

Contact:
Robyn DiFalco
Executive Director
Butte Environmental Council
[\(530\) 891-6424](tel:(530)891-6424)
robynd@becnet.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BUTTE ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL TO BEGIN NEW WATERSHED PROGRAM IN 2014

CHICO, Calif. February 7, 2014 – While water advocacy has long been a priority for BEC, this new program focuses on watersheds as an ecological planning unit that can guide local land-use planning. Approaching habitat restoration and land-use planning from a watershed perspective has the advantage of recognizing the cumulative effects of human activities and natural processes, as well as being able to connect those living in the environment to larger issues that surround the creeks of Butte County.

The Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance (BCCWA) approached BEC in 2013 seeking a way to consolidate efforts. After several decades of watershed protection work, the BCCWA felt the best way to reenergize watershed protection efforts was to merge with a larger organization that encompassed the Alliance's mission and goals. BCCWA board member Sharon Wallace was selected to join the BEC board to facilitate the evolution of the program.

BEC has hired Nani Teves as program coordinator for the Watershed Program. Teves has a Masters in Watershed Science and prior experience as a Watershed Coordinator for watersheds throughout Tehama and Butte Counties. She has also worked for BEC in recent years as an independent consultant on water outreach and land-use planning.

Carol Perkins will continue to serve as BEC's Water Policy Analyst by helping the organization respond to out-of-region water transfers, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, and other critical water policy issues.

BEC's new watershed program seeks to protect and enhance the ecological integrity and economic vitality of watersheds throughout Butte County, with specific emphasis on watersheds not served by other programs or organizations. In partnership with interested citizens, government agencies, landowners, and private enterprise, BEC will work to foster watershed education, sustainable land management, and promote the perspective that watersheds are ecological planning units that can positively guide local land-use planning.

John Merz, chair of the BCCWA board, is excited about the added focus that BEC's new Watershed Program will bring to countywide watershed issues, including

fisheries and forest management, and looks forward to a more unified approach to addressing such concerns for the benefit of all.

Among the potential projects for the program are the development of a greywater workshop led by Greywater Action out of Berkeley, rainwater catchment at schools, and advocating for the restoration of greenways along Little Chico Creek. For further information, please visit www.becnet.org/water.

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The Butte Environmental Council is a non-profit environmental organization based in Chico, California. BEC's mission is to preserve the Earth's natural resources, with an emphasis on environmental issues in Northern California. Since 1975, BEC has played a significant part in shaping the environment and policies of Butte County and surrounding areas. For further information, visit www.becnet.org or contact Executive Director Robyn DiFalco at [\(530\) 891-6424](tel:5308916424) or robynd@becnet.org.