



*"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 15, 2022**

**Time: 9:00 AM**

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

### **Or Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84342212526?pwd=eTZuQzJSV3IDRlcyYWJkcnhWm1mdz09>

**Meeting ID: 843 4221 2526**

**Passcode: 704514**

**Join via phone +1 408 638 0968**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – Dave Lee, President, 9:09 am
- 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** – Chair Dave Lee, Vice Chair Allen Harthorn, Directors Samantha Lewis and John Christofferson, Treasurer Colleen Hatfield, Associate Director Mike Crump; District Manager Thad Walker, Staff Wolfy Rougle; board welcomed Dan Taverner (District Conservationist) and Lilly Trejo (Biologist) of NRCS.
- 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 BCRCO 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 11/17/2022

Allen moved, Samantha seconded, to approve the consent agenda; motion passed with 4 in favor, John abstaining.

## 6. ACTION ITEMS – Dave Lee, President

- a) Review and approval of Financials/ Accounts Payable- Colleen Hatfield – Colleen notes that the board reports can be long but the most important parts are the monthly transaction reports and the outstanding items coming in. Samantha asked about the 2 checks voided in mid-November; Colleen responded they were both printer errors. As for the 2 voided payments on the interim report, the 8/20/22 payment to Penske Trucks is shown as voided but we're not sure why because the payment was actually made as a debit card payment; and the 11/20/22 payment to Garmin was voided because Garmin's monthly charge to us increased slightly and we accidentally paid the old amount, so we voided that one.

Colleen gave the board a pop quiz, asking why the November financial statements make it appear that we owe contractors/vendors more \$\$ than we are owed by grantors. The answer is that accounts payable reflects all vendor invoices (including those to be paid by money we already hold in advances), but the accounts receivable does not reflect the money we already hold in advances. To find the full sum of all the money we hold in our general account *plus all our advances*, scroll down to "Bank Statement Balances" and "Total Cash In Bank".

Allen moved, Samantha seconded to accept the financials and pay the listed bills; motion passed unanimously.

- b) Agreement with California Association of Resource Conservation Districts to fund Butte County Prescribed Burn Association - Wolfy Rougle – John asked about how whether, if we spent money on equipment, would we need to return the equipment to the funder (in this case, CAL FIRE who granted the money to CARCD). While this has been a possibility in some grants in the past, we all reflected on how it would look if Governor Newsom's historic investment in wildfire resilience in 2022 funded dozens of much-needed equipment purchases around the state which were put to work reducing wildfire risk to communities for 4 years and then had to be returned (worn and depreciated) to State agencies in 2026. Allen directed attention to Article 5 of the subagreement which states,

The STATE retains a vested interest in the equipment for the useful life of the equipment, even after completion of the grant. The Contractor [i.e., BCRCD] shall provide written disposition of the equipment upon completion of the grant and upon any changes to the disposition of the equipment. Such disposition must be approved in advance by the STATE and the Client [i.e., CARCD]. Equipment purchased using Grant Funds cannot be used as collateral, financed, or sold without prior written approval from the STATE and Client.

Having considered this, John moved to accept the agreement; Allen seconded, motion passed unanimously. We then discussed : where would we keep the equipment that it would be both safe and geographically convenient? NRCS field office in Oroville is available (see discussion under NRCS below) and a good solution when the equipment needs to be used in the South County, but not when it needs to be used in Cohasset (and all staff reside in Chico). Some partners in Chico may have locked yards they can provide us space in (e.g., Firestorm, BCCER, County; add locked gate to the Chico NRCS Soils building lot?) but we haven't had these discussions yet.

- c) Agreement with Butte County Fire Safe Council to provide funding to Butte County Prescribed Burn Association - Wolfy Rougle. Similar to the above but more focused on staff time, education, and TREX support, and also geographically focused on the Berry Creek-Brush Creek area. Provides a unique opportunity for Butte PBA to attempt develop a strategy/techniques for reintroducing a healthy fire regime in an area that has already burned at high severity. Samantha moved to accept, Allen seconded; motion passed unanimously.
- d) Mike Santuccio Brush Creek reforestation CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE) – Wolfy Rougle-

Did not receive enough review from CAL FIRE in time for BOD meeting; item tabled until January meeting.

e) Next Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, Jan 19, 2023, at 9:00 AM, Location: Klamath Conference Room 202 Mira Loma Drive, Oroville, CA

## 7. RCD PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

Staff Updates – Big projects underway right now include overseeing implementation for BCFSC’s Forest Health projects in Magalia and Forest Ranch. Wolfy described how BCRCD’s Upper Butte Creek project is providing a forum and motivation for Lassen National Forest to take stock of its 71,000 acres of Dixie-burned forest that is not expected to return to forested conditions without active intervention. About 2,400 acres of this is in Butte County, mostly in the Willow Creek and main stem Upper Butte Creek drainages. LNF (similar to PNF and even Fremont-Winema in Oregon) has not used herbicides in the last 15 years and has been experiencing very bad outcomes from their post-fire reforestation investments over the last 15 years (i.e., few surviving trees/failure to re-establish forests). USFS staff are now choosing, as a team, to try authorizing herbicides for the first time in decades. This change in direction will be controversial and will only succeed if BCRCD and other partners are able to successfully educate/address concerns from the public. We discussed the “reforestation pipeline” initiative being funded by the State, the new SPI nursery being built near Yreka that will produce 2.4 million seedlings/year, and the new “Cone Corps” service corps being developed by our great partners American Forests.

We discussed the new trend of State funding agencies (e.g. CAL FIRE, SNC) taking a more active role than ever before in reviewing CEQA documents BCRCD prepares as a lead agency for implementation projects funded by the State. This is a concerning trend because it undermines lead agency authority but even more so because it slows down projects the State is trying to fund. The value that RCDs bring to the environmental review table is that we can review, survey, analyze and develop mitigations for projects much faster than a State agency can. We can achieve these efficiencies because of our local knowledge, experience, and local resource specialist networks. If a State agency’s additional review adds even a month of delay to a document an RCD has already developed, the implementation window can be missed for an entire year. In most cases, a State agency’s review adds more than one month (three or even twelve months is not unheard of). In many cases, State agencies could eliminate these duplicative delays, while still complying with the CEQA statute, simply by revising their internal Board procedures to affirm the validity of “third-party” (i.e., RCD-led) CEQA documents.

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

- a) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – Last year was a bit disappointing for the field office in terms of how much funding the national agency told Oroville would be available vs. how much actually was available. Currently, the field office has 130 applications to process, most of which work will fall on the NRCS staff but some of which RCD may help with or end up administering (through our new RCPP contract through CARCD). Over the next 5 years, Dan noted, national NRCS’ budget should increase dramatically (but, Dan also noted, we’ve heard that before). Also, Area Engineer is currently interviewing candidates and is expected to select a new engineer for the Oroville Field Office in the next couple of weeks. But, demand for engineers is high and NRCS doesn’t pay very much so there’s no guarantee we will end up having an engineer at the Oroville Field Office. [RCD staff adds: If NRCS does succeed in hiring an engineer, that would mean RCD would lose access to the engineer’s office which is currently our only option for Zoom meetings or phone calls when more than 1 of us is working in the RCD office.] NRCS does have 2 new vehicles plus a new ATV and trailer. Dan noted that NRCS hasn’t had any theft or vandalism issues in the 1.5 years the ATV and trailer have been parked in the parking lot behind the NRCS building, which is covered by surveillance cameras at the Lineman’s’ College. Dan suggested BCRCD, if it acquires PBA equipment it needs to store, would be welcome to utilize the NRCS parking lot. New NRCS employee: Rachel McDowell: Covers the Sutter Valley area and is paid through Oroville FO but is not assigned duties by Oroville FO.
- b) Butte County departments - none
- c) Community groups and agencies - none

## 8. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS

a) Butte County RCD Directors and Associate Directors are welcome to report – Dave Lee reported back on his queries to the County to try and find the RCD much-needed office space. (He talked to Doug Teeter, others, and Hunsicker.) The 2 options the County offered were the old sheriff's substation in Paradise and the old County hospital in Oroville. Neither is a great space for our needs. Dave stated he understands office space is a major need and a truck is a major need; Dave suggested the District Manager decide which is a higher priority. Dan Taverner reiterated BCRCDD is able to use the NRCS pickup truck whenever needed, including on PBA burns. RCD has outfitted that truck with a slip-in unit and pump before (to water trees) and could do it again (to support landowner burns). Thad observed that we are currently in a good financial position, thanks to all the indirect we currently have written into many large grants. We can easily apply this indirect toward rent. To help identify office space we can rent, Thad has also been talking to several small local nonprofits (with just a small handful of employees each) who might be interested in going in on an office space together, e.g. in Chico. Colleen recommended Thad, Wolfy, she and Cheryl get together in January to do a more in-depth financial forecast (some preliminary forecasting has already been done and is promising) to show how much income we'll have coming in over the next several years.

Happy holidays to everyone!

## 9. ADJOURNMENT: 10:12 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: [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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