



**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 13, 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 **6:38PM on January 13, 2020** at Zoom Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Kelley Bell Robert Ketley Howard Liebenberg Mike Manfre, Vice President John Ricker
Directors Absent:	Jim McKenna, President
RCD Staff Present:	Tangi Chapman, Recorder Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
NRCS Staff Present:	Whit Haraguchi

**1. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME**

Mike Manfre welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:46PM, with a quorum present. Mike Manfre chaired the meeting. Roll was called and connectivity confirmed; Kelley Bell present; Robert Ketley present; Howard Liebenberg present; Mike Manfre present; Jim McKenna absent; John Ricker present.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments made.

**4. NRCS REPORT**

Whit Haraguchi reported that NRCS continues to support the CZU Fire Recovery efforts for the Farm Service Agency's Emergency Conservation Program; Rich Casale has been conducting site visits and his ACES agreement has been extended thru January. The first EQIP batching has been announced for March 3<sup>rd</sup> and Whit has been working with Erin McCarthy and Kelli Camara for Stormwater Management RCPP planning. He reported that Kay Joy-Barge has not been able to fill the District Conservationist vacancy in Salina. This has meant that staff have been rotating in to complete those responsibilities. NRCS staff continue to telework as much as possible.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA**

The Board reviewed the consent agenda items and then, John Ricker moved to approve the consent agenda items. Kelley Bell seconded the motion. Ayes include Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, and John Ricker. There were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

**6. ACTION ITEMS**

**6.1. Consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2021-01 to enter into agreement and designate an authorized signatory for the Technical Assistance, Basin Management Plan, Agricultural Water Conservation Program with Pajaro Valley Water District**

Lisa Lurie informed the Board that the PV Water District approved a three-year \$946,671 agreement with the RCD to continue the Irrigation Efficiency program, now in its sixth year. The new round of



funding will support ongoing technical assistance, education and outreach, increase rebates to growers implementing irrigation efficiencies, as well as continue the efforts by UC Cooperative Extension to quantify conservation efforts in the Pajaro Basin and meet the goals of the Basin management plan. The Board expressed their congratulations to staff regarding the new agreement and the positive results their efforts have produced. After discussion, Kelley Bell moved to approve Resolution RCDSCC 2021-01 as presented, John Ricker seconded the motion. Ayes include Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, and John Ricker. There were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

**6.2. Consider voluntarily extending the Emergency Family Medical Leave Act and Emergency Sick Leave benefits as established in the 2020 CARES Act that expired December 31, 2020 through June 30, 2021.**

Lisa Lurie informed the Board that the provisions of the 2020 CARES Act which required the District to provide EMFLA and ESL to staff effected by COVID-19 expired December 31, 2020. Given that the Stay-at-Home order persists, the rates of community spread and hospitalizations continue to rise, and local schools are operating remotely, Lisa would like the Board to consider extending the benefit to June 30, 2021. After discussion, Robert Ketley moved to extend the EFMLA and ESL as established in the 2020 CARES Act voluntarily through June 30, 2021. John Ricker seconded the motion. Ayes include Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, and John Ricker. There were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

**6.3. Consider a one-time PTO payout for employees who reach the 240-hour PTO accrual cap between now and the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2021.**

Lisa Lurie referred to the memo that was circulated with the Board Packets. She explained that due to COVID-19 Stay-at-Home Order and the CZU Fire Response it has been difficult for staff to take Personal Time Off. This has caused several staff to push up to and or beyond the 240-hour accrual cap and that penalizing staff by capping their accrual would constitute an unfair penalty. Lisa pointed out that PTO is a liability, so allowing staff a payout would relieve some of the liability on the books and help with staff morale. Kelley Bell moved approval of a one-time PTO payout up to 80 hours for those staff that reach the 240-hour accrual cap between now and June 30, 2021. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. The Board further discussed the need to revisit the PTO accrual caps when the Employee Handbook gets reviewed and updated. The vote was called; ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre and John Ricker. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

**7. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**7.1 NRCS Request for Comments regarding Water Programs and Guidance Defining Nonindustrial Private Forest Land Eligibility**

Lisa facilitated a conversation with the Board regarding NRCS requests for comments relating to both water programs and forest land eligibility. Lisa identified several of the most pressing needs and wanted to recognize NRCS for including groundwater supply as a practice and that it has been extremely helpful for addressing water quantity issues. Needs include methods for addressing water savings per practice, expanding managed aquifer recharge, and better understanding the water conservation and recharge benefits of soil health practices. Lisa said that research is needed on water use and cultivation using nurseries and potted plants, as well as, the need to understand groundwater/surface water interactions. The Board suggested that water quality priorities should include phosphorus, in addition to nitrates, as there have been detrimental cyanobacterial blooms in the Pajaro. Additionally, John Ricker asked about



the results of the Data Collection by the WIN towers. Lisa reported that the towers have recently been decommissioned due to evolutions in the technology, and participating growers have been transitioned to current technology. Further feedback included technical support for growing crops in extreme conditions which include increased temperatures and decreased moisture and the need for NRCS support for groundwater sustainability plans. Finally, it was suggested that the Food Safety Sector Inspections need to be informed of water quality programs.

### **7.2 Executive Director Report**

Highlights from the Executive Director Report included the CZU Fire response which included coordinated efforts by RCD staff, the City of Santa Cruz, the County of Santa Cruz, Cal-OES/Department of Water Resources. The California Conservation Corp crews implemented run-off control measures at 350-400 critical sites. Additionally, RCD staff continue to coordinate with Coastal Commission staff to develop more efficient permitting of forest health and fuels management projects in the coastal zones. RCD is in process for renewing the Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination program. Lisa reported that the Regional Transportation Commission, in partnership with the RCD, is hosting the first public meeting on the Santa Cruz Regional Investment Strategy on January 21 at 6:00PM via Zoom.

The RCD is currently seeking an Agricultural Technical Specialist to replace the vacancy left by Gerry Spinelli's departure.

### **7.3 Director/ Associate Directors Reports**

Kelley Bell reported that she met with Darryl Wong on the phone to discuss participation on the RCD Board.

Robert Ketley suggested that maintenance be considered for Fuel Load Reduction projects.

John Ricker reported on the Regional Water Boards redo of the Ag Order to encourage third party participation in monitoring. The Regional Water Board is under court order to have this completed by April 15, 2021. He said that it is a delicate balance for RCDs to participate, but not be regulatory. It was also suggested that staff reiterate what the suggestions made previously by the RCD staff and Board. John also shared that he is now semi-retired from the County of Santa Cruz. The Environmental Health Department is in good hands with Sierra Ryan as Interim Water Resources Manager. He said that the CCC crews which supported the erosion control measures for the toxic runoff in the burn areas ended up costing the County considerably more than anticipated as the crews needed to be fed, housed and provided toilets and showers during their stay. They also needed to be managed and directed. John hopes that FEMA will help with some of the costs, but it is unclear at this time if those expenses will be reimbursed. He said that Kristin Kittleson and Angie Gruys were amazing with this effort.

Howard Liebenberg shared that he was able to move back into his house on Christmas Eve, with the gas meter set last week and generators providing power since PG & E will not hook up power until July. Additionally, he has noticed a white mold growing in the burn areas and even climbing up metal.

## **8 ADJOURN**

The next meeting of the RCD Board will be February 10, 2021 at 6:30PM via Zoom. **Robert Ketley moved to adjourn. John Ricker seconded the motion. Ayes included, Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg,**



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**Mike Manfre, and John Ricker. The meeting was adjourned.**

(TC:MM)

DocuSigned by:

*Jim McKenna*

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