How to install **STRAW WATTLES**

To protect our creeks, reservoirs, and fish

By Butte County Resource Conservation District.

Visit [www.bcrcd.org](http://www.bcrcd.org) or email us: bcrcd@carcd.org

**STEP 1: PLAN**

**DO:**

- Do install wattles **along contours**. They should run **perpendicular** to how water flows.

- Do install straw wattles in a closed ring around any burned structure.

**DON’T:**

- Don’t place wattles running downhill. And don’t block creek channels: Wattles are for **slowing sheet flows**, not blocking streams.

- Don’t place wattles where they could easily come loose and block culverts or grates.

**STEP 2: TRENCH**

**DO:**

- Use a shovel to make a shallow (2-3”) trench, just wide enough for the wattle. Pile the extra dirt on the uphill side. Trenching gives your wattles better ground contact and helps them stop more sediment.
STEP 3: STAKE

**DO:**

- **Do** overlap wattle ends horizontally. Always stake wattles, driving the stakes directly through the wattle. Use 1 stake per 4 feet.

- **Do** stake wattles along contours. The best place for wattles is often at the top of a slope (just above where it gets steeper).

- On long bare slopes, place a series of wattles. If it’s nearly flat, space wattles every 20 feet. For steep slopes (2:1), space them every 10’. For moderate slopes, every 15’ is fine.

  - **Extremely steep slopes** don’t benefit from wattles. Instead of trying to stop the flow halfway down a steep slope, try to stop it up top on the ridge.

  **Pro tip:** If your wattles “overtop” with sediment this winter, simply place a second ring of wattles around the first, just downhill. In the spring, wattles and the toxins they trapped can be removed along with other debris.

**DON’T:**

- **Don’t** butt wattles end-to-end w/ no overlap.

- **Don’t** place wattles across creeks or ravines. This might work some places but here in Butte County it usually does not.

  Finally, **don’t** overlap wattles vertically. It just provides a perfect channel for water to sneak underneath!