



*"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."*

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Minutes

**Date: Thursday, December 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** – Chair Dave Lee, Treasurer Colleen Hatfield, Directors Andrew Sohnrey and Samantha Lewis, Bookkeeper Cheryl Kiesel, District Manager Thad Walker, Staff Wolfy Rougle. Guests Allen Harthorn and Mike Marvier
  
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)) – A check we sent to a subcontractor was intercepted en route and used fraudulently. The checking account -4716 needs to be closed and our debit card has been frozen. Board action is required to open a new account and get a new debit card. Andrew moved, Samantha seconded to close -4716, open a new account with Dave Lee and Colleen Hatfield as the signers, and get a new debit card. Motion passed unanimously.
  
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.*

## 5. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a) Review and approval of the minutes of the BOD meeting held on 11/16/2023 – Colleen moved, Samantha seconded to approve the consent agenda; motion passed unanimously

## 6. ACTION ITEMS – Dave Lee, President

- a) Review and approval of Financials/ Accounts Payable- Colleen Hatfield – Colleen introduced the board to Cheryl, BCRCD’s bookkeeper extraordinaire. Colleen and Cheryl explained why it appears that BCRCD lost a bunch of money in November: There was a \$342,000 Summitt Forestry bill dated in November (as a liability) but we didn’t show ourselves as paid back for it until December. It’s paid now and RCD is reimbursed for it.

Q.: Why are our “liabilities” so much higher than our actual accounts payable? –A: Because anytime we have an advance on a grant, that advance sitting in our bank accounts is considered a “liability” from a bookkeeping perspective.

Andrew moved, Samantha seconded to approve the financials; motion passed unanimously.

Colleen and Wolfy provided update on Cottonwood accounting. Samantha: Why doesn’t the ~\$900,000 in our Cottonwood endowment/AMG fund show up on our balance sheet? Answer: The contract we have with CalTrans essentially indicates that the interest/growth in the endowment remains the asset of CalTrans; however, this could be interpreted as not in sync with state/special district regulations. The auditor, Leslie, has been very helpful helping us navigate the CalTrans endowment complexities. Leslie largely agrees with Cheryl that some of that endowment money should be considered a BCRCD asset. RCD will confer with County Counsel for extra guidance. But by next year, Board should be seeing the Cottonwood endowment on our balance sheet.

- b) Grants and Projects update by Friends of Butte Creek (FBC), Executive Director, Allen Harthorn (Information Item Only) – Allen shared that:
  - FBC is now one of very few non-profits in the state that hold a water right dedicated to instream use (in this case, 5 cfs, but they are looking to buy more).
  - FBC has been awarded funding, and is now in the permitting phase, to remove a broken bridge and a crumbling road that’s been contributing asphalt to Butte Creek. FBC will also pursue floodplain reshaping & ameliorate the topographic damage caused by historic mining. BCRCD may be asked to assist with permitting or not. An example of a successful precedent for what FBC is trying to do is the restoration of lower Clear Creek in west Redding. The keyword in salmonid restoration right now is “rearing habitat” and FBC’s floodplain restoration would aim to create more. Additional benefits would be flood reduction and improved wildfire resilience for that entire reach of the canyon.
  - The PG&E flumes are in bad shape and diversions by the Paradise Irrigation District are decreasing. That means it’s a critical time to assess the flume, infrastructure, and habitat conditions (from Quartz Bowl all the way up to Butte Meadows) and potentially assist PG&E in removing the Centerville Head Dam. FBC has applied for a NOAA barrier removal grant to fund the assessment (and, potentially, head dam removal process). When it comes time to re-shape (i.e., abate) the problematic parts of the flume, Pacific Watershed Associates is one firm capable of doing the work.
  - There is talk that the Butte flume (the one that feeds DeSabra Reservoir, the one that failed in August 2023) may never come back online. If true, that would result in a section of Butte Creek receiving full flow for the first time in years, making this an ideal time to re-assess what full flow looks like. Under full flow, what are the actual fish passage barriers, if any?
  - Little Butte Creek: Historic outflow has been 1.5 cfs (but with dam leakage, it’s really 4.5-5 cfs, more during storm events of course). FBC would like to develop some restoration projects on Little Butte Creek, improving its potential for steelhead and perhaps fall run salmon. (CDFW currently blocks fall run salmon

at Parrott-Phelan dam in an effort to protect spring-run salmon, but FBC doesn't see that as the right thing to be doing going forward.) These restoration efforts would be done in partnership with Little Butte Creek Canyon's largest private landowner.

- Fewer than 100 spring run salmon spawned in Butte Creek this year. Mill and Deer Creek populations have also crashed.
  - FBC is applying for several grants for their project of conducting an in-depth, comprehensive recovery planning for the Butte Creek salmon "stronghold". Each proposal also includes (1) some funding for BCRCD to be involved in the planning and (2) some land acquisition funding for potentially up to 600 acres.
  - Discussion of the existing diversions from the W Br Feather River into Butte Creek. Although the diverted water does not appreciably decrease temperatures in Butte Creek (modeled as only cooling Butte Creek ½ a degree at Centerville Dam, and there are times when W Br water is actually warmer than Butte Cr), still, the diversion does contribute an average of 100 extra cfs to Butte Creek flows. (PG&E's water right at the W Br intake is 125 cfs; in summer it may divert as little as 70 cfs into Butte Creek. However, since Butte Creek's base required instream flow in summer is only 40 cfs, this is a significant boost.) The canal that delivers water from W Br, Hendricks Canal, is also seeing failures just like its sister flumes, though less well publicized. Hendricks canal is now being operated at just 50-75% of capacity to avoid stressing it.
  - The relationship between Butte Sink/Sutter Bypass area duck clubs and salmon advocates is better than it ever has been, and the potential of duck clubs to provide important habitat and shelter for young fish is now being explored in new ways. Last year, hundreds of 4-inch young salmon rescued from the Wild Goose club were radio-tagged and released at 4 different points in the system, allowing researchers to understand which routes give the young fish the best chance of successfully reaching the ocean. (Some made it to the Benecia Bridge within days, others never made it.)
  - Due to the superior rearing/floodplain habitat, Butte Cr salmon are twice as big as Mill Cr/Deer Cr salmon when they enter the ocean.
- c) Review of Fee for Services Rates and Consideration of Updates -Thad Walker – BCRCD's rates have not been revised since June 2021 and risk not keeping pace with labor cost inflation. DM suggested a \$15/hr increase across the board. Colleen agreed in general but suggested the project manager rate rise by \$20. Samantha and Andrew stated that while these estimates aren't bad, they would ask staff return in a month with more information and a presentation of regional industry standard rates for comparable work. Samantha pointed out this comparison should best take place after the first of the new year, since wages will rise on Jan 1 and lots of firms will be revising their fee for service schedules. Item tabled until January.
- d) Review of Operating Reserves Policy and Contribution -Colleen Hatfield/ Thad Walker – We adopted an operating reserves policy back at the Sept 2020 board meeting. However, we have seldom contributed to the reserves we established (our reserves account still only holds about \$12,000, although our budget allows us to contribute higher amounts in alignment with our adopted policy). 3 months of operating expenses is about \$150,000, but a more exact estimate will be brought back to the Board next month. Item tabled until January.
- e) Review of Long Range Project Forecast -Thad Walker/ Wolfy Rougle (Information Only) – Board reviewed RCD's 10-position org chart (3 of these positions are currently unfilled or underfilled). Board also reviewed staff's long-range forecast for existing and reasonably expected grants/contracts through the end of 2026. Starting in Q1 2025, projected funding drops off from sustaining 8+ FTE to only about 5 full-time staff members. Our past experience has been that we consistently end up with far more funding than we projected. However, staff is actively looking at grants and contracts that can extend our capacity through 2025 and beyond. The need to constantly secure new grants and contracts is nothing new for the RCD,

- f) Driver Fuel Policy for BCRCD Vehicles/ Use of Pacific Pride Fuel Cards -Thad Walker – Samantha moved, Andrew seconded to approve the policy as written; motion passed unanimously.
- g) Purchase of Fire Skid to Support Prescribed Burn Association Operations -Thad Walker – PBA coordinator has identified a 125-gal PolyTuff baffle tank-based skid unit as the most usable and cost-effective unit. Allen Harthorn wondered whether the Butte Creek Canyon volunteer firefighters (station 26)'s slip-in unit was ever available for BCRCD to rent or borrow. Thad will pass on the station 26 contact info to PBA coordinators. Andrew moved, Colleen seconded; motion to purchase the QTAC unit passed unanimously.
- h) Extension of Agreement 21-CS-11272138-031 with Pacific Southwest Research Station - Wolfy Rougle – Would not add new money or scope of work but would simply extend the time remaining to complete this forestry data collection agreement. Colleen moved to approve the extension, Andrew seconded; motion passed unanimously.
- i) Agreement with California Association of Resource Conservation District for Regional Conservation Partnership Program through NRCS -Thad Walker – This is the dedicated RCPP pool for forestry work. We are one of 8 RCDs who will be sharing in it. Don't let the \$5M+ match scare you: it is split across all 8 RCDs, and anyway it can be fulfilled using partner match (e.g., work done by the Fire Safe Council would qualify; that's just an example). This agreement could potentially give us the ability to hire someone full-time to just work on EQIP. Colleen moved to approve the agreement; Andrew seconded; motion passed unanimously.
- j) Next Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 9:00 AM, Location: Klamath Conference Room 202 Mira Loma Drive, Oroville, CA

## **7. RCD PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS -STAFF REPORTS**

- a) Project Updates – Several projects are ready for close-out by the end of the quarter/year; meanwhile, we received word Butte Creek House implementation was funded. This important meadow is a high candidate site for beaver re-introduction and not terribly far from the first reintroduction site, Tasmam Koyom (Humbug Valley). Side note: Crane Valley meadow is also a work site for us and might be even more suitable for beavers than BCH!

In terms of implementation happening right now, we're deep in the middle of SFLAP and our assistance to CAL FIRE on Swedes Flat.

Upper Butte Creek NEPA is going into the EA phase and Colby Mtn planning is almost finished. Colleen and Thad attended the CARCD conference and Colleen was honored for her service to RCDs.

## **8. PARTNERS' REPORTS (5-minute limit per group)**

- a) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- b) Butte County departments
- c) Community groups

## **9. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS**

- a) Butte County RCD Directors and Associate Directors are welcome to report
  - Samantha mentioned that our last LAFCO report was in 2019, so our five-year report is therefore about to start being developed by LAFCO. What is BCRCD's plan to address the open issues in the last report? (Examples: elections to sort the BOS-appointed directors into their roles; bylaws should be posted on website; bylaws could use some review and some individual policies (e.g. document retention, social media, etc) need to be updated.) Thad

stated that Strategic Planning is expected to start in January and that would be a logical time for BOD to review the bylaws; of course the Board can review them and/or prepare a list of comments/proposed revisions at any time. Colleen suggested we have an item on January agenda for bylaws review. She asked that if we do that, it would be best if Directors come prepared having already read the bylaws.

## CLOSED SESSION

BOD reviewed staff compensation and benefits package and made updates.

## 10. 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: [bcrd@carcd.org](mailto:bcrd@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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