–25, 1818, a major wildfire, the Camp Fire, destroyed most of the town of Paradise, the adjacent community of Concow, and many square miles of rural, hilly country east of Chico. More than eighty people were killed, fifty thousand were displaced, over 150,000 acres were lost, and nearly twenty thousand buildings were destroyed.<sup>[m][n]</sup> The Camp Fire is California's most destructive and deadliest fire.<sup>[l]</sup>

### Geography

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 1,677 square miles (4,340 km²), of which 1,636 square miles (4,240 km²) is land and 41 square miles (110 km²) (2.4%) is water.<sup>[k]</sup>

The county is drained by the Feather River and Butte Creek. Part of the county's western border is formed by the Sacramento River. The county lies along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, the steep slopes making it prime territory for the siting of hydroelectric power plants.About a half dozen of these plants are located in the county, one of which, serves the Oroville Dam which became severely stressed by overflow water in 2017, and which remains a concern today.

### National protected areas

- Butte Sink National Wildlife Refuge (part)
- Lassen National Forest (part)
- Plumas National Forest (part)
- Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge (part)

### Adjacent counties

- Sutter County, California - south
- Colusa County, California - southwest
- Glenn County, California - west
- Tehama County, California - northwest
- Plumas County, California - northeast
- Yuba County, California - southeast

### Demographics

### 2011

**Population, ethnicity, and income** [show]

### Places by population, race, and income

Places by population and race	[show <span>]</span>
Places by population and income	[show <span>]</span>

### 2010

The 2010 United States Census reported that Butte County had a population of 220,000. The racial makeup of Butte County was 180,096 (81.9%) White, 3,415 (1.6%) African American, 4,395 (2.0%) Native American, 9,057 (4.1%) Asian, 452 (0.2%) Pacific Islander, 12,141 (5.5%) from other races, and 10,444 (4.7%) from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 31,116 persons (14.1%).<sup>[k]</sup>

**Population reported at 2010 United States Census** [show]

### 2000

As of the census<sup>[k]</sup> of 2000, there were 203,171 people, 79,566 households, and 49,410 families residing in the county. The population density was 124 people per square mile (48/km²). There were 85,523 housing units at an average density of 52 per square mile (20/km²). The racial makeup of the county was 84.5% White, 1.4% Black or African American, 1.9% Native American, 3.3% Asian, 0.2% Pacific Islander, 4.8% from other races, and 3.9% from two or more races. 10.5% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race. 14.2% were of German, 11.1% English, 10.2% Irish, 7.8% American and 5.6% Italian ancestry according to Census 2000. 87.9% spoke English, 7.8% Spanish and 1.4% Hmong as their first language.

There were 79,566 households, out of which 28.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 46.7% were married couples living together, 11.2% had a female householder with no husband present, and 37.9% were non-families. 27.2% of all households were made up of individuals, and 11.1% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.48 and the average family size was 3.02.

In the county, the population was spread out, with 24.0% under the age of 18, 13.6% from 18 to 24, 24.8% from 25 to 44, 21.8% from 45 to 64, and 15.8% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 36 years. For every 100 females there were 96.1 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 92.6 males.

The median income for a household in the county was \$31,924, and the median income for a family was \$41,010. Males had a median income of \$34,137 versus \$25,393 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$17,517. About 12.2% of families and 19.8% of the population were below the poverty line, including 23.8% of those under age 18 and 7.3% of those age 65 or over.

### Crime

The following table includes the number of incidents reported and the rate per 1,000 persons for each type of offense.

**Population and crime rates** [show]

### Cities by population and crime rates

Cities by population and crime rates	[show <span>]</span>

### Government

### Voter registration statistics

**Population and registered voters** [show]

### Cities by population and voter registration

Cities by population and voter registration	[show <span>]</span>

### Local

The citizens of the county of Butte are represented by the five member **Butte County Board of Supervisors**.

### Tribal

The **Berry Creek Rancheria** of Tyne Maidu Indians of California is headquartered in Oroville. The Berry Creek Rancheria operates **Gold Country Casino**.

The **Mooretown Rancheria** of Maidu Indians of California is also headquartered in Oroville. The Mooretown Rancheria operates **Feather Falls Casino**.

The governmental headquarters of the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria is located in Chico.

### State

See also: *List of members of the California Senate from Butte County*

Butte County is split between the 1st and 3rd Assembly districts, represented by Republican Megan Dahle and Republican James Gallagher, respectively.<sup>[m]</sup> The county is in the 4th Senate District, represented by Republican Jim Nielsen.<sup>[n]</sup>

According to the California Secretary of State, as of February 10, 2019, Butte County has 172,054 registered voters. Of those, 42,093 (34.4%) are registered Democrats, 41,330 (33.8%) are registered Republicans and 30,377 (24.8%) have declined to state a political party.<sup>[k]</sup>

On November 4, 2008 Butte County voted 56.7% for Proposition 8 which amended the California Constitution to ban same-sex marriages.<sup>[k]</sup>

### Federal

Butte is in California's 1st congressional district, represented by Republican Doug LaMalfa.<sup>[k]</sup>

Butte is a Republican-leaning county in Presidential and congressional elections. Lyndon Johnson in 1964 is the last Democrat to win a majority in the county (It was also his weakest county victory in the state that year); however, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Joe Biden won the county by plurality in 1992, 2008, and 2020, respectively.

Presidential elections results	[show <span>]</span>

### Education

### Public schools

There are roughly 90 public schools in the county according to the National Center for Educational Statistics. The schools are operated by the County Office of Education and 15 school districts, which are:

- Bangor Union Elementary School District
- Biggs Unified School District
- Chico Unified School District
- Durham Unified School District
- Feather Falls Union Elementary School District
- Golden Feather Union Elementary School District
- Gridley Unified School District
- Manzanita Elementary School District
- Oroville City Elementary School District
- Oroville Union High School District
- Palermo Union School District
- Paradise Unified School District
- Pioneer Union Elementary School District
- Thermalito Union School District

### Colleges and universities

- Butte College
- California State University, Chico

### Public libraries

Butte County Library provides library services to residents of the County through six branches in Biggs, Chico, Durham, Gridley, Oroville and Paradise. The mission of the Butte County Library is to provide all individuals, regardless of age, ethnic background, educational or economic level, with free access to ideas, information, and technology. For many years, the library served rural and mountain communities through regularly scheduled bookmobile visits; however, due to budget cuts, this service was discontinued in 2009 and the bookmobile was sold. The library serves low-literacy adults through several programs of the Butte County Library Literacy Services division, including the Adult Reading Program, Families for Literacy and the Literacy Coach, a 36-foot (11 m) vehicle that provides mobile programming like story times, parent meetings, workshops, and computer and teacher trainings.

The library operates as a department of the County of Butte, governed by the Butte County Board of Supervisors.

### Transportation

### Major highways

- 33 State Route 32
- 20 State Route 70
- 24 State Route 99
- 16 State Route 149
- 162 State Route 162
- 191 State Route 191

### Public transportation

Butte Regional Transit or the B-Line, provides service in and between Chico, Oroville, Paradise, Gridley and Biggs. Chico is also a connection point for **Glenn Ride** buses to Glenn County and **Plumas Transit Systems** buses to Plumas County.

Greyhound buses stop in Chico.

Amirak's *Coast Starlight* (Los Angeles-Seattle) passenger train makes a stop daily in each direction in Chico's Chico station.

### Airports

General Aviation airports in Butte County include:

- Chico Municipal Airport
- Oroville Municipal Airport
- Paradise Airport
- Ranchaero Airport
- Richvale Airport

### Communities

### Cities

- Biggs
- Chico
- Gridley
- Oroville (county seat)

### Towns

- Paradise

### Census-designated places

- Bangor
- Berry Creek
- Butte Creek Canyon
- Butte Meadows
- Butte Valley
- Cherokee
- Clipper Mills
- Cohasset
- Concow
- Durham
- Forbes Ranch
- Forest Ranch
- Honcut
- Kelly Ridge
- Magalía
- Nord
- Oroville East
- Palermo
- Rackberby
- Richvale
- Robinson Hill
- South Oroville
- Stirling City
- Thermalito
- Yankee Hill

### Unincorporated communities

- Centerville
- DeSaba
- Helltown
- Inskip
- Irish Town
- Lomo
- Lovelock
- Mineral Slide
- Powellton

### Ghost towns

- Bidwell's Bar - now located under Lake Oroville.
- Butte Creek
- Coutolenc
- Diamondville
- Forks of Butte** - a former gold mining settlement.<sup>[k]</sup>
- Hamilton - Butte County's first permanent county seat. John Bidwell discovered gold at Hamilton in 1848, and the settlement arose. It was located on the west side of the Feather River, 15 mi (24 km) downstream from Oroville.
- Lynchburg

### Population ranking

The population ranking of the following table is based on the 2010 census of Butte County.<sup>[k]</sup>

† county seat

Rank	City/Town/etc.	Municipal type	Population (2010 Census)
1	<b>Chico</b>	City	86,187
2	<b>Paradise</b>	Town	26,218
3	<b>† Oroville</b>	City	15,546
4	<b>Magalia</b>	CDP	11,310
5	<b>Oroville East</b>	CDP	8,280
6	<b>Thermalito</b>	CDP	6,646
7	<b>Gridley</b>	City	6,584
8	<b>South Oroville</b>	CDP	5,742
9	<b>Durham</b>	CDP	5,518
10	<b>Palermo</b>	CDP	5,382
11	<b>Kelly Ridge</b>	CDP	2,544
12	<b>Biggs</b>	City	1,707
13	<b>Forest Ranch</b>	CDP	1,424
14	<b>Berry Ranch</b>	CDP	1,184
15	<b>Butte Creek Canyon</b>	CDP	1,086
16	<b>Butte Valley</b>	CDP	899
17	<b>Cohasset</b>	CDP	847
18	<b>Concow</b>	CDP	710
19	<b>Bangor</b>	CDP	646
20	<b>Honcut</b>	CDP	370
21	<b>Yankee Hill</b>	CDP	333
t-22	<b>Forbestown</b>	CDP	320
t-22	<b>Nord</b>	CDP	320
23	<b>Stirling City</b>	CDP	295
24	<b>Richvale</b>	CDP	244
25	<b>Rackberby</b>	CDP	244
26	<b>Berry Creek Rancheria</b>	AIAN	152
27	<b>Clipper Mills</b>	CDP	142
28	<b>Robinson Mill</b>	CDP	80
29	<b>Cherokee</b>	CDP	69
30	<b>Butte Meadows</b>	CDP	40
31	<b>Enterprise Rancheria</b> <sup>[k]</sup>	AIAN	1

### In popular culture

Several movies have been filmed in Butte County, including *One with the Wind*, *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, *Friendless*, *Magie Town*, *The Klansman*, *Ruby Ridge*, *An American Tragedy*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *Under Wraps*. The most recent season of the television series *Sons of Anarchy* features an episode in which the Sons come into contact with corrupt police in the fictional town of Eden, located in Butte County.

### See also

- List of California counties
- List of school districts in Butte County, California
- List of museums in the Shasta Cascade (California)
- National Register of Historic Places listings in Butte County, California

### Sources

- US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics.
- State of California, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.

### Notes

- ↑  Other = Some other race + Two or more races
- ↑  Native American = Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander + American Indian or Alaska Native
- ↑  Only larceny-theft cases involving property over \$400 in value are reported as property crimes.
- ↑  % Percentage of registered voters with respect to total population. Percentage of party members with respect to registered voters follow.

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