



*“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.”*

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Minutes**

**Date: Thursday, May 21st, 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** – Andrew Sohnrey, Vice Chair 9:02 am
- 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** - Vice Chair Andrew Sohnrey, Treasurer Colleen Hatfield, Directors Allen Harthorn and Jeff Carter, District Manager Thad Walker, Staff Wolfy Rougle, Julia Sidman, Dallas Koller. Guests on Zoom: 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))
- 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 Regular Meeting held on 4/16/26 – Jeff moved, Colleen seconded to approve; Allen made one small change (“barometric” should have been “bathymetric” in the Partner Reports). With that revision, motion passed unanimously.

## **6. ACTION ITEMS – Dave Lee, President**

- a) Review and approval of Financials/ Accounts Payable- Colleen Hatfield – We now have the Blue Forest grant account set up and we made the first transfer out of it (to cover some Upper Butte expenses) yesterday. We will close out the Mechanics Bank account and move the remnant money in it over to Golden Valley Bank once we close out this year’s audit. Colleen has requested \$40,000 be transferred out of our AMG account into the Cottonwood account to cover the next couple year’s expenses. Colleen reported on a number of outstanding invoices that were recently paid, and some of the vendor invoices this allowed us to pay. Our first “single audit” (triggered by receiving more than \$750,000 in Federal funds in a year) should be concluded very soon. (And then we get to start a new one!). Colleen thanked Thad and Cheryl for how much of the audit-related burden they have shouldered. Andrew: Why do we owe Rolls, Anderson, Rolls \$4,000 from September on an NRCS project? Thad: NRCS reimbursements have been slower and also there was a mix-up on some of RAR’s billable hours which has now been straightened out so reimbursement should come from NRCS soon. Andrew: Can we get the very small balances written off (e.g. \$1.23, \$0.33)? – Colleen: Yes, this is underway and we’ll have an email thread showing the justification for doing so. Allen moved to approve the financials, Jeff seconded, motion passed 4-0-1 (Dave Lee absent).

Introduction of 2026/ 2027 Operational Budget -Colleen Hatfield/ BCRC D Staff (information only) – Staff presented a draft budget which shows a modest (five-figure) net income on approximately \$6 million in expenses. (Each of the RCD’s \_\_\_\_ projects yields a positive balance, but the RCD’s overhead reduces our overall earnings.) A new feature of this year’s budget, is that it accounts for some costs that are incurred annually but have never been accounted for as overhead in the past, such as non-DM staff’s non-billable time (averaging 12 hours/staff member/month).

Wolfy and Thad explained how the Forest Service, and even the State, are tightening up their policies covering how RCDs can recoup indirect costs. Thus, while BCRC D is in a better position than many other RCDs because we have solid, long-term agreements, many of these agreements don’t yield a lot of indirect. We could potentially increase the indirect we recoup from FS and BLM by establishing a Negotiated Indirect Cost Recovery (NICRA), a process which would come with some upfront investment in bookkeeper/consultant time.

Comments: At some point, Board would like to see a 5-year projection of projects into the future... when they start, when they end, what new ones we have coming online, and how our net revenue might fluctuate up and down over time. Thad confirmed this is something staff is working to develop. Board also asked whether the mileage reimbursement we recoup is still covering our fuel costs with the recent price increases in fuel. We are confident it it’s still covering fuel costs for the 2 gasoline trucks (possibly not for the diesel one), but we plan to run an analysis of this over the last year before next board meeting.

Andrew asked how do we come up with the overhead expenses? – They are based on what we have spent over the past year or years on a given category, and/or on updated costs (for example, when our insurer tells us they’re about to raise our annual bill by \$4,137). In most

cases, forecasting costs gets easier each year with improved bookkeeping and deeper records (thank you Cheryl).

Thad noted the foresight of the Board in establishing a rainy-day fund (Cash Reserves) during a time of strong revenues. The 2026-27 budget continues to fund these reserves.

- b) BCRCDC AI Policy (Informational/discussion item only) - Wolfy Rougle/ /Thad Walker – Andrew proposed that BCRCDC allow no AI notetakers in the meeting, but we could vet and allow an approved BCRCDC notetaker to take “our own” notes which are then revised by a human. Thad noted that this is totally feasible but wouldn’t avoid confidentiality and AI corpus concerns. Jeff advocated for human notetakers and human revision of notes into minutes. This multi-stage human review is what produces minutes that “capture the essence of what was discussed and the actions taken”. Andrew observed that we can also say “no AI notetakers for now” and that’s no problem. Staff will bring the AI notetaker policy back to June meeting for a vote.

When it comes to generative AI for helping write paragraphs etc. (something BCRCDC currently doesn’t use), he feels at some point we will have to use it to stay competitive. Thad also mentioned any future policy we put in place will need to be vetted by County Counsel. Allen requested that Ariann from Allevity possibly be present at a future BOD meeting to help answer questions.

**\*\*At this point, Internet connectivity at 202 Mira Loma was lost so Zoom meeting ended\*\***

- c) Amendment of agreement with Guzi-West Consulting for services of Certified Asbestos Consultant (CAC) on Coutelenc MacNab Fencing project - Wolfy Rougle – There is naturally occurring asbestos in the soil at some sites in Butte County, including the Coutelenc MacNab site where the Forest Service asked us to oversee the process of building a fence. (See also item d.) To make sure we and all contractors are complying with OSHA and Air Quality regulations before and during fence construction, we enlisted the services of a CAC. Originally approved by the DM as a small agreement (three quotes/under \$5,000), as the project evolved we realized the CAC services we need are more comprehensive. These include providing all on-site asbestos monitoring and supervising the contractor for their first several days of work. We reason that increasing the CAC’s SOW and budget by \$11,000-\$12,000 probably saves more than that amount in reduced costs incurred by a contractor (that they would pass along to us). Colleen moved to approve, Jeff seconded, motion passed 4-0-1.
- d) Agreement with Alvar Fence Co. for Coutelenc MacNab Fencing project, Plumas National Forest - Wolfy Rougle – Alvar Fence Co. was the lowest bidder and their proposal was fully qualified. Their references were very positive, and they were FS’ choice. Andrew noted the SOW requires a change of the language “without or without concrete” to “with or without concrete”. Jeff moved to approve with that revision, Allen seconded; motion passed 4-0-1. Andrew noted the contract includes the presence of a water truck full-time on site, and asked whether in the future we could provide this service ourselves, since we have a 1500-gallon water buffalo. Thad agreed this could be positive for the RCD in a revenue sense. We would need to be cautious because if there were any issue with our own water truck, we could be liable to the contractor for triggering delays or causing them to be out of compliance with their asbestos mitigation plan. (Watering the ground during disturbance, to settle dust, is a big part of the asbestos mitigation strategy for this project.)
- e) Agreement with Wildlife Conservation Board for the Colby Mountain Project -Thad Walker – This grant was slated for award last quarter, but with concerns from members of the equestrian community, WCB gave us the flexibility to defer for three months. During that time, we met with representatives of the local equestrian community, which resulted in us creating a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – composed of hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers -- that would advise the RCD on how to spend the grant dollars in ways that meet the needs of all users. WCB will still require us to build the Humboldt Summit trailhead hub and the education trail, but will offer us flexibility to move budget and scope of work around to best meet the TAC recommendations. Jeff moved, Colleen seconded, motion passed 4-0-1.

- f) Agreement with Coalitions and Collaboratives for USDA Forest Service Wildfire Mitigation: *Action, Implementation Program and Community Mitigation Assistance Team* for support of Butte Prescribed Burn Association -Wolfy Rougle – Written by Dallas and Wolfy, this small but important grant would cover PBA operations for the next 10-11 months. Dallas observed that working with CoCo-AIM last time around (in 2022-23) was a good experience, and they're a very fire-positive organization that understands community-based mitigation. Colleen moved, Jeff seconded, motion passed 4-0-1.
- g) Agreement with Redwood Forestry LLC for Concow 2026 Vegetation Treatment #1, Plumas National Forest - Julia Sidman – We had 11 contractors at the bid walk, 4 submitted bids; Redwood was by far the lowest. While such a low price would often raise red flags, Julia checked out their references and they were very positive (and diverse – representing both Federal CORs as well as partner organizations operating in an RCD-like role). Apparently Redwood's belonging to a larger umbrella company keeps their overhead costs very low and allows them to submit low bids like this. Colleen asked whether anyone had raised any herbicide-related concerns on this project; Julia has heard none so far. Allen moved, Jeff seconded; motion passed 4-0-1.
- h) Next Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, June 18, 2026, at 9:00 AM, Location: Klamath Conference Room 202 Mira Loma Drive, Oroville, CA. – We discussed a possible one-time change of venue to Chico but no decisive action was taken.

## 7. RCD PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS -STAFF REPORTS

- a) Project Updates – **Sac Valley Regional RCDs Meeting:** Thad gave huge thanks to Allen and Jeff for attending the Sac Valley regional meeting in Quincy with him this quarter! Regional election results: Jocelyn is regional chair; Maureen from WSRCD is regional Representative. A number of state and federal agency reps were there. Soil hub update: The Sac Valley RCDs Needs and Opportunities Assessment, compiled by Margo over the last year, was unveiled.

**Dallas introduced an exciting upcoming burn in south Paradise**, tentatively scheduled for June 1. This would be the first burn in Paradise under the new MOU with the Town, and would be a collaboration between CAL FIRE and the PBA, with Dallas' functioning in the role of CARX unlocking access to the State Rx Claims Fund for the landowner. The property is 42 acres of tall grass, which the landowner currently mows every year at substantial expense. This keeps fire risk low, but if he could burn it instead, it would save him 100+ hours of heavy equipment operation. Colleen: Isn't June 1 getting pretty close to the burn ban? Dallas explained the ecological and operational reasons why grass burns often need to happen in June, and added that CAL FIRE already has an established precedent of issuing permits for these burns -- even during the burn *suspension* – as long as they can verify adequate resources and windows are in place.

The challenge on this burn is CEQA coverage. (Without CEQA, the landowner could surely burn, but CAL FIRE and the RCD would not be able to be in operational leadership on the burn.) A programmatic CEQA document covers the property, but it has conditions attached which have not been met for this parcel. These are 1) botanical surveys (which RCD can do quickly), 2) archaeological surveys (which RCD cannot do quickly – we are hopeful CAL FIRE might be able to make it happen?), and 3) a simple notice of CEQA adequacy to be signed by a lead agency, which RCD could develop quickly but it would need to be signed **at a board meeting**. These are all necessary only because of the way this particular CEQA document was written, treating multiple types of fuel reduction as though they have comparable impacts. BCRCD-written CEQA documents normally do not require full archaeological surveys for prescribed burning if the

property recently burned, nor do they (usually) require botanical surveys since California native plant communities are adapted to the kinds and seasonalities of fire that we would apply. In conclusion, regardless of the CEQA pathway that was chosen, BCRCDCan't develop CEQA coverage for this burn before the next board meeting (regular or special).

**Overall PBA news** – You'll get a more comprehensive update next month, but we've been very busy! Got a recent thumbs-up from CAL FIRE at the statewide level when a chief observed online that burning often tapers off this time of year even though there are spring windows partners should be taking advantage of. The week he said that, the RCD had burned 6 out of 7 days!

**CalRecycle grant on BLM property on Centerville Rd:** Disconsolately, we have submitted the withdrawal to CalRecycle from the cleanup grant that was thwarted by PG&E's actions moving the trash around on the BLM property. Acknowledging that these complications were not BCRCDC's fault, BLM is allowing us to recoup (out of our Good Neighbor Agreement with BLM) all staff costs already spent toward meeting the deliverables for this now-unusable State grant. Thank you, BLM.

**Humbug Rd update:** On May 8<sup>th</sup>, RCD and many Public Works staff, Acting Public Works Director Wendy Tucker, and Supervisor Doug Teeter went to look at the Humbug Road realignment/Willow Creek Meadow restoration site. Even though this project would add a mile to the County-maintained road network, it would be a net win for the County by eliminating the "weak link" of the unfixable Willow Creek meadow crossing, eliminating an ongoing source of washouts/maintenance liability. BCRCDC believes this would improve the overall reliability and resilience of the County road network. For this reason, we have been working with BCPW on project planning since summer 2022, a process which culminated in 100% plans for the realignment (reviewed and approved by BCPW's lead engineer). In 2025, BCRCDC secured a \$2,000,000 grant to complete the project at no expense to the County. However, in spring 2026, we learned that Public Works had never elevated the project to County administration and so the Board of Supervisors really didn't know anything about it. That was the reason for the visit by Doug Teeter. Doug emphasized the importance of accessibility by all users, keeping County maintenance costs down, and getting everything the Forest says in writing. Noted!

We would expect this project to come before the Butte County Board of Supervisors as an agenda item in the next 4-6 weeks, at which point BCRCDC will present on its merits.

## **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 – **Jeff** reported that the Sac Valley Regional RCDs meeting in Quincy was a great day, very informative; all the speakers were well chosen and well spoken. Allen concurred and expressed regret he hadn't planned it out such that he could attend the field trips the day before. (This was the first time a Sac Valley regional meeting had had a field trip day.)

**Allen** noted there are over 5000 spring-run Chinook salmon in Butte Creek. Even though the flume failure event was 3 years ago and thus we expected almost no fish in this run, the revenants this year are largely big, 4-year-old fish whose return Allen attributes to the suspension of the Pacific ocean fishing season last year. 4-year-old fish are very successful spawners – they have 50% more eggs for

one thing, and can dig deeper redds which should translate to better survival in warm temperatures.

**10. CLOSED SESSION-** didn't happen (placed on agenda erroneously)

**11. ADJOURNMENT – 10:43 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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