



Butte County Resource Conservation District Quarterly Newsletter, Summer 2009



Butte County Resource Conservation District is leading the progress of working landscape and open space management in the county through unique and influential partnerships for the benefit of the citizens, the environment, and the economy.

Our motto is cooperation, not regulation

BC-RCD partners with Butte County Fire Safe Councils for Healthy Forest Workshops

The Butte County Resource Conservation District was awarded a grant from the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts to provide technical assistance for fuel load reduction and healthy forest management. The funding stems from the Cooperative Initiative to Improve Forest Health originally issued by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). See upcoming events for more information.



Humboldt Fire- Jason Haley/Chico Enterprise Record

U.S. FARM BILL CONTRACTS

NRCS project application rankings and approved landowner contracts are currently being processed in the Oroville Conservation Partnership Office. To date, approximately \$500,000 of conservation work has been approved. Together with the required local landowner cost share match requirements, this means approximately \$1 million worth of conservation projects will hit the ground on Butte County's private lands. Additional 2009 US Farm Bill funding for the county has been requested by the Nathan Key, Butte County District Conservationist.

Butte Creek Watershed Roads Project Moves Forward Despite State Funding Freeze

BC-RCD was notified last year that its contract for the Butte Creek roads project was frozen due to the state's budget issues.

However, thanks to the leadership of the project partners namely Butte County Public Works, Lassen National Forest, NRCS, Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy, Bureau of Land Management and volunteers from the BC-RCD the project is gearing up

Upcoming Events:

BUTTE COUNTY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

August 6th, 9am
BC Farm Bureau Conference Room
2580 Feather River Blvd.
Oroville, CA

Please let us know how we can help you help the land! Input is used to help define priorities for future projects and plans.

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE WORKSHOPS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BUTTE COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCILS

- **Oroville/ Berry Creek/ Forbestown/ Feather Falls/ Palermo**
July 25th, 9-2pm
Oroville Municipal Auditorium
- **Concow/ Yankee Hill**
August 1st, 9-2pm
Yankee Hill Grange Hall

Topics Include: Creating community fire safe planning, wildlife impacts, reducing risks and increasing values on your property, how to prepare for with practical steps, forest and rangeland stewardship

BC-RCD to assist Paradise Irrigation District with Watershed and Fire Fuel Reduction Study

At the request of the Board of Directors of Paradise Irrigation District, the BC-RCD will conduct a resources inventory on the PID lands between Magalia Reservoir and Paradise Lake. The goal of the inventory is to gather data and specific information that will allow for holistic management of the lands and forest resources. The extensive fire fuel load of the property has long been a serious concern for PID managers. With the help of the BC-RCD, public education and watershed outreach will be a top task of the project.

for the 2009 construction season despite the funding freeze. The matching funds are still available and will go to work in July.

2009 construction sites include Humbug Road, and additional water bars and culvert replacements on Humboldt Road. Dirt moving is planned for July and will last approximately one month. Butte County Public Works will be providing the construction operators. US Forest will be supplying the materials and equipment. Engineering work and planning have been provided by US Forest Service and the NRCS.

Alternative non-state funding has been sought by the BC-RCD and the Bureau of Land Management in order to continue construction of Doe Mill Road sections, but it is too early to know for sure if the requests have been successful. So let's keep our fingers crossed and our minds open for new partnerships. The BC-RCD Rural Roads Project is not just shovel ready, it is shovel dirty!



Butte County Public Works –photo: Robert Smith

Nothing but public accolades have been heard for the work that was completed during the 2008 construction season. Local residents of the upper Butte Creek watershed have noticed the visibly improved water quality of Butte Creek this past spring run-off season. Positive comments were also received from the Butte Meadows Hillsliders Snow Mobile Club. Trail grooming for the snowmobile club was enhanced by the improved base road conditions. Some of the best project feedback regarding the 2008 construction season came from Bryan Graves, Butte County Public Works, Road Superintendent who was surprised at the high quality of Humboldt Road as the snow melted off on the summit. No annual spring road grading was required for the first time. This fact translates into saving of annual maintenance costs for the County Public Work Department. When there are multiple levels of “wins”...ya’ can’t keep a good project down.

Butte County’s Agricultural Leadership supports their Resource Conservation District

The BC-RCD benefits Butte County landowners directly. \$35,000,000 of Farm Bill conservation programs have been contracted directly to local private landowners through the Butte County Conservation Partnership Office. Since its inception, the BC-RCD has been funded by a mix of local, state, and federal grants and contracts. No one ever could have imagined the BC-RCD evolving from a less than 1% victory at the local ballot, to an RCD forging new state contractual precedents with resource agencies in less than seven years.

Butte County’s natural resources are at the pinnacle of debate for local, regional, state and federal programs. For example, there are general plan updates, drought and groundwater conservation plans, Endangered Species Act plans, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission reviews on the Feather River and Butte Creek, and US Farm Bill Programs just to name the obvious. **Private landowners participate in these programs through their representation with the Butte County Resource Conservation District.**

The global economic downturn has reduced funding for the BC-RCD. **The District is asking for donations from the local community in order to continue to serve and represent the interests of local landowners.** The Butte County Resource Conservation District Board of Directors was recently approached by Ed McLaughlin of EMAC Farms. Mr. McLaughlin came with a generous offer of financial support from the local agricultural community at a time when every dime can make a huge difference for leveraging program development. The BC-RCD has confirmed its tax exempt status with the IRS.

Charitable contributions to governmental units are tax-deductible under section 170 (c) (1) of the Internal Revenue Code, if made for a public purpose.

If you would like to provide direct, tax-deductible financial support to the BC-RCD, please contact the Conservation Partnership Office at 530-534-0112 ex 117.

- ***Thank you, in advance, for your support of BC-RCD’s commitment to locally lead conservation.***