

### 3 COLUSA BASIN DRAINAGE DISTRICT HISTORY AND OPERATION

#### 3.1 Establishment of District by State Legislature

The California State Legislature created the Colusa Basin Drainage District by special act in 1987. The Colusa Basin Drainage District Act, codified at Chapter 127 of the California Water Code Appendix, sets forth the Colusa Basin Drainage District's authorities, obligations, and governance structure. The text of this legislation is shown at the end of this report at Appendix L.

Within the Colusa Basin Drainage District Act, the State legislature recognized that "the problems of flooding and winter drainage, irrigation drainage, and subsidence which are occurring within the Colusa Basin are multicounty in scope, but are unique to the Colusa Basin and are not general or statewide. A special act to address these problems is, therefore, necessary." (Water Code App. § 127-21) The Legislature also recognized that efforts to resolve these issues may cross jurisdictional boundaries:

*Sec. 22. There are within the basin a number of governmental entities presently formed which are authorized to address one or more of the problems referred to in Sections 20 and 21 within the scope of their particular jurisdiction. It will be beneficial for the overall basin that a district be formed which incorporates the entire basin and is able to relate to the overall problems of the total basin while still allowing any project which may be undertaken affecting individual areas within the basin to be addressed by other districts or the respective counties with the assistance and cooperation of, and coordination with, the basinwide district.*

Finally, the Act provides that the District may not exercise the powers granted to it under the Act within the boundaries of another local agency which is authorized to exercise the same powers, except with the consent and approval of the agency in question. (Water Code App. § 127-143).

The Colusa Basin Drainage District Act states the following regarding LAFCo:

*Sec. 50. The Cortese-Knox Local Government Reorganization Act of 1985 (Division 3 (commencing with Section 56000) of Title 5 of the Government Code) does not apply to the formation of the district or the formation or changes in the boundaries of any zone. For all other purposes, the district is a "district" as that term is defined in the Cortese-Knox Local Government Reorganization Act of 1985.*

#### 3.2 Colusa Basin Drainage District

##### 3.2.1 Colusa Basin Drainage District Goals

Under its organic act, the "primary purpose of the district is to study, plan, and facilitate the implementation of [plans related to drainage, flooding and subsidence in the Colusa Basin], leaving, wherever possible, the implementation of the plan to the local agency or other district which is best able to carry out that function." (Water Code App. § 127-143.) Consistent with that directive, the District has been involved in a number of regional planning efforts, typically associated with floodwater retention or irrigation water management. In 2001, the District adopted its *Integrated Resources Management Program for Flood Control in the Colusa Basin*; a

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Deleted: US Government established the Colusa Basin Drainage District by passing the "Colusa Basin Watershed Integrated Resources Management Act" in 1999. The text of this legislation is shown at the end of this report in Appendix B. The District is also governed by the State of California Colusa Basin Drainage District Act (1987) shown in Appendix C at the end of this report

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programmatic EIR/EIS for the plan was released in the same year.

The Colusa Basin Drainage District provided the following summary of goals and objectives:

*The primary goal outlined in the Plan is to develop facilities and programs to reduce peak flood flows in conjunction with environmental restoration and enhancement measures.*

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*The District's objectives in implementing the goal include the following:*

- *Work in tandem with landowners, other local interested parties, and local, state and federal agencies.*
- *Minimize property damage from flooding within the study area.*
- *Maximize landowner benefits.*
- *Enhance and protect environmental resources.*
- *Minimize impacts to downstream interests.*
- *Improve water quality by minimizing erosion and sedimentation.*
- *Provide additional opportunities for groundwater recharge where feasible.*

Although the Integrated Watershed Management Plan 2000 is referenced on the Colusa Basin Drainage District website, a copy of the Plan is not available on the website. It may be time to redo or update this Plan.

**3.3 Colusa Basin Drainage District Government**

**3.3.1 Board of Directors membership:**

The Colusa Basin Drainage District has a nine member Board of Directors, with three from each of the three counties involved as follows:

**District #1: Glenn County:**

- Tom Arnold
- Donald Perez
- Jered Shipley

**Deleted:** Cell: 530-330-0328 - Email Address: [tom.arnold@countyofglenn.net](mailto:tom.arnold@countyofglenn.net)

**Deleted:** Cell: 530-713-5650 - Email Address: [perezdonald@hotmail.com](mailto:perezdonald@hotmail.com)

**District #2: Colusa County:**

- Gary Evans
- Mary Fahey
- Peter Knight

**Deleted:** Assistant: Ann Nordyke 530-458-0508 - Cell: 530-570-1908 - Email Address: [gevans@countyofcolusa.com](mailto:gevans@countyofcolusa.com)

**Deleted:** Cell: 530-383-4625 Email Address: [wiseacrefarm@succeed.net](mailto:wiseacrefarm@succeed.net)

**Deleted:** Cell: 530 521-6384 Email Address: [pdknight@knightfarms.us](mailto:pdknight@knightfarms.us)

**District #3: Yolo County**

- Lynnel Pollock
- George Tibbitts
- Todd Miller Cell:

**Deleted:** Cell: 530-383-5640 Home: 530-662-3570 Email Address: [yoloranch@gmail.com](mailto:yoloranch@gmail.com) and [lynnelpollock@gmail.com](mailto:lynnelpollock@gmail.com)

**Deleted:** Cell: 530-437-2546 Email Address: [gdtibbitts@gmail.com](mailto:gdtibbitts@gmail.com)

**Deleted:** 530-304-7704 Email Address: [tmiller@rd108.org](mailto:tmiller@rd108.org)

**3.3.2 Board of Directors Terms**

The Colusa Basin Drainage District Board of Directors are elected or appointed and serve four year terms as follows:

District #1: (Glenn County)

Tom Arnold Board of Supervisors	4 years	Jan 1, 2026
Donald Perez Elected by Division I	4 years	Jan 1, 2028
Jered Shipley Elected by Districts	4 years	Jan 1, 2026

District #2: Colusa County

Gary Evans Board of Supervisors	4 years	Jan 1, 2026
Mary Fahey Elected by Division II	4 years	Jan 1, 2028
Peter Knight Elected by Districts	4 years	Jan 1, 2028

District #3: Yolo County

Lynnel Pollock Board of Supervisors	4 years	Jan 1, 2028
George Tibbitts Elected by Division III	4 years	Jan 1, 2026
Todd Miller Elected by Districts	4 years	Jan 1, 2026

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### 3.3.3 Board of Directors Meeting Locations

The Board of Directors rotates among several meeting locations within the District. The meeting locations are specified on the agendas and are posted on the District website. The following is a list of rotating meeting locations:

Glenn Colusa Irrigation District Conference Room  
344 East Laurel Street, Willows, CA 95988

Sites Project Authority Reservoir Conference Room  
P.O. Box 517, 122 Old Highway 99, Maxwell, CA 95955

Colusa-Glenn Farm Credit Conference Room  
2970 Davison Court, Colusa, CA 95932

[Westside Water District Board Room](#)  
[5005 State Highway 20](#)  
[Williams, CA](#)

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**Deleted:** Contact Person: Mary Spooner, Email: [m Spooner@qcid.net](mailto:m Spooner@qcid.net), Phone Number: 530-934-8881

**Deleted:** Contact Person: Terri Baland, Email: [boardclerk@sitesproject.org](mailto:boardclerk@sitesproject.org)  
Phone Number: 530-438-2309 (personal cell phone),  
Web: [www.SitesProject.org](http://www.SitesProject.org)

**Deleted:** Contact: Rebecca Myers, Email: [rmyers@fscolusaglenn.com](mailto:rmyers@fscolusaglenn.com), Phone Number: 530-458-2163

### 3.3.4 Contact Information and Website

The Colusa Basin Drainage District can be reached as shown below:

Phone: 530-934-7794  
Mailing Address: PO Box 390, Willows, CA 95988  
Office location: 1030 W Wood St, Ste 3, Willows, CA 95988

The Colusa Basin Drainage District has a website at [cbdd.specialdistrict.org](http://cbdd.specialdistrict.org). The website is required by State law for special districts in California.

### 3.3.5 Committees

The Colusa Basin Drainage District has three committees as follows:

Project Committee  
Ranch Committee  
Executive Committee

The agendas for these committees are published on the Colusa Basin Drainage District website. The committees often meet at the Westside Water District, 5005 State Highway 20, Williams, CA 95987. The minutes of the committee meetings are not shown on the website.

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#### 4.3.1 Infrastructure

The District does not have a fire protection, municipal/industrial water supply, or sewer function under its enabling legislation. It likewise does not serve a primary function in maintaining or funding infrastructure projects, and does not maintain or construct infrastructure.

Sections 20 of the Act identifies three problems that the District was created to respond to. These include:

- Limited outlet capacity and limited drainage and channel capacity within the basin in and around the Knights Landing Ridge Cut and the Colusa Drain during periods of high water in the Sacramento River, which results in periodic extensive flooding throughout the basin.<sup>16</sup>
- Decreasing capacity for irrigation drainage in the Colusa Drain as a result of increased development of lands within the Colusa Basin, resulting in decreased drainage function and regional flooding, even during the normal drainage season.<sup>17</sup>
- Certain areas within the Colusa Basin appear to be experiencing subsidence which, in the opinion of the Legislature, could add to the flooding and drainage problems occurring within the basin.<sup>18</sup>

The District's primary task upon formation was "the development of an economically feasible initial plan to improve or mitigate the drainage, flooding, and subsidence problems within the district, including financing measures to carry out the plan." According to Merrilee Vanderwaal, General Manager, "[t]he District does not have an activity plan at this time."<sup>19</sup> Future projects carried out by the District are to be considered and evaluated by the Board under the processes identified in Section 610 through 613 of the Act.

#### 4.3.2 MSR Determinations on Infrastructure for Colusa Basin Drainage District

MSR 3-1) It appears that the Colusa Basin Drainage District could benefit from an updated review of the ongoing efforts to improve or mitigate the drainage, flooding, and subsidence issues within the District, and an updated Plan under section 610 of the Act to respond to those issues.

#### 4.4 Financial Ability to Provide Services<sup>21</sup>

*Purpose: To evaluate factors that affect the financing of needed improvements and to identify practices or opportunities that may help eliminate unnecessary costs without decreasing service levels.*

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<sup>16</sup> Colusa Basin Drainage District Act, Section 20(a).

<sup>17</sup> Colusa Basin Drainage District Act, Section 20(b).

<sup>18</sup> Colusa Basin Drainage District Act, Section 20(c).

<sup>19</sup> Colusa Basin Drainage District, Merrilee Vanderwaal, General Manager, April 23, 2024, E-mail to John Benoit, Executive Officer, Colusa Local Agency Formation Commission.

<sup>21</sup> California Government Code Section 56430 (a) (4)

#### 4.4.1 Financial Considerations for Colusa Basin Drainage District

The Colusa Basin Drainage District prepares a budget and an audit as required. The District could benefit from an update of the 2000 [Integrated Watershed Resources Plan](#) referenced on the website for the District, [as well as an update on current efforts Basin-wide to address the three problem areas identified in the Act, to guide its financial decisions and identify planning priorities for the future.](#)

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#### 4.4.2 MSR Determinations on Financing for Colusa Basin Drainage District

MSR 4-1) The Colusa Basin Drainage District maintains good financial records.

MSR 4-2) The Colusa Basin Drainage District could benefit from a Plan or an updated Plan [that accounts for recent studies and partner agency work on the three problem areas identified by the Act, in order to prioritize expenditures that would further the specific goals of the District.](#)

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#### 4.5 Colusa Basin Drainage District Opportunities for Shared Facilities<sup>22</sup>

*Purpose: To evaluate the opportunities for a jurisdiction to share facilities and resources to develop more efficient service delivery systems.*

##### 4.5.1 Facilities

The Colusa Basin Drainage District owns [one ranch, the South Fork Willow Creek Ranch, which it leases for conservation grazing practices consistent with the terms of a grant agreement between the State of California and the District.](#)

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##### 4.5.2 MSR Determinations on Shared Facilities for Colusa Basin Drainage District

MSR 5-1) The Colusa Basin Drainage District could benefit from a Plan or an updated Plan which would show what facilities are needed, [or proposed for study in the Basin by the District or other partnering agencies.](#)

#### 4.6 Accountability for Community Service Needs, Government Structure and Operational Efficiencies<sup>23</sup>

*Purpose: To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various government structures that could provide public services, to evaluate the management capabilities of the organization and to evaluate the accessibility and levels of public participation associated with the agency's decision-making and management processes.*

##### 4.6.1 Government Structure

The Colusa Basin Drainage District has a [nine](#)-member Board of Directors, three directors from each county in the District. The District has three committees: Executive Committee, Ranch Committee and Project Committee. The District has a website and a General Manager to

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<sup>22</sup> California Government Code Section 56430 (a) (5)

<sup>23</sup> California Government Code Section 56430 (a) (6)

oversee the budget, website, meeting minutes, and other administrative matters. The District does not have a technical staff or consultant to plan, evaluate, and implement projects.

**4.6.2 MSR Determinations on Government Structure for Basin Drainage District**

MSR 6-1) The District has a nine member Board of Directors as required by the enabling legislation.

MSR 6-2) The District has a General Manager to organize meetings, agendas, finances, legal notices and the website.

MSR 6-3) The District does not have a technical staff to plan and oversee drainage projects. The General Manager and/or Board are responsible for coordination with other districts.

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