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RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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MINUTES OF THE MARCH 8, 2023 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 March 8, 2023,** the meeting was conducted in person at the City of Capitola Counsel Chambers and virtually via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Kelley Bell
	Mike Eaton
	Robert Ketley
	Howard Liebenberg (Zoom)
	Mike Manfre, Vice President
	Jim McKenna, President
	John Ricker
Associate Directors Present:	Vasiliki Vasil (Zoom)
	Kathryn Tobisch (Zoom)
RCD Staff Present:	Tangi Chapman, Recorder
	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
	Cameron McDonald
NRCS Staff Present:	Drew Mather, District Conservationist

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 on zoom; Mike Manfre present; Jim McKenna present; John Ricker present.

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. NRCS REPORT

Drew Mather gave shared highlights from the NRCS Report. He shared that Jennifer Nowark is now in the Capitola Office two times per week; she is working for both Half Moon Bay and Modesto NRCS offices. This saves her from commuting to Salinas those days. Drew reported that the first round of Inflation Reduction Act funding has started; this will likely fund several forestry projects; six projects in total. Additionally, Jeff Kelly will be working with the Forest Health Team to do a Forest Health Training. He told the Board that efforts continue to implement storm water management projects through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program with RCD staff. Drew attended a Viticulture Association quarterly meeting along with members of the RCD Ag Team. He mentioned that many vineyards have forests around them so it is a good tie in to forest health programs. Finally, he shared that the procedures for using government vehicles have changed and the learning curve has been steep.

5. RCD STAFF PRESENTATION

Cameron McDonald gave a presentation on the 2023 Storm Response. He shared that disaster preparedness was a large part of his undergraduate work, and that being a part of this effort has been very exciting and

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rewarding. He gave a slideshow presentation (see attached). He shared that the RCD and NRCS were able to mobilize quickly after the initial storms in December-January, with a webinar immediately following the storm which was recorded and posted on the RCD website; the webinar has received over 500 views. Site visits began soon after the Federal Disaster Declaration on January 17, 2023 with over 130 official site visits and most have received a follow up summary of recommendations and resources. He said that no two sites have been the same; damage has included varying degrees of mudslide, landslides, debris flow, sinkholes, gullying, drainage issues, damaged or broken culverts, debris jam, sediment deposition, hazard trees, road damage and the like. Each site with a multitude of triggers exacerbated by over steepened/oversaturated slopes and 10 years of drought and multiple atmospheric rivers, as well as, the nature of the geologically young active mountains coupled, in some cases with insufficient preventative maintenance and mitigation. He shared lessons learned from the response including community building and resiliency, getting the message out about resources available, protecting properties and water quality and quantity. Cameron outlined current gaps in response efforts including, getting FEMA and other Emergency Response agencies to recommend our services to anyone seeking assistance; increasing community outreach and awareness of our year round technical assistance and winter preparedness to proactively prevent little problems from becoming big problems; increase access to financial assistance programs. The Board expressed their appreciation for Storm Response Team's efforts to meet this need in Santa Cruz County.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board reviewed the consent agenda items, which included the February 8, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes. Robert Ketley moved approval of the consent agenda items. John Ricker seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. There were none opposed; the motion passed unanimously.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7.1. Consider and vote for Special District Regular Member on LAFCO Board

The Board reviewed the two candidates for the Special District Member to the LAFCO Board. After consideration of each, Rachél Lather (Soquel Creek Water District) and James Joseph Gallaher of the Pajaro Valley Health Care District, John Ricker made a motion to vote for Rachél Lather. Mike Eaton seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. There were none opposed; the motion passed unanimously.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1. Executive Director Report

Lisa gave a verbal Executive Director Report. She followed up on the public comment received regarding the Fall Creek Truck Trail Forest Health project. She responded to the email directly with the methodology for assessing and implementing Forest Health projects. The community member was thankful for the response and gave some feedback about the wording presented in the memo and was supportive. Lisa shared that the Ag Team is ramping up to offer water pump efficiency testing technical assistance. The Restoration Team is working on rolling out the Spring Chipping program which is set to open April 1st to unincorporated county residents, noting that FireWise Neighborhood registration will open a week earlier. Due to weather the Last Chance Forest Health Project has been delayed. They will need a break in the weather to begin. Lisa was excited to announce that the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy is in final accessibility review before it goes to the Regional Transportation Commission, tentatively scheduled for May. She reported that there have been many field tours looking at past and potential future projects. Additionally, she has met with the Moore Foundation to look at no/low cost loans to improve cash flow for implementing projects. The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Draft Budget creation is currently underway, the Board will review the Draft in July. Lisa shared that there are many grant proposals in the works. Lisa shared that

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data from the Managed Aquifer Recharge projects has been compelling given the storms; Detailed analysis is forthcoming. Lisa shared that she was interviewed for the Land Trust's recently released Five Year Conservation Roadmap. She believes that much of the RCDs goals are in alignment with the Land Trust especially in key areas around the lower Pajaro River, stewardship in agriculture, species recovery (specifically collaborative efforts for amphibian undercrossing and associated habitat restoration), and forest health.

8.2. Director/Associate Director Reports

John Ricker reported that a log jam on the west branch of Soquel Creek cut a complete new channel.

9. CALENDAR DATES

- March 15, 2023 Agriculture Luncheon sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau
- March 16, 2023 from 4:00 to 8:00 Climate Change and Community Action event, Cabrillo College (Sacha Lozano will present, RCD will table)
- March 18, 2023 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM State of the San Lorenzo River Symposium (Lisa Lurie will moderate, RCD will table)
- March 29, 2023 Crop Manage Training, Santa Clara County
- March 2023 California Resource Conservation Districts Virtual Conference

10. ADJOURN

The next regular meeting of the RCD Board will be held at the City of Capitola Community Room and via Zoom on April 12, 2023, at 6:30PM. Robert Ketley moved to adjourn. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. There were none opposed; the meeting was adjourned.

(TC:MM)

DocuSigned by:
Jim Mckenna
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