



*"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, July 20th, 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 – 9:01 am
- 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** – Chair Dave Lee, Treasurer Colleen Hatfield, directors Samantha Lewis, John Christofferson and Andrew Sohnrey; guest Mike Marvier; District Manager Thad Walker; staff Wolfy Rougle, Cameron Musser.
- 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.*

## 5. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a) Review and approval of the minutes of the BOD meeting held on 6/15/2023 – John moved to approve the minutes with the following correction to item (e) (in red and underlined):
- Allen moved to have BCRCD sign the MND document and adopt the MMRP (Appendix A) attached to it. John seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- Dave seconded John’s motion to accept the 6/15/23 minutes with that change; motion passed unanimously.

## 6. ACTION ITEMS – Dave Lee, President

- a) **Review and approval of Financials/ Accounts Payable-** Colleen Hatfield – Cheryl has sent out the board reports; Colleen asked if everyone had had a chance to read them and did anyone have questions. John asked about the long-delayed payment from BCPW; Thad will look into it. Samantha noticed that “supplies” and “project supplies” are going over budget (as viewed in the annual budget-to-actual); Dave observed this is offset by the higher than expected amount of work (and thus income) we’ve been getting. “Project supplies” are reimbursed directly to projects; “supplies” are typically expensed to overhead. There are also under-budget categories (e.g. “misc expense” which was budgeted at \$2100 and actually turned out to be \$0). Colleen thanked Samantha for bringing it up and was confident BCRCD will continue to have differences between budgeted and actual numbers, but will also continue to have more work and income than expected. So far, we are a little under budget on our transition to the new office. The ongoing expense of the office is now written into the 23-34 budget. Good news is that the new auditor has finally gotten started on the 2019-2023 audit. Cheryl the bookkeeper is energetically working with the auditor to answer all questions. Samantha asked that Cheryl be reminded that the office furniture we’ve purchased should be a fixed (depreciable) asset, not expensed. Samantha moved to approve the financials for the period through July 19. John seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- b) **Adoption of 2023/ 2024 Budget** -Colleen Hatfield - John asked staff to confirm that each project’s sheet has been updated to reflect the state of affairs as of 6/30/23 (i.e. how much of budget has already been spent, how much of work still remains to be done). It has. Samantha wondered if the budget allocated for our bookkeeper was going to be sufficient; Colleen thanked her for that note and agreed there was enough margin to go over budget on that category without affecting the bottom line.

Thad explained how the budget already accounts for a vehicle purchase, full-time District Manager, and full-time PBA coordinator (the latter is completely grant-supported). The vehicle purchase would not be 100% supported by grant funds, but grant funds would offset the expense because we can lease the vehicle back to ourselves on a day-to-day basis as we utilize it on a project.

Samantha asked that the budget provide more information on the “miscellaneous income” item and would like to see a clearer breakdown of “grant income” rather than just one huge number. She also pointed out it’s not clear to observers that the reimbursable vehicle expenses are income as well as an expense. Samantha asked we increase the amount we spend on recruitment and also on the DM salary (Samantha would like to see it increased from \$90K to \$125K).

Samantha moved to approve the budget but with the DM salary raised to \$125K (plus benefits) per year; motion failed for want of a second. John moved to approve the budget as is but with the “miscellaneous income” matter fixed. (Staff can also continue to work with Board to re-calculate the big “grant income” category so the public can see our income broken down more clearly and granularly.) Colleen seconded, motion approved 4-1, Samantha dissenting. The new budget will be uploaded to our website.

- c) **Agreement with UBEO West LLC. for printer** -Thad Walker – This is a monthly rental agreement (for \$161/month over 5 years, during which time we can upgrade or downgrade the equipment) for a Canon printer with high-quality scanning ability, combined with a service contract with a locally based firm UBEO West. The service contract includes IT setup and remote resolution of some connection issues. Dave asked if 250 color prints a month would be adequate. Thad stated he

still prints all the Board reports and packet items at the Oroville NRCS office, where printing doesn't cost the BCRCD anything, so the estimate for the Chico office's printing needs feels adequate.

Unfortunately, UBEO West doesn't offer shorter (e.g. 3-year) contracts. What would happen if our funding dropped off a cliff in 3 years and we had to break the contract? The UBEO sales representative told Thad UBEO understands how publicly funded organizations work and "we would work something out." But, Samantha asked, what is the cost of breaking the contract? Since we were unable to find this amount in the contract, Samantha moved to accept the agreement provided UBEO clarifies what the cancellation policy is. John seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- d) **CEQA Notice of Exemption for Feather Falls Forest Health Project** -Thad Walker – This provides CEQA coverage for an already NEPA-reviewed and approved post-fire fuels reduction and reforestation project on Plumas National Forest lands. John moved to adopt and sign the NOE. Colleen seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- e) **CEQA Notice of Exemption for Small Forest Landowners Assistance Project** - Wolfy Rougle – SNC and the Berry Creek Tribe have had a couple of weeks to review this proposed NOE, but haven't proposed any changes. If they have minor changes or language edits they would like to see, hopefully we can work them into the project with no problems (perhaps through a written MOU or amendment Board could consider in August, if that is necessary). Given the need to get CEQA coverage in place so the (likely slow) process of SNC funding release can begin, the Board chose to consider the NOE. Colleen moved to adopt, John seconded, motion passed unanimously
- f) **Extension of agreement with Sierra Institute for hydrology services** - Wolfy Rougle – Time extension only, no changes needed to SOW or budget. John moved to sign the extension, Colleen seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- g) **BCRCD Letter of involvement for Hazard Mitigation Plan, Participating Jurisdiction Letter of Commitment** -Thad Walker – Becoming a participating jurisdiction in the LHMP as an "annex" would put us at the table to work collaboratively with other groups to update the County's hazard mitigation plan. The value of this is BCRCD's ability to assist County land managers and residents with mitigating so many different hazards – not just wildfire, but also drought and flood, among others. The cost to BCRCD is some un-reimbursable staff time. The benefits could be finding out about valuable drought mitigation dollars and potential involvement in future disaster settlements. John moved to sign the letter, Samantha seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- h) **Agreement for Services with Flow West for NEPA fisheries report on Upper Butte Creek Forest Health project** - Wolfy Rougle and Faith Churchill – Flow West asked for the inclusion of some language (underlined and in red) pertaining to indemnifying them. Samantha pointed out we're under no obligation to accept Flow West's language since we already have a policy about claims against the District built in on our Transparency page. John moved to accept the agreement but only in its original language, i.e. without FW's proposed modification. Samantha seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- i) **Approval to open a new interest-bearing account to receive the advance monies from Sierra Nevada Conservancy for project RFFCP-962** - Wolfy Rougle (No document associated with this item; vote only) – Samantha moved to approve and open a new interest-bearing account, Andy seconded; motion passed unanimously. When the check arrives, Wolfy or Thad will contact Dave to open the new account.
- j) **Grant Agreement with Point Blue for Crane Valley Meadow Restoration Project** -Thad Walker – Point Blue is administering a large meadow restoration block grant on behalf of Sierra Meadows Partnership, using WCB funds. BCRCD applied for and won this subgrant to plan and permit the rehabilitation of the Crane Valley meadows at the headwaters of Kimsheew Creek. BCRCD would work in partnership with landowners SPI and the Wilson Family, and a variety of contractors. John moved to approve and sign the grant agreement, Colleen seconded, motion passed unanimously. Samantha stated that with the remoteness of the project and the time Thad will be devoting to it, it underscores the importance of recruiting a DM sooner than later.

- k) **Agreement for Services with Forest Creek Restoration for Crane Valley Meadow Restoration Project** -Thad Walker – FCR’s work will take place within the meadow footprint. We have also factored in money for an engineer on this project because we anticipate the plan will end up being a mix of process-based restoration and more aggressive methods (e.g. channel fill). John moved to accept the agreement, Colleen seconded. Colleen asked if Point Blue is the lead and we’re their subcontractor? Not exactly: Rather, Point Blue is essentially the grantor to BCRCD, then FCR will be a subcontractor to us. In other words, because of the nature of block grants, Point Blue is essentially functioning as a state agency. Samantha asked DM to double-check the legal DBA name of the Forest Creek Restoration entity. Motion passed unanimously.
- l) **Next Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, Aug 17, 2023**, at 9:00 AM, Location: Klamath Conference Room 202 Mira Loma Drive, Oroville, CA

## 7. RCD PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS -STAFF REPORTS

- a) **Project Updates** – Colby Mountain Trails PAPH will be released to the public on Monday July 24<sup>th</sup> for a 2 week public NEPA comment period. This should lead to a signed decision later in the summer; meanwhile, we’ll need to do CEQA. But we are still on track to potentially start implementation in the fall. Implementation estimate is sitting at about \$1.4M. Still waiting for CalPERS to get back to us about a 457. Staff will come together next week with Solid Ground Consulting for strategic staffing planning. Office still needs some updates (e.g. soundproofing, microwave or fridge, rugs to help absorb sound and cover the concrete floor) but we’re making progress.

Samantha asked that we help publicize the RCD speaking contest to FFA and ecology clubs around Butte County. Thad promised to connect her with the flyers CARCD produces. The topic this year is great – it’s about groundwater recharge. High school students stand to win up to a couple thousand dollars and get great speaking experience. John asked where did our Farm Bureau move to? Andy responded they have a tiny temporary office in Richvale but they’re building one in Durham!

Any news on the \$2M project on North Fork of the Feather (Poe Reach Trail) with PG&E (for which BCRCD produced the report years ago)? -- PGE tried to show the project would be infeasible, but FERC stood behind the report that BCRCD produced and stated PGE has to go ahead and build the trail.

- b) **SFLAP Presentation** - Cameron Musser shared with the Board a presentation on SFLAP that she’s already presented to CARCD, groups of small landowners, and other audiences. SFLAP is our RCD’s attempt to administer a better, more effective version of EQIP – that is, a program that will help local small forest landowners recover and reforest their properties after high-severity wildfire. Each year we select an area of the County to work in (this year it’s Berry Creek, next year it’s Feather Falls) and residents in that area can apply to the RCD for help. Then we rank their applications according to a transparent rubric (published on our SFLAP website), and we select the landowners we can help each year. A lot of fire survivors don’t have internet access and most applicants are senior citizens so Cameron and Ben worked with them to accept applications in whatever way worked best for them. Once they’re selected, each resident gets a customized plan for how to help their land recover, based on their unique objectives (some landowners want to restore forest, some want to go into the grazing business; all have maintenance plans). Each resident also gets a Butte-County-specific “user guide” that functions as a decoder ring to all the additional government programs that are available to them. Then they get botany and archaeology surveys and forest inventories. BCRCD also makes sure all septic tanks, water lines and other utilities are well flagged! Cameron then bundles all the landowners together, develops the contractor’s scope of work based on the collective needs of that year’s batch of landowners, circulates a bid packet, and selects the lowest-priced qualified contractor (has to be an LTO with an A license). The contractor is responsible for getting the excess fuels off the landowner’s property so BCRCD can be sure to leave it in good shape.

For SFLAP’s first two years, 100% of the costs are grant-funded. In the future, however we will begin to ask landowners to share the costs. The \$900,000 we have received from SNC for implementation

will pay for 250 acres of implementation. The transport (removal) costs of dead woody biomass, however, are extreme and may challenge our ability to treat as many acres as we planned. It would be ideal in the future if we could pursue the next round of funding in partnership with a contractor, who could help develop the scope of work and budget from the get-go.

SFLAP Feedback from Board and the public: Samantha stated that it would be more effective to ask for an applicant's AGI (not gross income) based on their 940, as this better captures the real income of a farmer or other business owner. Mike Marvier advised we budget for a lot more paint and flagging in marking out utilities than we think we need! Board thanked Cameron for her presentation.

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

- a) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) - None
- b) Butte County departments - none
- c) Community groups and agencies - none

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

- a) Butte County RCD Directors and Associate Directors are welcome to report – Samantha requested that BCRCDD do more active recruitment for the CalRecycle Farm and Ranch cleanup grant.

## **10. CLOSED SESSION**

Employee Performance Review – No action taken.

## **11. 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: [bcrcd@carcd.org](mailto: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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