



"To protect, enhance, and support Butte County natural resources and agriculture by working with willing landowners and citizens through education, land management, and on-the-ground projects."

150 Chuck Yeager Way, Ste. A, Oroville, CA 95965 * (530) 693-3173 * bcrd@carcd.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes

Date: Thursday, September 21, 2023

Time: 9:00 AM

**Location: Klamath Conference Room
202 Mira Loma Drive, Oroville, CA 95965**

Or Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88974119154?pwd=V01CaUpYVEw3VFpNQS84YkFSSmJkQT09>

Meeting ID: 889 7411 9154

Passcode: 575904

Join via phone +1 408 638 0968

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Dave Lee, President

2. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** – Present were Chair Dave Lee, Treasurer Colleen Hatfield, Directors John Christofferson, Samantha Lewis, Andrew Sohnrey; District Manager Thad Walker; Staff Cameron Musser, Dallas Koller, Wolfy Rougle; Konkau Association Corporation President Fred Gramps; guests Jeff Boyen and Toni, managers at People's Solutions at Morrison in Chico (consultant); guest Kelly Peterson of the Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation; guest Toby Giesentanner.

3. **REVISIONS TO AGENDA** (only emergency situations requiring the need to take immediate actions may be added as action items pursuant to Gov. code 549954.2(b))

4. PUBLIC COMMENT (on non-action items)

(1) (3 min. limit per speaker/topic, 15 minutes/person/meeting total) (2) Public comment is encouraged. Any member of the public may address the Board with any comment related to the Resource Conservation District's areas of concern.

*However, no action can be taken by the Board on such items at this current meeting. The Board may direct staff to agendaize such items for consideration at a future meeting. (3) *Please note that all action items will have time set aside for public comment prior to the vote occurring. After a motion is made and seconded by two BCRC D Directors, the Chair will first ask for any further discussion from the Directors and Associate Directors and then Chair will open up the item for brief public comment limited to 2 minutes/person. After the public comment period closes a vote will be held.*

CONSENT AGENDA:

- a) **Review and approval of the minutes of the BOD meeting held on 8/17/2023** – Samantha

moved to adopt consent agenda, John seconded; motion passed unanimously

5. ACTION ITEMS – Dave Lee, President

- a) **Review and approval of Financials/ Accounts Payable- Colleen Hatfield** – Board reviewed the financials. Board members and staff remarked on the success of the high school speak-off contest. No updates this month on our annual audit. John moved, Samantha seconded to accept the financials; motion passed unanimously.
- b) **Resolution 09212023, Adoption of CalPERS 457 Plan, Employer Adoption Agreement, and consideration of Loan Provision/ Roth Adoption- Thad Walker** – A 457 is the special district version of a 401(k). If BCRCD adopted it, it would be offered to all staff (including otherwise non-benefitted staff) but would at the same time be totally optional for staff to opt into. Allevery is not currently a plan subscriber but that doesn't mean BCRCD can't enroll in this 457, it would just take a little extra time for startup. There are options to add an employer loan benefit and a Roth IRA benefit but those don't have to be elected at this time; we could start with the 457 alone and add additional options later. It is optional for BCRCD to offer match and this can be added later. Andrew moved to adopt the 457 with no match or other add-ons at this time. John seconded; motion passed unanimously.
- c) **CEQA NOE for Butte PBA burns - Wolfy Rougle** – Now that we have a CARX on staff (Dalla Koller, CARX #0024), landowners who burn with the PBA are eligible for enrollment in the CA State Prescribed Fire Claims Fund, a public rx fire insurance pool for burns where a CARX provides leadership. (Landowners continue to **hold** liability, they just have access to the claims fund.) This means a BCRCD employee will be implementing burns (not just providing education), so CEQA is triggered. Therefore, the NOE under CEQA was prepared under the exemption “minor alterations to land”. Dallas and Wolfy shared some of the policy background behind the Prescribed Fire Claims Fund, which community burners have been advocating for for years. Dallas explained how with the suite of policy protections that come along with CARX qualification, the BCRCD is, if anything, even more protected from liability than in the past. Colleen moved, Andrew seconded to adopt and sign the exemption; motion passed unanimously.
- d) **Augmented agreement with Point Blue for CEQA services - Wolfy Rougle** – This would fund BCRCD to complete NOEs on up to 8 projects that appear to qualify, most helping farmers and ranchers with improved livestock watering, hedgerows, pollinator habitat, wildlife boxes, fence replacements, and exclosures. (Exclosures are fences designed primarily to exclude livestock from a sensitive area (such as a spring or area of young oaks) rather than to enclose livestock.) If, during the process of analysis, it became apparent that a project did not qualify for an NOE, BCRCD would not be bound to completing CEQA on that project. John moved to approve the agreement, Colleen seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- e) **SFLAP Contract with John Benherd Custom Logging- Cameron Musser** – This project has gone through two rounds of bidding as more information came to light and the project's complexity deepened. This logger bid on both the first round and the revised second round of bidding, so he has good familiarity with the project. He has a plan to mitigate the slash through burn piles (which he has experience with) as well as through a deal with Cal Hot Wood, Oroville-based firewood business. All three references stated this local operator (based in a tiny town outside Bangor) does good “clean” work. Typo should be corrected: in scope section 3, omit “SFLAP participant Mathis hazard tree felling” so it should only say “Berry Creek SFLAP”. Samantha moved to accept with that correction, John seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- f) **District Manager Recruitment, Consultant Presentation, Morrison -Andrew Sohnrey** – Based in Chico, Morrison have been in business for 21 years and provide services in business/accounting services, recruitment/HR/organizational development (“people solutions”), and competitive grantwriting which they offer either as a comprehensive or “a la carte” service. They have helped secure \$255M in funding to date. They employ 15 FTE and about 90% of their business is in food and ag, both for- and non-profit. They do lots of work with City of Chico, Yolo Land Trust (Jeff described the successful search Morrison had conducted for YLT's next ED), CSU Center for

Regenerative Ag; Rice Research foundation, etc. Toni presented on their executive recruitment process. Typically when they work with an org they start with interviews of the key stakeholders to understand what the ideal candidate would look like. They perform a site visit; job and market analysis for compensation; and tap into their own strong network/database of candidates. They will facilitate interviews and help with offer letter/negotiations. Morrison also do ongoing check-ins and make sure the candidate is onboarding well for a long-term fit because they are vested in having healthy organizations in their community. What these services would cost and how they fit into RCD's budget will be discussed later. Toni will share a sample engagement letter.

- g) **Carbon Cycle Institute/ Colusa County RCD, Concurrence Document and Governance Funding Disbursement Agreement - Thad Walker** – Christina Harrington, who lives in Davis and is based in the Colusa RCD office, is serving as the hub manager for this healthy soils initiative. BCRCO has the chance to join the hub and work on both the larger regional level as well as local conservation planning/carbon farm planning efforts; comes with \$4,000 to support BCRCO's participation. The Sac Valley collaboration of RCDs has been trying for 4-5 years to get this hub up and running to support local farmers/ranchers. John moved, Samantha seconded to adopt the agreement; motion passed unanimously.
- h) Next Board of Directors Meeting: **Note time and date change** Rescheduled to Thursday, Oct 26, 2023, at 8:00 AM, Location: Klamath Conference Room 202 Mira Loma Drive, Oroville, CA

6. RCD PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS -STAFF REPORTS

- a) Project Updates – Scoping will end soon on the **Colby Mountain trails** project, most comments have been positive. BCRCO has been working on two **RCPP** dedicated funding pools for Butte County land managers: one for forestry, one for almond growers. **Crane Valley:** The technical lead on this project will change from Forest Creek Restoration to Plumas Corporation. **Upper Butte Cr:** On track to meet USFS timeline of specialist reports being completed by Oct 5. **PBA:** The prescribed fire training exchange, Butte TREX 2023, has had more interest than ever before and we have had to turn away participants for the first 2 training weekends even after making changes so we could increase enrollment 50%. There's a lot more to TREX than just those 2 training weekends though, so we are looking forward to a great burn season.

7. PARTNERS' REPORTS (5-minute limit per group)

- a) **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)** – Not present
- b) **Butte County departments**

Kelly Peterson -Butte County Water and Resource Conservation –

Kelly presented groundwater level monitoring results comparing spring 2022 (3rd year of bad drought) to spring 2023 after a good rain year. On average, wells did come up about 3 feet in Vina subbasin and in Butte subbasin about 5 feet (but there was a lot of variation and some wells did continue to fall). Kelly stated the small size of this rebound is attributable to major cutbacks in surface water which created more reliance on groundwater. In addition to water *levels*, the department also tests for salt concentrations: they aren't finding much salt, but there is some dissolved salinity in the Wyandotte subbasin; it's not clear how long this has been in the water. Dept. was successful in a recent \$1M IRWM grant. Will pay BCFSC to reduce some fuels in Berry Creek and also help some groundwater users affected by the North Complex fire. Dept. also got a \$1.2M DWR grant to replace drinking water wells in Feather Ridge Estates. Dept. is also working on a Palermo clean water grant (Palermo experiences regular flooding that compromises wells through septic overflow). Meanwhile, the County has a \$17M grant project to extend the Dept's about-to-expire drinking water program so they can continue to provide clean drinking water to people whose wells have gone dry and/or have water cleanliness issues; plus, they can continue to engage in strategic drought planning and provide "drought navigator" services for residents.

SGMA update: \$5.3M was awarded for Vina GSP projects; \$5.2M awarded for Wyandotte, all this work has to be done in 3 years and the projects' RFPs will start rolling out soon! The RFPs will start rolling out through "Public Purchase" website of Butte County. BCRCO already has an account with this site so we can keep track. Vina GSA landowners will start seeing assessments on their tax bills of \$1.54/ac regardless of water usage (will

rise to \$3.08/ac eventually). Wyandotte uses a different assessment system that does assess based on water usage: \$1.38/ac for non-irrigators, surface water users \$8.98/ac, groundwater irrigators \$13.86/ac. In the Butte subbasin, the 11 GSAs are working on a collaborative fee contribution structure. Vina GSA board has vacancies, applications due 9/29. Wyandotte Creek: a couple new stakeholder directors will be appointed in Dec and stakeholder domestic well users and tribal, environmental, business representatives can apply by Oct. 6. BCDWRC will be hiring!

c) Community groups, agencies, and tribal partners ~~Matthew Gramps-Williford~~ Fred Gramps, Konkow Valley Band of Maidu –

Fred Gramps was here for Matthew, who is performing in dances for the next 3 days. Fred is President of the Konkow Association Corporation, which is the non-profit arm of the Konkow Valley band of Maidu Indians. When BCRCDC wrote the budget for project SNC-1312 (Concow Resilience Implementation), we wrote in a small budget for cultural monitoring to be performed by the KVBMI, whose ancestral territory is the Concow Basin. “Cultural monitoring” can mean monitoring culturally important plants, or it can mean cataloguing old artifacts that may be found in the field.

Fred discussed the experience of serving as cultural monitor during field season 2023 on a large tract of land that had been previously surveyed and found to have no artifacts by the Forest Service. Tribal monitors found an incredible richness of artifacts, disclosing a long history of habitation, that the Forest Service archaeologists had missed. Fred stated that having Tribal monitors built into budgets can 1) protect resources that might otherwise be missed and destroyed; 2) enable both the Tribe and Forest Service/other land managers to continue to develop their databases and understanding of history; and 3) enable Native knowledge-keepers to train and teach not only Tribal members but non-Native neighbors as well. Fred also stated that this experience has helped him understand elements of his own heritage, and of Butte County’s history we all share, that had not been available to him before.

Toby Giesentanner, who had served as a judge on the high school speak-off, thanked the Board for such a successful and enjoyable evening.

8. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS

a) Butte County RCD Directors and Associate Directors are welcome to report

CLOSED SESSION

Legal and Employee Matters. Board reviewed compensation packages and approved offer for PBA coordinator and forestry technician.

9. ADJOURNMENT

***NOTE:** The Butte County Resources Conservation District (BCRCD) distributes its Board meeting agendas electronically at least 24 hours in advance of meetings. If you would like to be added to, or removed from, the email list, please notify the Butte County RCD at (530) 534-0112, ext. 122 or by email to: bcrdc@carcd.org. The BCRCD also publicly posts notice and agenda of meetings 72 hours in advance of meetings at the Butte County RCD office located at 150 Chuck Yeager Way, Suite A, Oroville, CA. **Reasonable Accommodations:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Butte County RCD Manager at (530) 534-0112, ext. 122.*

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