

BUTTE COUNTY RCD

2008-2013 Long Range Strategic Plan

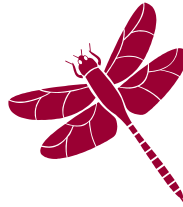
Revised April 8, 2008

The 2008-2013 BC-RCD Long Range Strategic Plan is a culmination of BC-RCD Board of Directors' input, stakeholders' ideas, and partners' suggestions. For each priority there is a defining statement. For each defining statement there are one or more essential objectives, with associated key actions. The BC-RCD would like to thank all the participants in the District's planning process for their essential energy and commitment. Six priorities have been identified.

Vision Statement: The Butte County Resource Conservation District is leading working landscape and open space management in the county through its unique and influential partnerships for the benefit of its citizens, resources, and the economy.

Mission Statement: To conserve the resources of Butte County for the benefit of its citizens, its resources and its economy. (Under Revision)

Motto: Collaboration, Not Regulation



I. WISE LAND USE PLANNING AND EROSION CONTROL MANAGEMENT EFFORTS

Defining Statement: The BC-RCD will continue to assist private landowners and governmental (local, state and federal) agencies with effective resource management to prevent watershed damage and costly erosion repairs. This assistance helps improve water quality, fish habitat, and the general health of the watershed.

Funding Sources:

- Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Contribution Agreement can match 50/50 state or local funding sources and may become available upon the passage of the 2008 Federal Farm Bill. This type of contract could support BC-RCD efforts to help promote NRCS programs such as the Soil Survey, Watershed Restoration, and

Best Management Practices (BMP”S) for growers, and other RCD programs as needed.

- DFG Master Lease Agreement: The California Department of Fish & Game Master Lease Agreement with BC-RCD is designed to establish a trust account for DFG lease payments. Currently, \$42,000 in trust. 20% (\$8,400) will be withheld annual for administration and will be considered a sustainable funding source. This account will grow in future years as a sustainable funding source.
- CALTRANS Conservation Easement: CALTRANS Conservation Easement to be signed in spring 2008, with BC-RCD taking over the conservation easement through CALTRANS Cooperative Agreement during prolonged escrow period by Sept 31, 2008. Endowment and management plan will follow to create sustainable funding program.
- Upper Feather River PG&E- FERC Settlement Agreement: Potential BC-RCD funding for erosion control on rural roads may be structured into the PG&E Settlement negotiation for the Upper Feather River FERC negotiations, if agreed to by the parties.
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy may be a source of funding for partnership roads program with Tehama County RCD linking rural roads project in the two adjacent counties. Additional funding may include Lassen National Forest and Fire Safe Council State Clearinghouse.

Essential Objective I.A.: As the Butte County General Plan continues to be updated, the BC-RCD shall participate in the public process. BC-RCD shall also contribute generous technical assistance where and when it is appropriate throughout the updating process.

Key Action I.A.1.: Pia Sevelius, District Manager, is currently on the Citizen’s Advisory Committee.

Key Action I.A.2.: Pia Sevelius, District Manager, serves on the stakeholder committee for the Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan, along with Nathan Key, NRCS, District Conservationist as an Alternate. BC-RCD has begun website expansion and will include links to the HCP/NCCP link to updated website

Key Action I.A.3.: Report to watershed, landowner, and other stakeholder groups regarding the progress of the General Plan Update process. BC-RCD shall add the General Plan webpage and HCP/NCCP to the updated website.

Key Action I.A.4.: BC-RCD will continue to disseminate the updated USDA/ NRCS Butte County Soil Survey. BC-RCD will investigate the potential for sales of “hard copies” or CD’s at reasonable cost which will compliment the free version currently available on the NRCS website. Included in the website expansion will be a link to the USDA/NRCS Soil Survey.

Essential Objective I.B.: As natural resource needs are identified through the General Plan Update process, the BC-RCD shall integrate those identified resource needs into the District’s planning priorities, thereby integrating broad based partnerships including Butte County Development Services.

Key Action I.B.1.: Additional value will be added to the Butte County General Planning update process by requesting assistance from appropriate entities in order to integrate and coordinate local, state and federal resource programs.

Essential Objective I.C.: Partner with NRCS to provide conservation planning assistance to landowners. The development of a BC-RCD Technical Service Provider (TSP) program will assist in creating a sustainable funding source for the District and enhance the partnership of the BC-RCD and the NRCS Field Office.

Key Action I.C.1.: Develop technical expertise of District staff in order to provide Conservation Planning as Technical Service Provider services for NRCS programs and landowners.

Key Action I.C.2: Develop technical expertise of District Staff in order to provide farm energy audits as Technical Service Provider services for NRCS Programs and landowners.

Essential Objective I.D.: Work with CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) and local partners to develop a gravel removal, flood control, and maintenance plans for waterways within Butte County where appropriate.

Key Action I.D.1.: BC-RCD will continue to invite collaboration with any resource entity and will continue to participate in preliminary project planning meetings to determine future Key Actions for the BC-RCD, as appropriate.

Essential Objective I.F.: The southern areas in Butte County have not had the benefit of an Existing Conditions Report to support and develop future resource management projects. In partnership with Sutter County RCD, Yuba County RCD and the City of Yuba, the Butte County RCD is currently facilitating the completion of a watershed assessment in the Lower Feather River Hydrologic Unit Control (HUC) and Honcut Creek Watershed. The Watershed Assessment is an advisory document on the

current conditions of the watershed. The Watershed Assessment will be made available to landowners, decision makers, agencies, and the public upon completion in 2009.

Key Action I.F.1.: BC-RCD shall complete performance on the CALFED Watershed Program Lower Feather River Grant contract 2006-2009.

Essential Objective I.G.: Erosion on the rural roads in Butte County is a major contributor of sediment thereby compromising the integrity of flood control channels and anadromous fish spawning habitat for many of the watersheds of Butte County.

Key Action I.G.1.: Contracts are in place to begin implementing rural roads maintenance and grading standards in the Upper Butte Creek Watershed. The BC-RCD Butte Creek Watershed Implementation Project is coordinated with the United States Forest Service (USFS), Butte County Public Works, Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The project will result in a technology transfer of grading technology and hydrology from the USFS to the Butte County Public Works, and NRCS staff. The technology gained through the project can then be implemented on other roads throughout the county.

Possible partnership with Tehama County RCD for Ponderosa Way.

II. COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Defining Statement: Conservation and restoration projects will not have long-term benefits unless landowners, citizens, agencies, and legislators understand why these efforts are valuable to our communities and ecosystems as a whole. The BC-RCD is committed to expanding outreach programs in each watershed as well as corresponding K-12 conservation education programs through youth organizations of Butte County.

Funding Sources:

- Farm Bill Assistance (see description above)
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Prop. 84. BC-RCD is receiving funds through Sierra Nevada Conservancy as a subcontractor for Nevada County RCD for grazing lands educational outreach programs in partnership with Butte County Cattleman's Assoc.

Essential Objective II.A.: The State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and other state water quality regulatory programs are evolving, thereby creating a need for landowners to

be aware of the non-point source programs and the voluntary practices designed to reduce runoff.

Key Action II.A.1.: The BC-RCD will continue to assist in the coordination of the SWRCB Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program informational meetings as well as provide support and information for landowners as needed.

Key Action II.A.2.: BC-RCD will continue to implement educational outreach programs for landowners, e.g. field days, tours and workshops. BC-RCD will continue to partner with Butte County Agricultural Commissioner's Office as well as expand partnerships with Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition, NRCS, UC Cooperative Extension, Butte County Farm Bureau, local Pest Control Advisors, and regional RCD's.

Key Action II.A.3.: Technical assistance for promotion of "Best Management Practices" shall be available to producers. Baseline water quality data may be required in some areas to challenge and/or support BMP's efficacy under some specific circumstances.

Essential Objective II.B.: The BC-RCD shall promote K-12 watershed conservation education through the support of existing programs developed by area partners.

Key Action II.B.1. BC-RCD is currently working with Manzanita School to develop a "Kids in the Creek" outreach program in the Lower Feather River Watershed. Expand support network to include in-kind contributions from BC-RCD Directors, Associate Directors and landowners who may participate as volunteer mentors.

Key Action II.B.2.: Continued support of Half Moon Bay's Range Camp for Butte County student attendance, if funds are available. Continue to recruit student participation from all Butte County schools.

Key Action II.B.3.: Continued support of CARCD Speak-Off Competition for Butte County High School students as staff time and funding allows. Increase number of contestants through youth organizations including Farm Bureau, Farm City Celebration, California Women for Agriculture, Future Farmers of America (FFA), and 4-H.

Key Action II.B.4.: Continued support of the partnership of 4-H, FFA, and County agricultural teachers for the construction of bird and bat boxes for profit and/or donation sale. Continue to develop outreach tools to promote bird and bat boxes.

Essential Objective II.C.: “Day in the District” bus tour or other District celebration of accomplishments should be scheduled on a semi-annual basis.

Key Action II.C.1.: 2009 “Day in the District” is scheduled as funded by the Butte Creek Watershed Implementation Project.

Key Action II.C.2.: BC-RCD will also continue to participate in local resource conservation events including:

- Oroville’s Wildflower and Nature Festival County
- Fire in the Foothills
- Endangered Species Faire
- UCCE Almond/Walnut Institute
- USDA Small Farm Conference Local Workshops
- Butte County & Silver Dollar Fair
- Stream Team Exhibits
- Farm City Celebration
- Others as funding allows

III. ENHANCEMENT OF WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY TECHNICAL DATA

Defining Statement: The surface water and groundwater resources are invaluable assets to the citizens of Butte County. The BC-RCD shall seek to protect and preserve the quality and quantity of the resources through technical investigations and cooperative land management activities.

Funding Sources:

- DOC Watershed Coordinator Program: See above
- Fee for Service- Section 401 Water Quality Certification Permits and other smaller permits have the potential to be streamlined through BC-RCD for a fee, generating income. Funding source is currently under investigation with Butte County Development Services.
- Water Use Efficiency Program’s Bureau of Reclamation/ CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) is distributing Prop.84 funds for water use efficiency.
- Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition serves as the implementing agency for the State Water Resources Control Board’s Irrigated Lands Regulated Lands Program. RCD’s are being considered at the state level as the liaison for the regulatory program and the agricultural landowners

Essential Objective III.A: The BC-RCD shall develop a voluntary Butte County watershed monitoring program designed to provide private landowners, resource managers, and local, state, and federal government agencies with technical information regarding the status of Butte County's water quantity and water quality.

Key Action III.A.1: Continue to develop and provide technical assistance and training for voluntary monitoring programs. Possible monitoring topics and projects to include: infiltration, erosion, wildlife habitat, bioassessment (Stream Teams), percolation, invasive weeds, fire danger, and threatened and endangered species. All implementation steps must be contingent upon voluntary participation of the landowners.

Key Action III.A.2: BC-RCD will also advocate the need for adequate funding levels to support historic state monitoring levels by providing a letter to legislators expressing importance of monitoring stations.

Essential Objective III.C.: Partner with Tehama RCD, Butte County Farm Bureau and NRCS to enhance Mobile Irrigation Lab Services for Butte County growers through expanded regional program services and funding.

IV. ALTERNATIVE ENERGY USE

Defining Statement: BC-RCD recognizes that state and federal legislation is essential for the private sector to expand investment in energy conversion technologies that use agricultural wastes as a fuel source. Forest thinning, orchard trimmings, and rice straw should be considered as sustainable fuel sources instead of disposal liabilities.

- Funding: Potential subcontract with Central Sacramento Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council to develop a fee for service program for farm energy audits.

Essential Objective IV.A: BC-RCD will continue to seek opportunities to participate and partner in a regional, collaborative approach to research future alternative energy opportunities and hurdles.

Key Action IV.A.1.: Continue to collaborate with the Central Sacramento Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council, and other partners including the regional forest products industry, the public utilities industry, the Butte County Air Quality District and Agricultural Commissioner Office, and California Association of Resource Conservation Districts.

Key Action IV.A.2.: The BC-RCD shall present and disseminate current information regarding alternative energy programs and efforts in California.

V. FOREST, RANGE AND CULTIVATED LAND HEALTH

Defining Statement: Healthy, well-managed forest and grazing lands are important to Butte County residents for food and fiber, water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, and rural lifestyles. Conservation of timber, soil, and water resources on both timber and grazing lands will result in healthy and productive watersheds.

Funding Sources:

- CA Department of Food and Agriculture has awarded BC-RCD \$29,000 to fund broom and skeleton weed eradication in Butte County. BC-RCD has sub-contracts with Butte County Agricultural Commissioner's Office and Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance.
- CA Wildlife Conservation Board will be awarding educational funds for oak woodlands education and oak protection. BC-RCD will be working with the California Cattleman's Association and the 4-H program and will be applying for funds in 2008. Funds can be leveraged with Butte County Fish and Game Commission and US Farm Bill for integrated local program to meet multiple benefits for conservation land-use planning, oak woodlands planning, fuel reduction.
- Farm and Ranch Cleanup and Abatement, up to \$50,000 can be awarded from the California Integrated Waste Management Board.
- California Cattlemen's Association's Safe Harbor Agreements: Fee for services based upon Baseline Condition Reports for Safe Harbor Agreements partnership with California Farm Bureau and DFG and US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Butte County Fish and Game Commission: Local granting programs for wildlife directed programs. Funds can be used as match for federal or state programs. BC-RCD envisions using F&G Commission fund for Oak Woodlands Education Programs as local match for UD Farm Bill Programs.

Essential Objective V.B.: Enhance the partnership with Butte County Agricultural Commissioner's Weed Management Area to develop a county wide invasive weed management program.

Key Action V.A.2.: The Butte County Agricultural Commissioner's has delegated the Butte County Weed Management Area to BC-RCD. BC-RCD has received funding from CDFA and is sub-contracting to Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance and the Butte County Agriculture Commissioner's Office. BC-RCD will continue to develop a county wide invasive weed management program as well as education and outreach to support the program.

Essential Objective V.C.: BC-RCD funded the Oak Woodlands Resolution and will be the lead agency for the Butte County oak education program. BC-RCD has the ability to hold conservation easements and will be developing an outreach programs for local landowners in partnership with the CA Wildlife Conservation Board, Butte County Development Services Butte County Farm Bureau, CA Oak Foundation, CA Native Plant Society, UCCE and Butte County Cattleman's Association.

Key Action V.C.1: BC-RCD will continue to investigate the potential to hold conservation easements as the program continues to develop.

Key Action V.C.2: BC-RCD will continue to expand its technical and financial capacity either through internal staff or through subcontracts to provide expertise to monitor and maintain conservation easement program in Butte County for open space, agricultural conservation, wildlife conservation and/or watershed protection.

Essential Objective V.D.: California Farm Bureau and the California Rangeland Coalition are developing Safe Harbor Agreements for specific species in Butte, Tehama and Shasta Counties. The Butte County RCD has been identified as the implementing entity within Butte County to service the voluntary agreements with the landowners.

Key Action V.D.1.: Develop a baseline conditions monitoring program for landowners for fee for service.

V. GROWTH, SUSTAINABILITY AND PROFESSIONAL STANDING OF THE BC-RCD

Defining Statement: To accomplish increasingly complex projects and grant management, BC-RCD must be staffed by professional management and technicians with a flexible structure that can respond to changes in funding and focus while maintaining the integrity of the organization.

Essential Objective VI.A.: All Board members, Associate Directors, Earth Team Volunteers, and staff should have sufficient training and equipment to professionally complete all tasks assigned.

Key Action VI.A.1.: A calendar of District training workshops and requests for future training should be created and maintained in an

available location. When appropriate, training opportunities shall be posted on the website for public outreach.

Key Action VI.A.2.: BC-RCD will identify strengths as well as areas where additional training is needed for future growth.

Essential Objective VI.B.: Enhance the Watershed Equipment Lending Library (WELL) including an equipment list, storage system, lending system and maintenance logs.

Key Action VI.B.1.: Increase promotion of the WELL equipment to be used by interested parties and schools.

Key Action VI.B.2.: Develop additional funding for growth of the WELL.

Key Action VI. B.3.: Monitor use of equipment and projects completed to demonstrate works being done in the county.

Essential Objective VI.C.: Continue to develop the District grant management and fiscal reporting and audit systems, in order to meet the increasing complexity of expanding programs, and insure public accountability.

Key Action VI.C.1: BC-RCD has hired Joan Webster a professional bookkeeper for the District. Associate Director, Rodney Carter is also assisting in the financial reporting for the District. Overhead will continue to be earmarked for regular financial review and formal financial audits.

Essential Objective VI.D.: The Finance Committee of assigned Board Members, Associate Directors, staff will continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss upcoming programs, staff development, staff requests and funding opportunities.

Key Action VI.D.1.: BC-RCD will assess how to structure BC-RCD Finance Committee with new directors and staff.

Essential Objective VI.E.: The District shall maintain active participation with the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD).

Key Action VI.E.1.: Encourage and fund participation in CARCD's Northern California programs as well as State program and committees, including the annual CARCD State Conference.

Key Action VI.E.2.:
The BC-RCD will review and rewrite the District's vision statement.

Essential Objective VI.F.: Maintain and review District business practices including, administrative and governance review

Key Action VI.F.1.: Risk management considerations for project implementation must be given to determine Board, staff and partnership coverage for all projects and levels of exposures.

BC-RCD is in the process of increasing insurance and risk management policy to be compliant with the California Department of Fish & Game requirements for the master lease agreements. BC-RCD will review and understand summary of new coverage and have it reviewed by an independent consultant.

Key Action VI.F.2.: Create a working list of Frequently Asked Questions and Concerns List for BC-RCD to maintain exceptional responsible management.

Essential Objective VI. G.: The District shall annex Butte County lands formerly served by the Vina RCD.

Key Action VI.G.1.:

The District annexation process shall be coordinated with Butte County LAFCO.

It is the policy of the BC-RCD Board of Directors that each monthly Board agenda item shall specifically reference by number a listed item within this Strategic Work Plan. If a proposed subject area for a monthly agenda item falls outside of the Strategic Plan, revisions to the BC-RCD Strategic Plan may only be made by majority vote of the full BC-RCD Board of Directors.

