



"To protect, enhance, and support Butte County natural resources and agriculture by working with willing partners, landowners, and the community 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, July 16, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: 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 – 9:05 am: Chair Dave Lee, Directors Allen Harthorn and Jeff Carter, Treasurer Colleen Hatfield; District Manager Thad Walker, Staff Wolfy Rouble, Faith Churchill, Dallas Koller and David Mitchell; Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation Director Kamie Loeser; online guest Michael Miller.

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)) – None

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 agendize 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 BCRCD 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.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

a) Review and approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on 6/18/26 – Allen moved,

Jeff seconded, motion passed unanimously

6. ACTION ITEMS – Dave Lee, President

- a) Review and approval of Financials/ Accounts Payable- Colleen Hatfield – The RCD still shows a balance “in the red,” but this is to be expected at the end of a quarter, since we run on an accrual basis and so many grants get reimbursed on a quarterly basis. (Staff has well over \$70,000 in invoices to send out to funders in July for work done in June, May and April.) At the beginning of June 2026, our deficit “as of June 30” appeared as about \$99K; by mid-July, our deficit “as of June 30” appeared as about \$54K; in past years 2024 and 2025, by fall our deficit “as of June 30” always disappears and is replaced by a modest surplus. The reason our net operating income for the same day of the year changes with time is that we run our bookkeeping on an accrual basis, which means we consider a bill we receive to be paid by us as soon as we receive it. If we ran instead on a cash basis (where we don’t register an expense until we literally pay it), our net operating income at this moment would be positive at \$148K.

We also discussed the Cottonwood endowment and what the RCD could potentially spend some of this excess money on to enhance natural resources and agriculture in Butte County. CalTrans won’t approve any expenditures except those that keep specific conservation values (burrowing owl, Swainson’s hawk, star thistle reduction, and 3 vernal pool invertebrates) at 2008 levels. No improving life for any other organisms allowed. While Wolfy has been bouncing ideas off CalTrans for habitat conservation (such as improving the reservoir infrastructure to avoid any future burial of fairy shrimp habitat vernal pools) she has not made much headway so far. Colleen proposed that she and Wolfy work together to draft a letter the Board can sign to CalTrans and USFWS.

Allen moved, Jeff seconded to approve the financials; motion passed unanimously.

- b) Consideration to close Mechanics Bank, Checking 2125 and transfer funds to Golden Valley, Checking 4706 -Colleen Hatfield – Jeff moved, Allen seconded, motion passed unanimously
- c) Presentation of Final Single Audit Report, June 30th 2025, Nigro & Nigro PC -Thad Walker (information only) – No questions on this item.
- d) Consideration of opening a Grant Advance Account for Wildlife Conservation Board, Colby Mountain Trails, WC-2595AB at Golden Valley Bank -Thad Walker – Would allow the RCD to request and store an advance equal to 25% of the total award. Dave asked about concerns from the one group of equestrians. Thad responded that to address these and other concerns, a special Technical Advisory Committee is ready to be formed, and BOD will consider this at the upcoming special meeting. Allen moved, Jeff seconded to open this account; motion passed unanimously.
- e) Update from Butte County Water and Resource Conservation Department on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and Butte County Drought Taskforce - Kamie Loeser (information only) – Kamie described the 14 GSAs spread across 3 subbasins (2 GSAs in the Vina sub-basin, 11 in the “Butte” sub-basin, and 1 in Wyandotte Creek sub-basin). Each sub-basin has its own, single, GSP (groundwater sustainability plan). The County administers the Wyandotte Creek GSA directly and has a strong administrative role facilitating the meetings in the other 2. Vina and Wyandotte GSAs each qualified for \$5.5 M in funding, which runs through the end of this year. In Vina sub-basin, sustainability activities include a Lindo Channel recharge feasibility study, and data collection. In future years, the State DWR and the County Dept. of Water and Resource Conservation will continue to monitor groundwater wells in the Vina, Wyandotte Creek and Butte groundwater subbasins.

West of Highway 99, there are opportunities for using Lindo Channel as a recharge zone. In Wyandotte Creek GSA, County has been working on a master drainage plan in Palermo where, thanks to clearing overgrown canals (using the County’s routine

maintenance agreement with CDFW under 1600!), excess floodwaters and SFWPA waters can now be shunted into Wyman Ravine so it can inundate rice fields and managed wetlands. Allen asked, wouldn't the canal in Palermo have more capacity and reduce flooding if it meandered a bit and wasn't so straight. Kamie: Definitely, but there's no way to re-engineer it now because it's totally surrounded by private land – except for in one spot, where a few parcels of “no-man's-land” are available for a potential widening or detention basin. However, nothing has ever been planned there so far. Kamie shared that about 10 alternative conjunction use plans exist with all kinds of different possible improvements for this conveyance system!

The GSPs were adopted 5 years ago. They are to be re-evaluated every 5 years in terms of how well the plans are being implemented and do they need to be amended. Wyandotte Creek's GSP will be amended, “Butte”'s GSP will not be. For Vina's, we're not sure yet, but we will know by January 2027.

Of potential relevance to the RCD, there's a perennial flooding problem associated with the Rock Creek and Keefer Slough “bifurcation” (a site on private lands where water that's supposed to go down Rock Creek instead takes Keefer Slough, overwhelming it). It may not be possible to end all flooding here but it definitely is possible to reduce it. CalTrans' improvements to 99 would be far less expensive if the bifurcation was fixed – that's an opportunity to save the State money – but “the only jurisdictions that cover the entire area are the County and the RCD, and the County doesn't do work on private lands.”

In Bidwell Park, a Five-Mile Basin multi-phase project to reduce flooding, reduce ongoing maintenance burden, and address biological/recreation interests is currently in the last months of the “monitoring/analysis” phase and design alternatives will be presented to the BOS in spring 2027.

A draft Drought Resilience Plan is available for public and interagency comment through Aug 28, 2026: www.buttecounty.net/2281/Drought-Resilience-Plan

Kamie shared a list of upcoming meetings that relate to groundwater regulation, well and septic updates, and BOS meetings where BCDWRC will present. Groundwater levels (found in “sub-stats,” a.k.a. sub-basin status reports) are shared from April to mid-June, mostly by Kelly, but Kamie will send these to RCD for our review. Kamie stated all sub-basins in Butte County are in maintenance except Vina which is in “slight decline”, and welcomed any and all questions from RCD board to her and/or Kelly.

- f) Resolution 07162026 to change BCRCDD physical and mailing address from 150 Chuck Yeager Way, Unit 1, Oroville CA 95965 to 641 Entler Ave Suite 47, Chico CA 95928 -Thad Walker – This is necessary for our address change to be official, (per LAFCO). County Counsel has reviewed the resolution. Jeff moved, Allen seconded, to approve the resolution; motion passed unanimously.
- g) Agreement with Konkow Valley Band of Maidu Indians, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, SNC 1710 Tribal Funds -Faith Churchill – Would allocate 17,614.40 of our RFFCP-1710 funds, that are specifically set aside for Tribes and Tribal land management planning, to the Konkow band. This will allow them to work toward a CEQA document authorizing land management planning on the 619-acre parcel west of Concow Lake which is in the care of the Archaeological Society and a small sliver in the care of the Thermalito Water and Sewer District. Jeff moved, Allen seconded to approve the agreement; motion passed unanimously.
- h) CEQA Notice of Exemption: Berry Creek Rancheria Wildfire and Resilience Project, Berry Creek Cemetery Unit, Berry Creek Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California - Wolfy Rougle – This document was also developed using a small amount of funding from the RFFCP-1710 funds for Tribal land management. This will assist the Berry Creek tribe in using CAL FIRE Tribal Wildfire Resilience grant funds for some fuels reduction on a Tribal property in Berry Creek. Colleen moved, Allen seconded to approve the NOE; motion passed unanimously.
- i) Next general Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 9:00 AM, Location: Klamath Conference Room 202 Mira Loma Drive, Oroville, CA

- j) However, there will be a special meeting Thursday June 23rd to cover about 4 or 5 time-sensitive items. Dave proposed this special meeting be held in Chico. Director Sohnrey should be back by then so a quorum should be easy to get. 24 hours' notice will be given of exact place and time.

7. RCD PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS -STAFF REPORTS

- a) Project Updates – Staff have completed the first invasives herbicide oversight project in Concow on Federal lands; have been flagging timber units in Upper Butte; and doing botany monitoring in Butte Creek House. Thad attended the Ag Summit and stated it was a richly informative, well-organized event; he also attended the most recent Tuscan water district meeting. Faith stated there are 2 upcoming BCCG field tours, one on 7/23 to discuss reforestation in Berry Creek (focusing on Berry Creek Rancheria) and on 8/13 to focus on Forest Ranch (with presentations from Dallas and David and also the FSC). Additionally, there's a BCCG quarterly meeting next Monday. Faith also updated the Board on the progress of the SNC "Landscape Grant," which would confer \$8M-\$12M per collaborative. There's a chance the BCCG might request RCD serve as the core grantee, which would result in pretty considerable income for the RCD – and, of course, would also bring pretty considerable responsibilities, which we feel ready for with all our past RFFCP grant management experience.

We continue to pursue more funding: possibly from CAL FIRE for post-fire assistance to private landowners in Berry Creek, and from BLM on an increased agreement for implementation (esp Forks of Butte). Allen mentioned the Forks of Butte should have its own recreation plan, which it currently doesn't, and Allen sees this as a strong role for the BCRCD. Dallas responded it's true there's no stand-alone plan, but there is a substantial section devoted to recreation in the NEPA document, and we hope to be able to build out those goals through an upcoming agreement with the BLM (up to \$10M).

- b) Update on Butte Prescribed Burn Association (PBA) -Dallas Koller/ David Mitchell – David provided an overview of the PBA and the great diversity of projects it makes possible, from complex multi-agency collaborations treating large parcels of extremely dense fuels, to volunteer days where neighbors and kids get comfortable underburning in mellow oak woodlands. The Butte PBA has burned 514 acres since 2021, across 109 burns, with **no** major injuries, **no** property damage, **no** escapes. In those 5 years 1117 volunteers have donated 6,170 hours of time.

Back in mid-2025, our small PBA accounted for 17% of the PBA burning statewide. Since then, more PBAs have come online, which is great to see and we look forward to accounting for a smaller share of the TOTAL good fire that's taking place! David shared about a recent burn in Forest Ranch where the landowner was not comfortable signing the CAL FIRE paperwork but *was* comfortable working with the PBA, so for the first time ever CAL FIRE was a resource assigned to a PBA burn with an RCD burn boss in command.

PBA assistance often results in landowners gaining the confidence to burn safely on their own. Dallas shared a testimonial from a landowner who had used the confidence and training she gained from being a PBA volunteer... to respond effectively to a surprise wildfire start on her own property. She was able to mostly control it by the time the fire professionals she had called arrived.

As probably the only RCD statewide that has 2 CARXes on staff, we've received many requests recently from agencies and large landowners in search of fee-for-service burn planning and implementation work from Dallas and David. This provides a promising avenue to offset the costs of operating the PBA as a free service to Butte County landowners.

How far we've come: Permitting environment has improved so much in Butte County over the last 5 years, there are now many months a year when we don't need CAL FIRE permits, and CAL FIRE is often completely waiving inspections if Dallas or David will be the burn boss. We have an excellent relationship with CAL FIRE now and it's benefitting the whole county. At the State level, liability protections have been improved, and there's room for more improvement too. In the future, we want to be able to move even faster from the landowner's first call to the burn day. This would require 1) more funding for unit prep and 2) more ways to have multiple burns going at the same time.

Allen hoped the PBA could assist with burning on the CDFW Butte Creek preserve. Future funding outlook? –Butte PBA is fully funded through 2027. After that, we’ll need to find more but are optimistic about the SNC Landscape Grant and/or a long-term state baseline funding solution. Board expressed it is happy to write a letter to legislatures and decision makers about beneficial fire policy; asked staff to keep them in the loop.

Dallas and David will be presenting a longer version of the slideshow at the November CARCD conference.

8. PARTNERS’ REPORTS (5-minute limit per group)

- a) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – not present
- b) Butte County departments – see e above
- c) Community groups – FOBC received a BOR award for \$7.7M for Butte Creek restoration between the Skyway and the Mechoopda reserve! Pending design completion. Dave asked will they be able to remove the collapsed bridge? –Allen stated they are trying, but since some biologists see the bridge serving as habitat, it will be a challenge.

9. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS

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

10. ADJOURNMENT – 10:58 am

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: bcrcd@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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