



**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 8, 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OF THE  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

The Regular Meeting of the Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Santa Cruz County Board of Directors was called to order at **6:33PM on December 8, 2021** at Zoom Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present: Kelley Bell  
Mike Eaton  
Robert Ketley  
Mike Manfre, Vice President  
Jim McKenna, President  
John Ricker

Directors Absent: Howard Liebenberg

RCD Staff Present: Tangi Chapman, Recorder  
Lisa Lurie, Executive Director

NRCS Staff Present: Drew Mather, Soil Cons. & Acting DC for Half Moon Bay/Santa Cruz

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33PM, with a quorum present. Jim McKenna chaired the meeting. Roll was called and connectivity confirmed; Kelley Bell present; Mike Eaton present; Robert Ketley present; Howard Liebenberg absent; Mike Manfre present; Jim McKenna present; John Ricker present.

**2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME**

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**4. NRCS REPORT**

Drew Mather gave the NRCS Report. He shared that Whitney Haraguchi is out on annual leave until the end of the year. Drew has been the acting District Conservationist while Whit is away. December 10, 2021, is the deadline for applications for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Drew attended a site visit with Erin McCarthy and Kelli Camara at a farm to discuss potential water projects, including rainwater harvesting and how RCD and NRCS can assist. Drew has seen an uptick in interest regarding biochar soil amendment and compost applications via EQIP cost share in Santa Cruz County and NRCS has been sending many referrals to the RCD regarding the Healthy Soils Program. A new EQIP Cover Crop Initiative with \$6.8 million will be available for California farmers. The locally piloted Conservation Incentives Contract will be rolled out nationally. Drew and Rich Casale completed what is likely their final CZU post fire visit. Additionally, there has been much interest in forestry plans which Jeff Kelley and Matt Abernathy have been coordinating.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA**

The Board reviewed the consent agenda items, including the November Minutes and November Expenditures. Mike Manfre moved approval of the consent agenda items. John Ricker seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. Robert Ketley abstained. The motion passed.



## 6. ACTION ITEMS

### 6.1. Consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2021-12 to extend remote meetings per AB 361 for 30 days

Lisa presented the Board with Resolution RCDSCC 2021-12 to continue remote meetings under a state of emergency per AB 361 requirements. The Board discussed the continued State of Emergency and that close contact for prolonged times continues to be discouraged. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

### 6.2. Review and consider approval of the North Rispin Property Checklist

Lisa reviewed the North Rispin Property Inspection with the Board. She shared that Angie Gruys conducted the inspection on November 24, 2021. Angie reported that the property was in very good condition in respect to garbage and recent human activities. There was one encampment with a single tent and another built out of fallen woody vegetation and tarps but were clear of debris and trash. There was graffiti on two trees (which had been documented in previous years) and three pieces of trash which were removed on the walk. Angie's assessment was that nothing observed would be a detriment to water conservation, erosion control, soil conservation, water quality or fish and wildlife. The Board was pleased to see coordination with Capitola law enforcement during the inspection. Questions remained about potential reimbursements for these inspections. Tangi said that she would send a copy of the Covenants to the Board for review. John Ricker pointed out that the City of Capitola is one of the only cities in the County that is a part of the RCD and that the District may get some tax revenue from the city though likely it is minor. After discussion, John Ricker moved approval of North Rispin Property Checklist. Kelley Bell seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

## 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 7.1. 100 Employee Handbook Update

Lisa shared that the Employee Handbook provides the framework for District operations, the document contains both legal requirements and Board adopted policies. The document was adopted in 2014 and has only had minor revisions since. In recent years, there have been significant changes to California Family Rights Act, expanding benefits and the employers that must provide them. Lisa has been working with Best, Best, & Krieger to update the handbook to comply with best practices and the law, and has communicate with other RCDs on their policies. Additionally, last week Lisa and Tangi Chapman met with Jim McKenna and Kelley Bell to discuss the changes and to identify areas that need further Board review. The four points that were identified included compensation for overtime, Personal Time Off accrual caps, providing workers compensation for volunteers and the process for resolving employee grievances. The Board discussed various aspects of each of these policies and it was suggested that Lisa take these comments and present alternatives for Board consideration, and where applicable quantify the cost to the District. Additionally, the Board felt that the final authority for employee grievances should be the Executive Director, though there needed to be a formal process if the grievance was with the Executive Director. Lisa will bring the Employee Handbook back to the Board for review.

### 7.2. Executive Directors Report

Lisa Lurie gave a verbal Executive Directors Report. She highlighted that the sediment reduction program Technical Advisory Committee will meet on December 10 to score the project applications. Most of the applications received were from landowners in the San Lorenzo River watershed and the North Coast.



Several of the applications include multiple projects along a large stretch of road. As part of the Monarch grant with California Area Resource Conservation Districts, Groundswell Ecology hosted a volunteer planting over the weekend which was well attended; there will be two additional planting days in January. Additionally, State Parks along with other partners has implemented a public awareness and outreach campaign around the negative effects of people raising then releasing monarchs into the wild. The Board gave kudos to Angie Gruys for her social media presence. Lisa said that Angie had attended a communications training hosted by CalFire and gained great insight into communication and outreach.

Lisa highlighted the efforts of Erin McCarthy to get new technology for assessing sites within the Managed Aquifer Recharge program. The current identification of potential MAR sites has been with Push Tests, which only evaluates the exact site of the test. Erin is spearheading the use of tTEM Which acts more like an MRI, evaluating a large area all at once, and evaluating sites to deeper depths. Rather than trying to find a needle in a haystack, the tTEM identifies the best areas to conduct the Push Test. This new effort will be funded through an NRCS grant and is set to begin in January 2022. The Ag team has also been working with partners to successfully identify a new location for a CIMIS station which needs to be relocated. The RCD is working with the landowner of the new CIMIS station site to apply for a grant through the State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Program through a California Department of Food and Agriculture to fund the pump and the solar system needed for the station.

Lisa reported that Sharon Corkrean, while not retiring, will be transitioning into a new roll in January 2022. She will continue to administer several grants, the accounts payables, and receivables, and help with general administrative tasks. Arianne Rettinger will be shifting into the Director of Finance role taking over more of the big picture tasks, including the audits, the cost allocation plan, and annual budgets. Additionally, Lisa said that the new Forest Health Program Specialist position is in the final stages of recruitment and hope to have an accepted employment offer by the end of the week.

### **7.3. Director/Associate Director Reports**

John Ricker reported that he and Robert Ketley met with Sharon and Lynn to talk about how best to present the financial information to the Board moving forward. They talked about no longer doing the expenditures reports monthly. Rather, provide on a quarterly basis using the accrual basis to present the profit and loss as well as, a one-page summary of all of the current grants.

Jim McKenna attended the first CARCD business meeting held in November. The candidates for officer positions were introduced. He was unable to attend the subsequent business meeting. He plans on attending some of the conference in January and shared that all will be on zoom.

Mike Eaton reported seeing Coho salmon in San Vicente Creek. Very exciting! The north coast community is concerned about the Coastal Commissions input regarding the management of the rail trail parking lots. There will be a hearing on Thursday regarding this project. Many farmers and community members are concerned with the repercussions of having parking lots open 24 hours per day.

Kelley Bell requested that at the next meeting getting update regarding the Board of Supervisors meetings that Lisa and Board members have been attending.

## **8. ADJOURN**



**The next meeting of the RCD Board will be January 12, 2022 at 6:30PM via Zoom. Robert Ketley moved to adjourn. John Ricker seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The meeting was adjourned at 8:01PM.**

**(TC:JM)**