RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
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www.rcdsantacruz.org

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 8, 2025 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 October 8, 2025.** The meeting was conducted in person at the Capitola Library Community Room, 2005 Wharf Road, Capitola, 95010 and virtually via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Kelley Bell Robert Ketley Howard Liebenberg Mike Manfre, Vice President John Ricker
Directors Absent:	Mike Eaton Jim McKenna, President
RCD Staff Present:	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director Lily Ruderman, Administrative Assistant
Others Present:	Adria Arko

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31PM, with a quorum present; Mike Manfre chaired the meeting. The roll was called; Kelley Bell present; Robert Ketley present; Howard Liebenberg present; Mike Manfre present, and John Ricker present. Mike Eaton absent; Jim McKenna absent.

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Mike Manfre welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting. Directors and RCD staff welcomed Adria Arko, attending her third RCD Board meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none given.

4. NRCS REPORT

With the ongoing Federal government shutdown, NRCS offices are closed, and staff are furloughed. Due to this, Drew Mather could not be present at the meeting to give the NRCS report.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

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The Board considered the consent agenda. The consent agenda items included the September 10, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes, the September 2025 Vendor Expenditures, and the Fiscal Year 24-25 Quarter Four (Q4) Financials. Robert Ketley asked a question about the Q4 Financials, then Robert Ketley moved approval of the Consent Agenda Items. John Ricker seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, and John Ricker. All were in favor.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Consider and approve application from Adria Arko to become an Associate Director of the RCD Board of Directors

The Board spoke highly of Adria Arko's experience and welcomed the addition of such a qualified and engaged candidate for the role of Associate Director. Her application also provided an opportunity to review the RCD's Associate Director policy. The Board agreed that policy updates should be discussed further, and revisions considered. The conversation also touched on Board engagement and recruitment, and ideas were shared for ways to further engagement from Directors and Associate Directors. There was a consensus that this topic will be revisited in the future, potentially in January of 2026. Following discussion, Robert Ketley moved approval, and John Ricker seconded. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Important Dates Calendar 2026

Executive Director Lisa Lurie shared the 2026 Important Dates Calendar as the next item coming before the Board for approval. There was discussion of various significant dates and events in 2026, including meeting dates in July and August, and the option for a Summer recess. The Board opted to leave both the July 8th, 2026, and August 12th, 2026, meetings on the calendar. If the Board elects to take a Summer recess in 2026, the meeting will be cancelled at a later date. Other calendar dates discussed were the Board Tour in November of 2026, and the office hibernation scheduled for December of 2026. The Board elected to schedule the 2026 Board Meeting and Tour for November 18th, pending that does not conflict with the CARCD conference.

Following the topic of 2026 calendar dates, there was further discussion regarding the 2025 calendar, particularly pertaining to the upcoming November 2025 Board Tour. A decision was made to decouple this year's November Board Meeting from the Board Tour, due to the substantial agenda for the November meeting. Lisa Lurie proposed keeping the originally scheduled date for the Board Meeting, on November 12, 2025, and sending a follow up email to Board members to select an alternate date for the Board Tour.

While investigating potential scheduling conflicts, the Board also considered the suggestion that an alternate time or location for Board meetings might make them more accessible to both Directors and the public. Board members were open to reevaluating the schedule, however the consensus was that the current time and location is the most practical for the majority of the Board.

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After discussion of these related topics, the Board returned to the subject of the 2026 calendar dates. Kelley Bell moved approval of the Important Dates Calendar. John Ricker seconded the motion, with the caveat that the approval was for the calendar as modified, with meetings scheduled on July 8th, August 12th, and November 18th, 2026. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, and John Ricker. All were in favor, the motion passed.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Strategic Planning

Lisa Lurie introduced the discussion on strategic planning, describing it as integrated planning. Three significant documents are being finalized in the same time frame, the RCD's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, the Vision Plan for Measure Q, and the County of Santa Cruz's Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP).

Lisa shared that Donna Meyers is currently finalizing the RCD's five-year Strategic Plan. This is a high-level strategic document, with broad themes. From those high-level goals and strategies, RCD staff will begin work planning and developing more details and specifics. The review and final comments for the Strategic Plan will be coming up, and once completed, Lisa will bring the document to a future Board meeting.

Additionally, the Measure Q Vision Plan was just approved. Lisa discussed good practices for the RCD's Measure Q work plan and described how the RCD will be reporting annually to the Measure Q Citizen's Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) the impacts of our work. Built into our report will be details on how Measure Q funds were spent, showing the impact of that funding. The Board engaged in a discussion on how to share our work under Measure Q and emphasized the importance of messaging that will resonate with the public. As the RCD works on strategic planning, we will highlight priority activities aligned with Measure Q investment.

The third significant planning document currently being developed is the MJHMP. Every five years the County of Santa Cruz develops a hazard mitigation plan which looks at natural disaster risks and how to address those risks. This year, for the first time, multiple jurisdictions are participating. For the RCD, this is the first hazard mitigation plan we have participated in creating, and once completed, it makes our organization eligible for FEMA funding. The plan defines what the RCD sees as the highest priority hazards that we can affect and looks at what actions our organization can take to mitigate those risks. The Board responded that the hazard mitigation plan can show how the work the RCD does helps keep our community safe.

Lisa emphasized how the concurrent timing of these three key documents allows the RCD to think about them in conjunction, putting program areas in context in a way that really matters.

7.2. Executive Director's Report

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Lisa Lurie shared the Executive Director's report with updates for the month on topics including grants and funding, projects underway, and engagement with the community. With regard to funding, she shared that the Community Wildfire Defense grant is still currently frozen. Projects this season have included the Aptos Large Woody Debris (LWD) project, San Vicente LWD and invasives removal project, Lockhart Shaded Fuel Break, and Seascape Pond Enhancement. Construction season is coming to an end, with projects wrapping up around the County. RCD staff member Laurel Bard recently presented to the Scotts Valley City Council on the Lockhart Shaded Fuel Break.

In community engagement news, RCD Executive Director Lisa Lurie and Watershed Restoration Program Manager Daniel Nylen have been participating in a yearlong program called Walking the Path of Right Relations, with a cohort of Monterey Bay climate resilience practitioners. The program focuses on deepening understanding of historic and current dynamics impacting Indigenous Peoples, relationship building with Indigenous members of the community, and designing new practices for engaging and supporting Indigenous Peoples. Also, the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network (SCMSN) recently celebrated their tenth anniversary and released a video which featured members of the RCD team and shared how the SCMSN brings together different voices from our area to address land stewardship issues.

In conclusion, Lisa wrapped up her report by summarizing upcoming matters which the Board will consider in future months, including the documents outlined in the Strategic Planning discussion, and an administrative matter related to personnel.

7.3. Discuss and Schedule a Date for the 2025 RCD Holiday Party

This was a discussion with Board members about potential dates and locations for the RCD's annual Holiday Party.

7.4. Director/Associate Director Reports

Directors reported on recent events and notable news, including the formation meeting for the local chapter being created between Special Districts in Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, exciting acquisitions in land conservation regarding a property being transferred to the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, and news about an invasive mosquito species, *Aedes aegypti* found in Boulder Creek.

8. CALENDAR DATES

October 11, 2025 – Central Coast Good Fire Fair at Henry Cowell State Park
October 18 and 19, 2025 – Esperanza Farms Organic Farming Festival / Dia De Esperanza
November 8, 2025 – Valley Women's Club Environmental Town Hall

9. COMMUNICATIONS

9.1. Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Video – Link: The Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network on Vimeo

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9.2. Aptos Streamwood Project Video – Link: https://www.canva.com/design/DAG0G-6mtoQ/wqXbnllqOe1kPNT03XUqSg/watch?utm_content=DAG0G-6mtoQ&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniquelinks&utlId=h2da8274881

9.3. Lockhart Shaded Fuel Break project update to the Scotts Valley City Council: Santa Cruz Sentinel Article September 18, 2025 – Link: Scotts Valley City Council moves forward with new dog park – Santa Cruz Sentinel

10. ADJOURN

The next regular meeting of the RCD Board will be hybrid November 12, 2025, at 6:30PM, at **Capitola Library Community Room 2005 Wharf Rd, Capitola, CA 95010** and via Zoom meetings: https://zoom.us/, Meeting ID: 708-386-048, Meeting PW: 599600. Robert Ketley moved to adjourn. John Ricker seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:58PM.

(LR:MM)

James J. McKenna