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RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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MINUTES OF THE JUNE 8, 2022 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 **6:31PM on June 8, 2022,** the meeting was conducted virtually per AB 361 and Executive Order N-35-20 via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Kelley Bell
	Mike Eaton
	Robert Ketley
	Howard Liebenberg
	Mike Manfre, Vice President
	Jim McKenna, President
	John Ricker
RCD Staff Present:	Tangi Chapman, Recorder
	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
NRCS Staff Present:	Drew Mather, District Conservationist
Others Present:	Grace Blakeslee, Regional Transportation Commission

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31PM, 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 present; 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 reported that NRCS is close to hiring a Soil Conservationist for the Area with interviews scheduled for the following week. His office has been working to get applications in for the ranking deadline; twelve have been submitted this round. He was pleased to report that with the help of Matt Abernathy and Angie Richman one of the applications was for a forest related application. Additionally, a cover crop application developed through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program has been approved for Conservation Stewardship Program funding, this is a promising addition and was not an overly onerous process that could open doors for others to use the program. Drew also reported that there have been some maintenance issues with vehicles.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board reviewed the consent agenda items, including the May 11, 2022, Minutes and Resolution RCDSCC 2022-11 to extend remote meetings per AB 361 for an additional 30 days. Howard Liebenberg moved approval of the consent agenda items. Mike Eaton seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

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6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Consider support of the Public Draft Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy

Lisa Lurie and Grace Blakeslee, RTC Transportation Planner gave background and context for the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS). The RCD has been developing a relationship with the RTC since 2010. In 2019 the RTC (in collaboration with the RCD) received a grant from CDFW to develop the RCIS to provide a coordinated effort for implementing high value mitigation projects and maximize the conservation impact of those projects. Lisa shared that there will be a public workshop on June 29 to share the draft and the document will be open for public review and comments through August 16th, 2022. This milestone has been a coordinated effort between the RCD, RTC and partners. The RCIS tool was developed by California Department of Fish and Wildlife as a way of establishing credit agreements for advance mitigation funds. The Santa Cruz County RCIS will open opportunity for mitigation funding that currently does not exist by enabling the creation of Mitigation Credit Agreements, and can help inform and direct other conservation investments.

Lisa and Grace gave a detailed account of the development of the RCIS and the next steps in getting it approved. Lisa pointed out that though the document is lengthy it is organized in a way that it can be navigated based on natural communities. What is required now is for the Board to formalize support for the Public Draft Santa Cruz County RCIS document. It will then go the RTC Board for approval and then to the DFW for public review and comments. After discussion, Robert Ketley moved support of the Public Draft Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy. John Ricker seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call vote; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Consider approval of Draft Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget

Lisa told the Board that the District has a big year ahead. The projected budget for FY 2022-2023 is $8.5 million. She pointed out that typically the District projects on the side of optimism and then lands quite a bit under budget, due to project developments. This year Last Chance Road, Skylark Ranch and Summit Road Forest Health and Fuel Load Reduction projects account for approximately $2 million in funding. Additionally, the Coastal Conservancy Integrated Watershed Restoration Program and Forest Health grants have large subcontracts with other RCDs, including San Mateo RCD, RCD of Monterey County and Upper Salinas Las Tablas RCD, which consist of mostly pass-through funding. Additionally, FY 22-23 will see an increase in personnel as the RCD has plans to employ 14, more-or-less, full-time staff on the payroll, an increase of 2 staff since the start of the last fiscal year. Lisa explained that the contingencies are distributed across all grants as necessary. After discussion, John Ricker moved to approve the Draft Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call vote; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.3. Consider scheduling a special meeting of the RCD Board on June 30, 2022 at 6:30PM to consider approval of contract award for the Last Chance Road Forest Health Project

Lisa requested the Board consider a special meeting to approve a construction contract for the Last Chance Forest Health Project. She explained that the bid opening is scheduled for June 27 and the cost estimate is

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over $400,000 and therefore requires Board approval. The Board agreed to hold a special meeting on June 27, 2022.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Memorial planning for Director Roberta Smith

Mike Eaton reported that there has been no activity this month. He said that there will be a fundraising event on Saturday September 17 at Pacific School, Davenport and that might be a good goal to aim for unveiling a plaque in honor of Roberta. Mike said he would connect with Vasiliki to discuss.

7.2. Executive Director Report

Lisa gave highlights from her Executive Director report. The City of Santa Cruz has reached out to the RCD to partner on a forbearance agreement on Pogonip Creek related to a grant they have with the Wildlife Conservation Board to support efforts to "Addressing Limiting Factors in the San Lorenzo River Lagoon: A Bottom Up Approach to Enhancing Streamflow" improve functions of the San Lorenzo River lagoon. Part of this effort requires the City to develop a forbearance agreement "between an organization and the water rights holder." The District roll would be to receive data from the city verifying the instream flow levels are being met. Lisa will give more information at the August meeting.

Lisa told the Board that the Ag Team is in the final stages of hiring for the Ag Program Assistant position and that efforts have begun to hire a Forest Health Program Specialist/Assistant. In addition to the Last Chance Road Forest Health project, efforts are underway to get the Summit Road project out to bid. Lisa thanked Mike Manfre for participating in the Redwood Mountain Faire booth staffing at the beginning of June. She shared that staff will be meeting next week for a strategic planning check in.

7.3. Director/Associate Director Reports

Kelley Bell suggested a summer gathering of the Board and Staff.

8. ADJOURN

The next regular meeting of the RCD Board will be August 10, 2022, at 6:30PM via Zoom. Mike Manfre moved to adjourn. Kelley Bell seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call vote; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The meeting was adjourned.

DocuSigned by:
Jim Mckenna
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(TC:JM)