



RESEARCH, EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date: Monday, January 12, 2026
Time: 12:00pm
Place: Lodi Winegrape Commission, 2545 W Turner Road, Lodi, CA 95242

1. The **meeting was called to order** at 12:08pm by Committee Chairman Dawson Lewis.
2. Those in **attendance** are indicated below. Justin Tanner has decided to step off the Committee.

First Name	Last Name	Attended
Scott	Armolea	
Amy	Blagg	X
Kyle	Brown	X
Kevin	den Hartog	X
Mike	Klouda	
Joe	Larranaga	X
Dawson	Lewis	X
Keith	Striegler	X
Joe	Valente	X

Staff present: Stephanie Bolton and Stuart Spencer.
Guests present: Cameron Heinitz (Kautz Farms) and Karen Block (UC).

3. **Consideration of previous minutes.** Valente/Brown made a motion to approve the November 18, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was carried on a vote of Committee members present. No “no” votes. No abstentions.

4. **Public comment:** Karen Block updated the Committee on UC activities.

5. **Grower education programs.**

- **Review of recent initiatives and growing season**
 - Committee members updated everyone on their “Member Projects” where each REC Committee member leads a project that they care about on behalf of the Commission to help the broader Lodi Winegrowing Community. Each project is in the area of viticulture research, education and/or communications. Brainstormed ideas thus far:
 - Kyle Brown: Tree of Heaven removal workshop at LangeTwins
 - Mike Klouda: Regenerative viticulture trial at Michael David
 - Keith Streigler: Rootstock evaluation
 - Joe Valente and Cameron Heinitz: Pruning competition in January with blog article
 - Amy Blagg: OSHA autonomous farm equipment regulations
 - Joe Larranaga: TBD, possible water project
 - Kevin den Hartog: TBD
 - Dawson Lewis: TBD, possibly mating disruption
 - Scott Armolea: TBD

- Roundtable review of recent meetings and events.
 - NASA DEVELOP presentation
 - December 2 IPM Network Breakfast Meeting: Trunk Disease Workshop with Akif Eskalen
 - January 6 IPM Network Breakfast Meeting
- **Future outreach initiatives**
 - Committee members were invited to:
 - Unified Wine & Grape Symposium
 - January 15 LDGGA Meeting
 - January 17 Joe's Pruning Competition
 - February 3 Lodi Grape Day
 - February 9 LDGGA Annual Business Meeting
 - February 18 UC Grape Day
 - March 3 Lodi Farm Safety Day
 - March 11 UC On the Road in Lodi
 - March 31 LDGGA Water Forum
 - Ideas for future meetings: profitability, alternative crops, "A Journey Into Vine Health", crop rotation and herbicides/plant back restrictions, rootstocks and drought tolerance, vineyard establishment workshop, beneficial insects, Axel Borg (UC V&E Librarian), grower/winemaker relationships, the grape market, field-in technology, a microscope series, robotics, and permanent/full ground cover.

6. **Grower communications.**

- Grower e-Newsletter emails are sent up to a few times per month as needed, with an extensive calendar at the bottom.
- The lodigrowers.com website is updated frequently with educational events (under the Education heading, Local Opportunities page). Stephanie Bolton manages our weekly viticulture blogs, which are often picked up by industry news outlets.
- Stephanie Bolton is providing extensive consultation to farming families regarding vineyard removals to help them through the process emotionally, logistically, and financially.

7. **Winegrape research in Crush District 11. Research projects and focus group updates:**

- The Commission continues to develop close working relationships with skilled scientists, who collaborate with us on research projects in the areas of soil, water, sustainability, pests and diseases, rodent control, climate change, and more.
- The Rootstock Research Focus Group meets on demand as they process five years of research. Growers can contact Dr. Stephanie Bolton to participate in on-farm small rootstock trials.
- Maria Zumkeller has created an Arc GIS dashboard which works with the free iNaturalist app to track our local Tree of Heaven populations so we can monitor their presence, scout them for the spotted lanternfly, and monitor their destruction post-scouting.
- Stephanie Bolton was invited to be a keynote speaker at the International Conference on Grapevine Viruses called "An Ongoing Grower-Led Holistic Grapevine Virus Outreach & Extension Project in California, USA" which includes Committee members Mike Klouda, Keith Striegler and Kyle Brown as co-authors. This international conference is held every two years and this is the first time the organizers opened the abstracts to extension work.

8. **Weather Network services.** Solar batteries are being replaced as needed.

9. The **FY2025-26 Budget** was reviewed.

10. **Reports from other Committees.**

- Stuart Spencer updated the Committee on marketing activities and the Business Improvement District.

11. **Public comment on items not appearing on the agenda (2 min limit):** Cornerstone Canine Concepts introduced themselves and discussed their project to pick up on the canine detection of grapevine viruses, building upon the Lodi Winegrape Commission's DPR grant project.

12. **Items for future agendas:** REC Member Projects.
13. The **next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2026.**
14. The **meeting was adjourned** at 1:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie L. Bolton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Stephanie L. Bolton, PhD
Research & Education Director
Lodi Winegrape Commission