RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 11, 2026 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 **6:45PM on February 11, 2026.** The meeting was conducted in person at the Resource Conservation District Office, 2425 Porter St Suite 19, Soquel 95073, and virtually via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Kelley Bell (via Zoom for medical reasons) Robert Ketley Mike Manfre, Vice President Jim McKenna, President John Ricker
Directors Absent:	Howard Liebenberg
RCD Staff Present:	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director Lily Ruderman, Administrative Assistant
Others Present:	Drew Mather, NRCS Mike Eaton (via Zoom)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:45PM, with a quorum present; Jim McKenna chaired the meeting. The roll was called; Kelley Bell present via Zoom; Robert Ketley present; Mike Manfre present, Jim McKenna present; John Ricker present. Howard Liebenberg absent.

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting. Members of the Board welcomed former Director Mike Eaton, who was present via Zoom.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none given.

4. NRCS REPORT

Drew Mather gave the NRCS report covering the period from January 15, 2026, to February 11, 2026. Subjects covered included staffing updates, Technical and Financial Assistance updates, the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP), and other news. Drew shared that many inquiries are coming in about the new Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP). All EWPP projects have been

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completed except one, which will be completed next year due to a change of contractor. Approximately twenty EQIP applications and twenty CSP applications for Fiscal Year 2026 have been turned in, and site visits are scheduled for the next six weeks prior to the ranking deadline at the end of March 2026. Drew Mather also met with Lisa Lurie, Kelli Camara, and Rich Casale to discuss conservation planning training modules for RCD staff.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board considered the consent agenda. The consent agenda items included the January 14, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes, and the January 2026 Vendor Expenditures. Director John Ricker requested that a copy of Mike Eaton's resignation letter be added to the January meeting minutes. The January 14, 2026 minutes were therefore pulled from the consent agenda. The revised minutes will be included with the consent agenda for the March 11, 2026, Board meeting. The Board proceeded with approval of the January Expenditures. Robert Ketley moved approval, and John Ricker seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Review and consider approval of the 2026 Cost of Living Adjustment effective PP 05

Executive Director Lisa Lurie introduced the first action item. She described the RCD's annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), and gave background on how it is typically based on the annual cumulative Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the San Francisco Bay area. Board members then discussed the proposed rate options for the 2026 COLA. Following discussion, John Ricker moved approval of a 2.44% Cost of Living Adjustment to take effect at the beginning of pay period 05, and Kelley Bell seconded. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker.

6.2. Consider appointment of Mike Eaton as an Associate Director of the RCD Board of Directors

Jim McKenna opened the discussion about the appointment of former Director Mike Eaton as an Associate Director. Directors and staff members thanked Mike Eaton for his interest in remaining engaged in the activities of the RCD board. An update to the Associate Director policy is planned for this year, with Lisa Lurie, Lily Ruderman, Adria Arko, and Mike Eaton participating in that process, along with one Director to be determined. Robert Ketley moved approval of the appointment, and Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. All were in favor, the motion passed.

6.3. Consider and approve RCD Measure Q Implementation and Expenditure Plan FY 25/26 – FY 26/27

Lisa Lurie introduced the item, and shared that this plan reflects what was presented to the Board of Directors at the last meeting, with some details developed further. Based on discussions at the prior meeting, items were added regarding collaboration, and the proposed internship program. Lisa continued by outlining the projects under each area of the plan, and describing the RCD's vision for a cost share program which will assist rural landowners. Board members made comments and asked questions. There was discussion around metrics, and how we plan to show what the RCD is doing overall that is consistent with the goals of Measure Q. Another subject of the discussion was the

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RCD's core services and how to best describe these areas of the work. Additionally, the naming of the contingency fund was discussed, with Board members suggesting it's use for disaster assistance be included in the name, emphasizing the importance of the contingency fund for disaster services in addition to project contingencies. Following the Board's suggestions for wording changes, John Ricker moved approval, and Robert Ketley seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker.

6.4. Review and consider approval of Staff Recommendation to enter into contract with George McMenamin for the Trabing Road Restoration Project

Jim McKenna introduced the staff recommendation, and Lisa described that this contract with George McMenamin utilizes the compatibility and continuation exemption to allow him to continue his work on the Trabing Road Restoration Project. Robert Ketley moved approval, and Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker.

6.5. Review and consider approval of Staff Recommendation to enter into Subrecipient Agreement with California Department of Parks and Recreation under CalFire Forest Health Grant Grant 8GT24603

Lisa Lurie shared that as the recipient of the 2025 CalFire Forest Health Grant, the RCD is working with a number of partners on projects under that grant. Our organization will function as the lead grantee, and pass through some funds to partner organizations. One of those partners is State Parks, who will be leading some aspects of project planning, coordination, and implementation of activities on State Park Lands (Nisene Marks, Wilder Ranch, and Henry Cowell State Parks), and are written into the grant as a subrecipient. This agreement with State Parks is for participation in project development for work on 543 acres of State Park Land, and implementation of prescribed fire treatments on a subset (estimated 200 acres) of that overall project area. The Board asked questions about fiscal specifics, and about the structure of the partnerships under the grant. Lisa clarified points about the function of pass through funds, with the RCD as the lead grantee. She added that this is one of the first subcontracts under this grant, with more coming in the future. This subagreement will be for an estimated amount of $580,000 (out of a total CalFire grant award of $7,000,000). Following discussion John Ricker moved approval. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. All were in favor, the motion passed.

6.6. Consider approval of Resolution 2026-01 to enter into agreement for the CalFire Wildfire Prevention Valencia Shaded Fuel Break and Associated Sub Agreement

Jim McKenna introduced the Resolution and Lisa Lurie then described the project. This is a 100 acre fuel break which is being implemented between the RCD and a private landowner. The focus of this work is fuel reduction and wildfire risk reduction. The project will take place on a property with a unique, first of it's kind, working land easement. This subagreement will be for $694,800 out of a total CalFire grant award of $771,858. Board members asked questions about how the partnership

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between the RCD and the landowner originated, and Lisa answered. John Ricker moved approval, and Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker.

6.7. Consider and vote on CARCD elections, resolutions, and amended bylaws

Lisa shared a summary of the CARCD election, describing the three categories being voted on - elections for CARCD leadership, resolutions, and amended bylaws. Jim McKenna and Lisa Lurie shared their thoughts on the candidates. The Board discussed and came to an agreement on their voting choices. Robert Ketley moved approval, and Kelley Bell seconded. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker.

7. CLOSED SESSION AGENDA

7.1. Per Government Code § 54757(b)(1) – Personnel Matters

8. OPEN SESSION AGENDA

8.1 Reporting of action taken in Closed Session

During the closed session, the Board met with Lisa to discuss her annual employee performance review and to confirm that she remains in good standing and should receive her annual performance increase upon her upcoming advancement date.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

9.1. Executive Director's Report

Lisa Lurie gave the Executive Director's report. She started by sharing personnel updates. The RCD has hired a new staff member, who has experience in water resources work and who will be starting on March 2nd. There is a vacancy on the RCD Board of Directors and applications are now being accepted on the County "Commissions, Committees and Advisory Bodies" webpage (https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/Government/Commissions,CommitteesAdvisoryBodies/Vacancies.aspx).The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors will review applications and appoint a new Director at the regular meeting of the County Board of Supervisors on March 10th.

The Coastal Santa Cruz Mountains PSA and Addendum is going before the Coastal Commission on March 12th. Comments were received regarding treatment of chapparal habitat, use of prescribed fire, and application of herbicides. Several meetings were held with interested parties to discuss their concerns, and Lisa expressed the importance of communication with the public to ensure that they are well informed and know we welcome feedback about our projects. Presentations on our work held at Board meetings would be an ideal time for outreach, when an upcoming project is being discussed and presented on.

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A Conservation planning series is being developed for RCD staff members, focusing on different resource concerns throughout the course of the year. A mentor and staff person will lead each of the presentations in the series.

Lastly, Lisa shared policy related updates regarding Assembly Bill 1584 (Monterey Bay Area Stewardship Authority) and Senate Bill 949 (landscape of statewide significance: Santa Cruz Mountains), before concluding her report.

9.2. Board Secretary Report

Board Secretary Lily Ruderman shared an update on Board Meeting dates for October 2026, and a reminder regarding Form 700 filing.

9.3. Director/Associate Director Reports

John Ricker attended the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network Science and Stewardship Symposium held on January 30, 2026.

Mike Manfre suggested that we include a hedgerow expert who has worked with the RCD on pollinator plantings for one of the Conservation Planning Series trainings.

Robert Ketley requested a future staff presentation to the Board on RCD efforts to promote pollinator habitat.

10. CALENDAR DATES

March 18, 2026 – National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon

11. COMMUNICATIONS

10.1. Santa Cruz County Mosquito Vector Control Statement of Intent 2026

12. ADJOURN

The next regular meeting of the RCD Board will be hybrid March 11, 2026, at 6:30PM, **Resource Conservation District Office, 2425 Porter St Suite 19, Soquel 95073,** and via Zoom meetings: https://zoom.us/, Meeting ID: 708-386-048, Meeting PW: 599600. Kelley Bell moved to adjourn. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:12PM.

(LR:JM)

James J. McKenna