



**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 14, 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 **6:36PM on April 14, 2021** at Zoom Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

- Directors Present: Kelley Bell  
Robert Ketley  
Howard Liebenberg  
Jim McKenna, President  
Mike Manfre, Vice President
- Directors Absent: John Ricker
- Associate Directors Present: Kathryn Tobisch
- RCD Staff Present: Tangi Chapman, Recorder  
Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
- NRCS Staff Present: Whit Haraguchi
- Members of the Public: Mike Eaton

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:36PM, with a quorum present. Jim McKenna chaired the meeting. Roll was called and connectivity confirmed; Kelley Bell present; Robert Ketley present; Howard Liebenberg present; Mike Manfre present; Jim McKenna present; John Ricker absent.

**2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME**

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments made.

**4. NRCS REPORT**

Whit Haraguchi reported that NRCS has contracted the first Stormwater RCPP project of the year. He shared that the project, while in Monterey County, has been a collaborative effort with the District and RCD Monterey, and will be a sediment basin project capturing runoff, not for recharge, but for storm management. Additionally, he said that Erin McCarthy is looking for an appropriate site for a Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) project. Whit anticipates the Stormwater RCPP project will start in May or June of this year. Whit has been working with the Area Office and others to get an NRCS computer for Matt Abernathy to do Forest Management Planning. This computer will also allow other RCD staff to do the Conservation Planning in the future.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA**

The Board reviewed the consent agenda items which included the March Expenditures and Minutes and the FY 2019-2020 Audit Report and the FY 2019-2020 Federal Single Audit. Robert Ketley moved to approve the consent agenda items. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The vote was called, ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, and Jim McKenna. There were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously. The Board gave Kudos to Sharon for the huge task of conducting both the annual audit and a federal single audit.



## 6. ACTION ITEMS

### 6.1. Consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2021-02 to enter into agreement with the Regional Water Management Foundation to provide a county wide sediment reduction program from developed parcels and rural roads.

Lisa Lurie shared that the Regional Water Management Foundation, a subsidiary of the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County has received funding through the Department of Water Resources to implement the Santa Cruz County the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) plan. The RCD is a local project sponsor under the agreement with RWMF for the "Countywide Sediment Reduction from Developed Parcels and Rural Roads." RWMF will administer the \$700,000 grant which will expand the rural roads program county wide and will also include home drainage and rainwater capture, as well as streambank stabilization. The grant starts retroactively to November of 2020 and runs through March 31, 2024. Kelley Bell moved to approve Resolution RCDSCC 2021-02 as presented. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. The ayes include Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre and Jim McKenna. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### 6.2. Consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2021-03 to enter into agreement with the Regional Water Management Foundation for implementation of the Watsonville Slough Farms wetland restoration project.

Lisa explained that the District has received additional funding through the Regional Management Foundation as part of the DWR funded IRWM Plan implementation grant to continue implementation of the Watsonville Slough Farms project which seeks to restore hydrologic function at the Bryant Habert property. The District has been working on various phases of this restoration effort and this phase of the project will implement sediment basins in adjacent, uphill ag fields to prevent sediment from entering the restored seasonal wetland. This grant is in the contracting phase and will run through March 31 of 2023. Howard Liebenberg moved approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2021-03 as presented. Kelley Bell seconded the motion. The ayes include Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre and Jim McKenna. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### 6.3. Consider approval of NRCS Unfunded Cooperative Agreement for Vehicle Use and Space Sharing.

Lisa reminded the Board that a year ago the District approved the statewide MOU between the District, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts and the NRCS. This agreement is between the NRCS and the District. It provides a structure for how and what resources are shared between the agencies in the local office. Whit explained that this agreement is not a perfect fit, as it assumes that the NRCS is providing the office space to the District when the reverse is true at the Capitola Local Partnership Office. He explained that this is the best fit available and there may be an updated version soon. The agreement outlines the sharing of NRCS vehicles and other resources. The District will no longer be required to get separate authorizations for each RCD employee that needs access to the vehicles for District business. NRCS currently has two vehicles in the local fleet that are available for use, subject to availability. Whit pointed out that not in the agreement is the reciprocal arrangement for the sharing of some services and that the NRCS is currently providing like some compensation for storage space and some office supplies. After discussion, Robert Ketley moved to approve the NRCS Unfunded Cooperative Agreement for Vehicle Use and Space Sharing. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes include Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre and Jim McKenna. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



## 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 7.1. Executive Director Report

Lisa gave highlights from her Executive Director Report. She informed the Board that the District is working on a programmatic permitting program for coastal zone fuel load reduction projects. The proposed program will need to go out for public review and comment and will need to be addressed at the June Board Meeting. Lisa is working out the details for this process. She shared that there are two fuel load reduction projects in the queue for this year. Matt Abernathy has created a form on our website where contractors can submit an informal Request for Qualifications for Registered Professional Foresters and others who are qualified to do forest health and fuels management related work. The District seeks to build a database for qualified consultants and contractors interested in bidding on future projects.

Lisa was pleased to share that the District has hired a new Agriculture Technical Specialist who will join the Ag Team. Dan Hermstad will start Monday April 19, 2021. He has experience working internationally with Jacobs Farm del Cabo. He is fluent in Spanish and has been working on agriculture production, soil health and field data collection. He will be working primarily on the Irrigation and Nutrient Management program funded by Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency.

Lisa informed the Board of the State of the San Lorenzo River Symposium that the District will be co-hosting April 17 via zoom. There are links in the report, and she encouraged board members to attend.

Lisa continues to recruit for the Board Member and informed the group that Mike Eaton was invited to attend the meeting tonight. He is interested and has experience serving on other conservation related boards; he was the Executive Director of the Resources Legacy Fund.

Lisa explained that she is exploring ways in which to bring more transparency and discussion of procurement processes to the Board meetings. The recent audits while free of findings, illustrated that standardization of procurement documentation would make the audit process much less painful. Included in this standardization would be a process for Board review and approval of contractor selection for contracts over \$100,000. Lisa will bring this to the next Board meeting for review. Such a process would provide an opportunity for discussion and early identification/avoidance of potential conflicts of interest as well.

Lisa gave a shout-out to Angie Gruys who did a wonderful job of telling the post-fire recovery effort story. The brochure has been sent to funders and social media, with several agencies reposting the report. Since the annual report does not cover this time period, Lisa wanted to be sure that there was a stand-alone report of that effort. The District conducted over 450 site visits together with Rich Casale and Drew Mather at NRCS. Lisa encouraged the Board to share with their networks.

*(Mike Eaton entered the meeting)*

Lisa reported that the effort to update the website is in full swing with Phase 1 complete. Part of the funding to redo the website has been provided by the Community Foundation strategic planning grant that is wrapping up. Lisa let the Board know that she will be requesting input on the pages in the coming weeks.

Lisa is currently working on the return to the office plan. She has surveyed staff to tease out who will need to return to the office and when. It is likely that some staff will need to be in the office full-time



while others may be better served with a hybrid office / telework schedule. It is unclear at this point how the vaccine will play into the workspace capacity at the office; the situation is changing daily.

Kelley Bell expressed her concern given the drought conditions as we head into fire season. She asked if there is a plan in place given everything we learned last year that will help with the deployment of resources should we need it again this summer. Lisa said that David Reid and the Office of Recovery, Resiliency, and Response is working on a revision of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. She will connect and share lessons learned and get updates on those efforts. The Board would like to hear a report back on these efforts.

Finally, Lisa shared that the District chipping program will be starting in May. She shared the informational flyer with the Board.


#### 7.1 Director/ Associate Directors Reports

Kathryn Tobisch congratulated Whit and Lisa on the grants and projects they have in the works. She welcomed Mike Eaton to the meeting and suggested that given the nature of zoom meetings and minute taking it might be good to have someone monitor entry into the Zoom room so that the public is not waiting to be let in.

#### 8. ADJOURN

**The next meeting of the RCD Board will be May 12, 2021 at 6:30PM via Zoom.** Mike Manfre moved to adjourn at 7:35PM. Howard Liebenberg seconded the motion. Ayes included Kelli Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre and Jim McKenna. The meeting was adjourned.

(TC:JM)

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