RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
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MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 13, 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 **6:33PM on August 13, 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 Mike Eaton Howard Liebenberg Mike Manfre, Vice President
Directors Absent:	Robert Ketley Jim McKenna John Ricker
RCD Staff Present:	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director Lily Ruderman, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: Clare Peabody, County Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience (OR3)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33PM, with a quorum present; Mike Manfre chaired the meeting. The roll was called; Kelley Bell present; Mike Eaton present; Howard Liebenberg present; Mike Manfre present; Robert Ketley absent; Jim McKenna absent; John Ricker absent.

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Mike Manfre welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting. Members of the Board and RCD staff introduced themselves to Clare Peabody, of OR3.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none given.

4. NRCS REPORT

District Conservationist Drew Mather gave the NRCS report, covering June 12, 2025, to August 13, 2025.
Staffing Updates:

- There have been staffing changes, including the departure of former area forester Jeff Kelly. Drew Loganville will fill in and assist with some forestry projects.
- Rich Casale, ACES Contractor, is still providing technical assistance and doing site visits.
- Alanna Burhans, Area Business Tools Coordinator, will be staffing the Half Moon Bay office two days a week.

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- Drew Mather, District Conservationist (DC), continues to assist the Capitola office with day-to-day operations and field visits, and is still serving as the acting DC in the NRCS Vacaville Field Office.

Drew also shared the USDA is undergoing a reorganization which will result in the closure of all but two national headquarters and five regional centers. The Vacaville office continues to have a critical staffing vacancy, and it is unknown at this time who will fill that position. Drew concluded with a seasonal update on growing NRCS pollinator friendly seed packets.

5. PRESENTATION

5.1. Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan – Clare Peabody: Santa Cruz County Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience (OR3)

Clare Peabody of the County Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience (OR3) presented on the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP). She began by describing the process of developing the plan, and the stakeholders and participating agencies involved. This will be the first multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan created in the County of Santa Cruz, with ten participating jurisdictions including cities, water districts, and other special districts. Funding is through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and to maintain eligibility the plan will be required to be updated every five years.

County-wide the types of hazards which are being prioritized by this plan include, but are not limited to, wildfire, flood, earthquakes, severe weather, extreme temperatures, and coastal hazards. All participating agencies will take an infrastructure inventory, consider what critical infrastructure is in a hazard zone, and identify mitigation actions and priorities.

The intended outcomes from this process are to increase awareness of hazards and vulnerabilities, encourage coordinated planning, and secure mitigation and resilience funding. The planning process allows for an overarching view of how different agencies throughout the County of Santa Cruz are planning for hazard mitigation. Having these various groups working together provides the benefit of a coordinated strategy, as well as encouraging collaboration and shared responsibility.

Creating the MJHMP has also involved public feedback to inform strategy by engaging the community and having conversations about what hazard mitigation looks like. Another focus has been strengthening inter-agency relationships and leveraging existing partnerships where they exist. The plan is being developed by an eighty-member planning committee, which includes members of RCD staff. At the conclusion of the planning process, the MJHMP will be submitted to CalOES in October of 2025. After review and public comment, OR3 will come back to each agency with the completed plan for formal adoption.

RCD Executive Director Lisa Lurie added details on the RCD's involvement in this planning effort and emphasized the importance of how this helps integrate our work with other organizations and

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jurisdictions. She asked those present to consider how resource conservation is interconnected with hazard mitigation. The RCD, as a participating agency in the MJHMP, is developing an "Annex" to the plan which outlines risks and mitigation actions specific to the RCD. The MJHMP, including the RCD Annex, will be brought back to the RCD Board for formal adoption this fall.

Following the presentation, members of the Board asked questions and engaged in a discussion with Clare Peabody.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board considered the consent agenda. The consent agenda items included the June 11, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes, the June 2025 Vendor Expenditures, the July 2025 Vendor Expenditures, and the Fiscal Year 24-25 Q3 Financials. Kelley Bell moved approval of the Consent Agenda Items. Howard Liebenberg seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Howard Liebenberg, and Mike Manfre. The motion passed unanimously.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7.1. Review and consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2025-06 A Resolution for Funding from the Forest Health Grant Program

Lisa Lurie introduced the motion to enter into funding for the 2025 CalFire Forest Health Grant. This is a 7M dollar grant with a duration of five years that has been awarded to the RCD. The treatment plan under this grant includes over 800 acres of land selected for forest health improvements. After discussion, Mike Eaton moved approval. Kelley Bell seconded. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Howard Liebenberg, and Mike Manfre. The motion passed unanimously.

7.2. Review and consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2025-07 Santa Cruz County RCD 401(k) Plan Termination

No action was taken, this item was removed from the August 11th agenda, and will instead be considered at the September 10th meeting.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1. Executive Director's Report

Lisa Lurie gave the Executive Director's report. She began by discussing the RCD's Strategic Plan, which is updated every five years. The upcoming Strategic Planning Retreat will involve Board members and staff of the RCD in the visioning process for the coming years.

In another update based on a five-year term, Lisa shared that the RCD is undergoing a five year service review from the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). The service review will be discussed at the September LAFCo meeting. From a financial standpoint, that review will look at the RCD's budget in recent years, which demonstrates a pattern of increasing fiscal stability. Over the past four years the RCD has had a budget surplus, which shows a promising trajectory. Additionally, this review will highlight some of the program strengths of the RCD.

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Lisa continued by discussing personnel matters, including a staffing update for the Watershed Restoration Team. The Board offered suggestions for navigating the transition period when a staff member leaves and suggested possible avenues for rehiring. Future Board member recruitment and leadership development was also discussed.

Lisa also took time to focus on a significant event which occurred recently when a fire broke out in a neighboring business adjacent to the RCD's office. Fortunately, no one was in the building at the time of the incident, and she expressed gratitude for the rapid response by fire and emergency agencies to contain the fire. Board members suggested potential next steps as we navigate the effects this will have on our offices.

In other recent news, RCD staff member Angela Vasconcellos organized a training with Brian Woodward from the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources program (UCANR) to educate RCD staff about the invasive shothole borer, an insect which has been found in Felton. The training took place at Henry Cowell State Park, and Brian Woodward informed those attending on the lifecycle, identification, and management strategies for the shothole borer. Members of the Board asked questions and discussed this newly discovered invasive insect, its impacts, and how we can support with community outreach, education, and training for contractors and arborists to help stop its spread.

Lastly, Lisa shared an update on the Trust for Public Land's work to bring together stakeholders for durable funding for land stewardship. They are looking to create a mechanism to develop and allocate funding for long-term land stewardship across three Counties, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito.

8.2. Strategic Planning Preparation

Lisa gave a preliminary overview of the upcoming RCD Strategic Planning Retreat. She invited Board members to consider perspectives on the past, how we've adapted and evolved over time, and ways to bring that vision up to the present. She shared how this one-day event will allow for participants to think about four different programmatic areas of the RCD's work, as well as reflecting on core values and organizational culture.

8.3. Director/Associate Director Reports

There were none given.

9. CALENDAR DATES

August 16, 2025 – San Lorenzo Valley Water District Invasive Plant Removal at Olympia Watershed
August 20, 2025 – RCD Staff and Board of Director's Strategic Planning Retreat

10. COMMUNICATIONS

10.1. SDRMA Election Voting

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11. ADJOURN

The next regular meeting of the RCD Board will be hybrid September 10, 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. Howard Liebenberg moved to adjourn. Kelley Bell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:58PM.

(LR:MM)

James J. McKenna