



**MINUTES OF THE JUNE 9, 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 JUNE 9, 2021** at Zoom Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

- Directors Present: Kelley Bell  
Howard Liebenberg  
Jim McKenna, President  
Mike Manfre, Vice President  
John Ricker
- Directors Absent: Robert Ketley
- RCD Staff Present: Matt Abernathy, Forest Health Program Specialist  
Tangi Chapman, Recorder  
Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
- Public Works Plan Presenter: Jim Robins, Alnus Ecological
- Speakers at Public Hearing: Zeke Bean, City of Santa Cruz  
Kellyx Nelson, San Mateo RCD  
26 Total Members of the Public Present on Zoom

**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; Robert Ketley absent; Howard Liebenberg present; Mike Manfre present; Jim McKenna present; John Ricker present.

**2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME**

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the meeting. Jim reviewed the agenda and suggested moving the Public Hearing portion of the Agenda to be first and all Regular Board Meeting items after the Public Hearing. Jim welcomed all the meeting and gave some general information on the Public Hearing portion of the Agenda; Tangi Chapman gave instructions for renaming and raising virtual hand for those who wished to participate in the Public Comment section of the agenda.

**3. PUBLIC HEARING**

**3.1. Staff Presentation on the Draft Santa Cruz County Forest Health Public Works Plan**

Lisa Lurie introduced herself and Jim Robins to the meeting. She explained that she will give context to the need for the Public Works Plan and Jim will share the details of the document. Please see the attached presentation slides for details.

**3.2. Public Comments regarding Draft Santa Cruz County Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Works Plan**

Jim Mckenna then invited members of the public to share their comments on the PWP. Zeke Bean, Water Resources Supervisor addressed the Board. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to comment. He said that the city is in support of the PWP to supplement the California Vegetation Treatment Program to protect coast resources. He added that he would like to see the PWP include language and Best Management Practices that are protective of karst features within



the plan area as karst-derived water is an important component of the City's ability to deliver clean safe drinking water to 100,000 Santa Cruz residents.

Kellyx Nelson, Executive Director of the San Mateo Resource Conservation District addressed the Board and thanked the RCD of Santa Cruz County for their leadership in developing this important tool for addressing forest health and fire resiliency concerns. She explained the critical role that Resource Conservation Districts play in responding to emerging issues that are priorities for communities. This is an innovative solution to address the challenge of conducting forest health and fuel load reduction projects in the Coastal Zone in the immediate future.

### **3.3. Board discussion and consideration of Resolution RCDSCC 2021-06 to submit the Santa Cruz County Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Works Plan to the Coastal Commission.**

John Ricker expressed his support of the PWP; it is thoughtfully created and provides another tool in the toolbox. He reiterated that he does not see this tool precluding the use of other current options for conducting fuel load reduction projects in the future. It provides a useful and powerful tool for the RCDs of Santa Cruz County and San Mateo who want to work with partners to implement much needed fire related projects. He supported addressing karst best management practices in some capacity. He encouraged the RCD to work closely with the Bonny Doon Fire Safe Council who has done extensive critical work in that region of the county. He thanked Lisa and Jim for their comprehensive presentation and document.

The Board discussed with the presenters options for addressing the special karst considerations raised by the City, such as including specific language in the PWP or addressing these needs on a project-by-project basis. There was general agreement in the RCD consulting with the city on a project specific basis if projects come forward within karst areas. Additionally, Steve Auten addressed the board to point out that under the Project Specific Analysis (PSA) there is a Standard Project Requirement (SPR) 83 which requires consistency with local plans, policies, and ordinances. Anyone writing the PSA would need to make sure to check what those specific local requirements might be. In this way the PWP already ensures consideration of site-specific needs, such as karst, in alignment with local plans.

Jim McKenna thanked everyone for their time and thoughtful consideration. As there was no further discussion, John Ricker then moved to close the Public Hearing. Kelley Bell seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The roll call vote was taken. Ayes included, Kelley Bell, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously. Jim McKenna thanked the general public for their attendance and participation in the process; he encouraged all who were interested in staying for the regular meeting.

## **4. ACTION ITEMS**

### **4.1. Consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2021-06 to submit the Santa Cruz County Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Works Plan.**

Mike Manfre moved approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2021-06. John Ricker seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The roll call vote was taken; ayes included Kelley Bell, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. There were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.



## 5. NRCS Report

Lisa Lurie presented the NRCS report as Whit Haraguchi was unable to attend. She reported that NRCS will have a plan for in-office operations by July 19, and that currently they are at 50% maximum telework. Additionally, EQIP applications were due today.

## 6. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board reviewed the consent agenda items which included the May Expenditures and Minutes. Lisa reported that the RCD is currently wrapping up several grants, including the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program Phase V, and a fire prevention grant. John Ricker moved to approve the consent agenda items. Howard seconded the motion. The vote was called, ayes included Kelley Bell, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. There were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

## 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 7.1. Executive Directors Report

Lisa Lurie did not have a written Executive Director's report. She shared that Matt Abernathy and Daniel Nylen have been very busy completing proposals for the next Forest Health and Fire Prevention grants. She and staff have been working to ready the office for reopening and staff return to the office. Finally, the draft FY 2021-2022 Budget is in the final stages of completion and will be brought to the Board in July.

### 7.2. Director/Associate Director Reports

Jim McKenna suggested the Board plan something for Roberta Smith's passing and that there might be some way of honoring her collaboratively with CalPoly Swanton Pacific Ranch.


Howard Liebenberg shared his concern regarding spot fires that continue underground in the CZU Lightning Fire area. The fire has jumped into the tree canopy on several occasions due to ladder fuels igniting at the ground level then expanding into the upper canopy. He suggested that the priority needs to be removing the ladder fuels to prevent another catastrophic fire season.

Mike Eaton was introduced to the Board. He has applied to serve on the RCD board and is awaiting consideration and appointment by the Board of Supervisors. He shared that he was very impressed with the presentation and was honored to serve the public.

## 8. ADJOURN

The next meeting of the RCD Board will be July 14, 2021 at 6:30PM via Zoom. John Ricker moved to adjourn. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. Ayes included Kelley Bell, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

(TC:JM)

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