



Tehama County
Monday, July 21, 2025 10:00 AM
Flood Control and Water Conservation
District
Meeting Minutes

Tehama County Board of Supervisors
Chambers
727 Oak Street, Red Bluff, CA 96080
<https://tehamacounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

Present:

Chairperson Pati Nolen, Vice Chair Hansen Director Greg Jones, Director Rob Burroughs, and Director Tom Walker, Justin Jenson, Deputy Director of Public Works-Water Resources; Lena Sequeira, Administration

Public Comment

None

2. Accept June 2025 GSA Claims

25-1312

Request acceptance of the Tehama County Groundwater Sustainability Agency claims paid in June 2025 in the amount of \$11,022.11.

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: Tom Walker

SECONDER: Greg Jones

AYES: Director Nolen, Director Jones, Director Burroughs, and Director Walker

ABSENT: Vice Chair Hansen

3. Accept June 2025 Flood Claims

25-1313

Request acceptance of Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District claims paid in June 2025 in the amount of \$1,585.07.

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: Tom Walker

SECONDER: Greg Jones

AYES: Director Nolen, Director Jones, Director Burroughs, and Director Walker

ABSENT: Vice Chair Hansen

4. Presentation on Long Term Funding Strategies

25-131

Director Hansen arrived at the beginning of this item.

Jenson provided an update on the process for developing the groundwater extraction fee schedule. He clarified that this presentation was not a proposal or request for approval of specific fee amounts, but an introduction to the methodology that will be used.

Jenson noted that the process is complex and will be presented in phases to allow the community adequate time for review and feedback.

Jenson explained that the initial phase will focus on the legal framework, providing an overview of the Water Code and the authority it grants to impose fees on groundwater extraction within the basin.

Staff noted that if the state assumes management of the basin, a mandated fee structure would automatically be implemented.

The group discussed what would occur if the state assumed management of the basin and how that process might be carried out.

Discussion centered on what county residents would receive in return for paying the proposed fees.

Jenson stated that the next step is determining the funding required to carry out the work, noting that this calculation is nearly complete.

Discussion was held regarding the methodology for determining fees and whether differences exist across various regions of the state.

Jenson noted that, because metering is not required and basin conditions differ, fees will be determined based on water use rather than well size.

Jenson provided an overview of the fee schedule process and timeline. He noted that estimates for dollars per volume will be developed in October, first presented in September, and subsequently submitted for legal review. Input from external companies will be solicited to ensure legitimacy, and recommendations for potential modifications will be considered. He further indicated that multiple rounds of adjustments may be required.

Director Jones inquired about the timing of fee collection.

Jenson responded that the fees will be included on the July 2026 tax roll.

Director Walker asked whether other counties are following the same timeline. Jenson noted that the timelines vary across counties.

Jenson reviewed the proposed timeline for Tehama County, outlining steps including

legal review, finalizing a fixed methodology, and conducting public hearings and/or voting. He noted that existing data will be utilized, which, despite the substantial work remaining, is expected to expedite the process.

Walker asked whether, when establishing a set fee schedule for irrigated acres of specific crops, any users would be willing to meter their wells to verify the accuracy of water use estimates.

Jenson stated that data collected from Davis will be used to assist in determining fees. He noted that many users in the county already have meters and that additional data is obtained from some of these users.

Discussion was held regarding methods for monitoring water use and measures to prevent users from exceeding their allocated water amounts.

Discussion was held regarding which entity will collect the fees and which entity will make the recommendations.

A resident commented on the Irrigated Lands Program, noting that all farmers pay \$3.75 per acre and report their water use. The resident suggested that the program's irrigated parcel data could serve as a useful resource.

Jenson responded that the data cannot be shared due to legal restrictions.

A resident called in to express concerns regarding recharge projects. The caller, a hydrologist, inquired about project funding and asked questions related to the interconnected aquifers.

Jenson responded to the resident's comments, explaining the process for recharge projects and emphasizing that such projects require environmental review.

Discussion was held regarding nitrates in the water and potential filtration method when using surface water.

A resident inquired about the data being used to estimate the required funding and the associated timeline.

Discussion took place concerning the estimated costs, the method of their distribution, and the well registration program, including related mailers.

Hansen inquired if the fees imposed by the GSAs would ultimately be charged to property owners.

Jenson stated that a basin fee will be implemented, though the details remain under discussion. He explained that mountain water supplies the basins and noted that a future decision will be needed regarding the management of wells outside the basins.

Hansen expressed his opinion on managing wells outside the basins, suggesting that management remain within the basins for the time being.

Jenson addressed litigation, explaining that legal fees will be included in the budget. He emphasized that professional guidance will be sought prior to establishing fees, while acknowledging that all fee assessments carry some level of risk.

Jones expressed the view that the state should provide clearer guidance on the process for collecting these fees.

Jenson responded that the laws do provide guidance, but noted that the areas currently involved in litigation are not in compliance with these laws.

5. Flood Related Items

25-1314

Jenson started the discussion on flood related items reviewing that since we have had bad floods within the last 3 years, this is a discussion for flood related items.

Jenson stated that one benefit of being a flood control district is the ability to divert water during flood stages. He explained that this would help reduce downstream flooding while also providing a source of free water. He noted that there will be costs involved but emphasized that it would be the most affordable water available.

Burroughs asked how long it would take to determine flood levels and flow direction, noting that people are currently losing property and crops. He questioned what actions are being taken in the meantime.

There was discussion regarding historical data showing that stream flow changes naturally over time, the limitations of what the district can do to prevent flooding, and the responsibility of private property owners to maintain their land.

Burroughs stated his opinion on the sources of the flooding issues and asked what the Corps could do to assist.

Jenson clarified that the Army Corps of Engineers does not provide funding but explained the types of support and services they offer.

Hansen asked if Burroughs wanted to hold a study session.

There was discussion regarding the time and resources spent addressing both flood and well-related issues.

Burroughs expressed concerns about the condition of bridges within the county.

There was discussion regarding culverts and responsibility for their maintenance.

Jenson explained the county's scope of work and efforts to maintain land and levees.

He noted that taking additional action would require funding, which would involve collecting fees from the public.

There was further discussion regarding flooding issues and possible actions that could be taken.

Hansen again suggested holding a study session and requested that Jenson bring back a list of actions the county can take for review at the next meeting.

There was discussion about the potential creation of a special district and what that process would involve.

Jenson clarified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would not be responsible for creating a district but explained their role and how their involvement could impact local residents.

There was additional discussion regarding various scenarios.

Jenson reviewed the consequences of private property owners making changes to their land that impact downstream properties, noting that affected parties may pursue legal action.

Hansen asked what could be done about the affected bridges.

Jenson responded that the necessary infrastructure needs to be replaced but noted that the primary issue in Tehama County is the lack of available funding.

There was discussion about forming a task force to explore potential solutions.

County Counsel Daniel Clausner suggested creating a bullet list of specific requests for Jenson so he can return with the relevant information.

Additional discussion was held regarding illegal grading and flooding patterns, with specific attention to flooding in the Dairyville area.

The group reviewed changes in regulations and geography over the years, and several Directors shared observations from visiting the affected sites.

Jenson reiterated that the use of equipment to clean creeks is no longer permitted under current regulations. He noted that he has communicated with state and federal agencies regarding these issues, but options remain limited.

The group also discussed the implications of a 100-year floodplain designation for residents. Jenson provided an overview of the process and potential associated costs.

There was general consensus that the group would like to see a presentation outlining possible solutions and their impacts on the community.

6. Updates

25-1315

Groundwater Recharge:

Jenson stated that the agency has retained special counsel with expertise in public water rights to prepare a white paper identifying potential water sources, associated costs, and availability. This document will serve as the initial step in planning recharge projects.

Well Mitigation:

Jenson reported that the STRAW proposal is complete and that demand management and well-mitigation efforts are being aligned. One more meeting is planned before draft plans are presented to the Commission and then to this group.

Demand Management:

Update provided above.

Board Matters

None

Adjourn

11:49 AM