

**DRAFT Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Thursday March 21, 2024  
4:00 – 6:00 pm**

**Location: 80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019 and via Zoom**

Directors: Barbara Kossy, Adrienne Etherton, Steve Stielstra

Associate Directors: Zahra Kassam

RCD staff: Lau Hodges, Kellyx Nelson, Cesar Aguilar

NRCS staff: Jim Howard

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Approval of Agenda**

**Action:** Board approved unanimously

3. **Convene Closed Session Risk of litigation pursuant to California Government Code §54956.9(d)(2). Board will discuss one potential case.**

4. **(4:45pm) Convene Open Session and Report on Closed Session**

Kossy reported that there was a discussion on an issue that may involve litigation and that no action was taken.

5. **Introduction of Guests and Staff**

All in attendance introduced themselves.

6. **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

7. **Consent Agenda**

**7.1. Notification of amendment to contract with L.D. Giacomini Enterprises, Inc. for the Butano Creek Backfield Floodplain and Streamflow Enhancement Project.**

**Action:** Etherton moved to adopt the consent agenda. Stielstra seconded. Board approved unanimously

8. **Regular Agenda**

**8.1. Executive director report: 2023 Year in Review**

- Nelson presented the attached PowerPoint, noting that it is a focus on our program areas not our strategic plan and it does not address work completed in administrative or policy realms, and that because we provide comprehensive, integrated, holistic natural resource management, many of our projects and programs really touch on more than one focal area.
- Stielstra said that it is amazing to try and visualize an aerial map of all the projects.
- Etherton said it inspired her to see it all and asked if it will appear in the website or in an email.
- Nelson said that the power presentation will be in the minutes.
- Nelson said that we should be looking for groups who we can present this to.
- Kossy asks if there are any questions and thanks everyone for what they do.
- Nelson and Kipreos are almost finished with the JEDI plan and it is really coming together. She is excited to bring that graph to the board and staff.
- Nelson discussed JEDI related topics about women in the workplace like construction sites. She has had conversations with staff who are women. We are not a traditional workplace where we have control over all the experiences they might have. Others might say or do things to women on staff that they would be accountable for if they were on staff, but they are not on staff. Discussion with staff has included how men on staff can be allies. There is no current crisis or big problem but Nelson wants everyone on staff to feel safe.
- Nelson said another interesting JEDI topic is conversations we are having regarding tribal politics. She discussed the complexities of different claims

regarding territories, how staff is navigating this, and being very clear that our role is to help people help the land and not be arbiters of legitimacy. It is very complex.

- Nelson reported that we did sponsor the farmworker conference at Puente. We had 2 staff tabling the event who are Spanish speakers. The individual sessions were not open to people who were not farm workers, so that they had a safe space to talk about their needs.
- Nelson said we are developing a work plan for the many administrative projects we need. Getting them all done will take some time.
- Nelson may not backfill Adria's position due to the contraction in the economy and State budget deficit.
- She asked for grace and empathy because her current workload is astonishingly high. There is so much we want to do and improve administratively but it is hard to get staff capacity when we don't have the operating base.
- Kossy thanks Nelson for letting the board know about her workload since it is always a good reminder for them.

## **8.2. USDA NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) report, Jim Howard**

- € NRCS is all about Farm Bill program workload these days.
- € Tremendous amount of funding coming from the Inflation Reduction Act is going to carbon sequestration and reduction in greenhouse gasses.
- € NRCS is all in on getting 2024 Farm Bill conservation program contracts. They are doing really well.
- € In SMC, there are 7 customers funded on various contracts this year across different programs like grazing, conservation, soil health work, and energy conservation.
- € He is wrapping up his workload and going to help other counties who are behind.
- € He is trying to hire a soil conservationist for the Half Moon Bay local partnership office.
- € He explained how they took a 30% cut in their conservation technical assistance funds which can include things like salary agreements. Fortunately Carlos Suarez, State Conservationist, had planned the budget for that type of cut.
- € He will have another forestry intern this summer in our office.
- € RCD staff helped out a lot last year and gave the intern a lot of valuable experience. He is looking forward to it happening again.
- € He discussed the value of regional meetings in connecting with colleagues and achieving the NRCS mission. He wishes the regional RCD meetings were taken a bit more seriously.
- € Stielstra agreed. Especially with how short the meetings are and how far some people travel to them, they could be much more.
- € Nelson said she believes it goes back to how the regional meetings are created in the bylaws and that she is on a CARCD committee looking at that and is looking to improve the meetings. Many RCDs don't have the knowledge or resources to host the meetings and need support.
- € Howard said some of the RCD's feel isolated and don't feel the support or network. It would be nice if there was a way to support each other.
- € Nelson reminded the board that Howard is only being here for one year after being here for 20 years.

## **8.3. Directors reports**

**8.4. Board will consider rescheduling the April 2024 Regular Board meeting.**

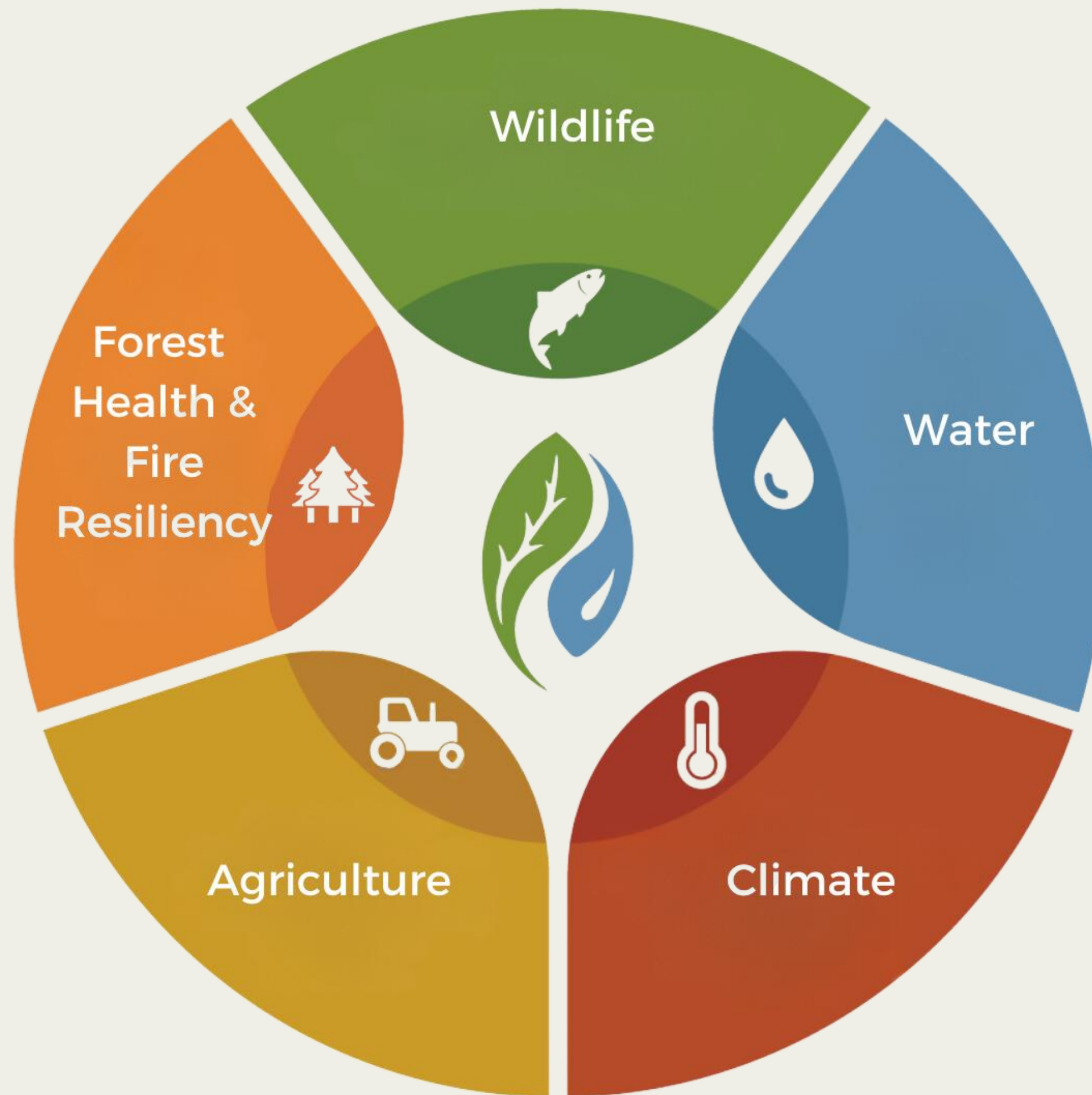
No date was set and staff will follow up via email.

**9. Adjourn Meeting**

Kossy Adjourned the meeting at 6:01.

# 2023 Year in Review

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Wildlife

Forest  
Health &  
Fire  
Resiliency



Water



Agriculture



Climate

# AGRICULTURAL STEWARDSHIP

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- Composting
- Improving soil health
- Increasing biodiversity
- Sequestering carbon
- On-farm waste reduction
- Agricultural Ombudsman
- Agricultural viability



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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4 workshops, including 4-day workshop for 40 RCD and NRCS staff

Made presentations to 9 groups

Served as Ag Ombudsman to assist County and 20+ ag producers and landowners with permitting-related questions

Secured funding and advanced collaborative planning process for regional food hub

Began developing 4 conservation plans

Tested soil at 10 gardens and farming operations

Provided technical assistance to 20 ag operations on a wide range of topics including soil health, irrigation, equipment sharing, plant health, pollinators, etcetera

Spread 4,100 tons of compost

Helped 20 jurisdictions (cities and County) as compost broker to meet targets for waste reduction and comply with SB 1383



## **PARTNERS**

- NRCS
- TomKat Ranch
- Point Blue
- San Mateo County:
  - Office of Sustainability
  - Planning Department
  - Agriculture Department
  - Housing Department
  - Supervisor Mueller
- Santa Cruz RCD
- Carbon Cycle Institute
- San Mateo County Farm Bureau
- San Francisco Farm Bureau
- Kitchen Table Advisors
- Brisa Ranch

## **FUNDERS**

- San Mateo County
- All cities in San Mateo County
- Western SARE
- Zero Food Print
- CDFA
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- Peninsula Open Space Trust
- NRCS
- National Association of Resource Conservation Districts
- Wildlife Conservation Board
- CalRecycle
- UC ANR

## **NETWORKS**

- Food System Alliance
- CARCD Ag Task Force
- California Climate and Agriculture Network
- California Carbon Farm Planners
- Cascade Ranch Advisory Council
- Agricultural Advisory Committee
- CA Ag Ombudsmen
- Farmworker Advisory Commission



# WILDLIFE AND HABITAT

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- Fish migration
- Habitat
  - Creeks
  - Grasslands
  - Floodplains
  - Wetlands
- Wildlife reintroduction



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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## Restored:

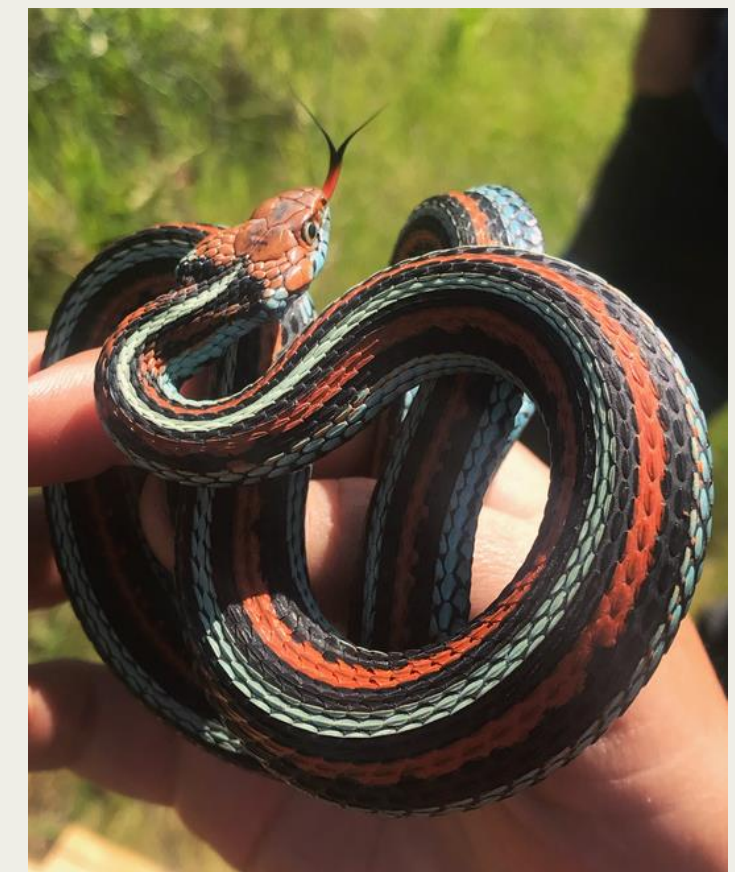
- access to 5 miles of creek by removing a dam
- 2.5 miles of creek habitat
- 47 acres of grassland habitat
- 14 acres of wetlands

Created 6 acres of floodplain, and reconnected 100+ acres of historic floodplain

Supported 8 monitoring events and 1 coho release

Developed LWD rapid assessment protocol

Hosted 2 workshops



## **PARTNERS**

- SPHERE
- City of Pacifica
- San Pedro Creek Watershed Coalition
- San Mateo County – Parks, Public Works
- MROSD
- POST
- RCD of Santa Cruz County
- State Parks
- Potrero Nuevo Farm
- CDFW
- NOAA
- USFWS
- Granada Community Services District
- San Bruno Mountain Watch / Mission Blue Nursery
- Pacifica Land Trust
- Girl Scouts
- Coastside Land Trust
- Sempervirens Fund
- Fifth Crow Farm

## **FUNDERS**

- EPA
- Wildlife Conservation Board
- MROSD
- POST
- GCSD
- Private landowners
- PG&E
- State Parks
- Coastal Conservancy
- San Mateo County
- NOAA Restoration Center
- USFWS Partners Program

## **NETWORKS**

- Integrated Watershed Restoration Program
- Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network
- Pescadero Technical Roundtable
- SFGS Recovery Working Group
- San Mateo Weed Management Area
- California Invasive Plant Council
- CalFora (Weed Manager)
- CARCD Monarch group
- Process-Based Restoration Network
- Salmonid Restoration Federation

# FOREST HEALTH AND WILDFIRE RESILIENCY

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- Technical assistance
- Fuel load reduction
- Forest restoration
- Regional coordination
- Post-fire recovery



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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- Improved ecological health of over 290 acres of forests
- Advanced planning, designs and permitting for 19 mile La Honda Fuel Break that will begin implementation in 2024
- Chipping program helped create defensible space around 667 homes in 20 communities
- Coordinated collection of new LiDAR data for San Mateo County
- Conducted post-storm hazard tree mitigation on 5 properties
- Gave 10 presentations and site tours
- Provided technical assistance to 13 public and properties, including e.g. storm hazard mitigation, access for firefighting and egress for evacuation, defensible space, and forest management



## **PARTNERS**

- NRCS
- CARCD
- CalFIRE
- RCD of Santa Cruz
- San Mateo County
- California Fire Safe Council
- Fire Safe San Mateo County
- South Skyline Fire Safe Council
- State Parks
- Girl Scouts of Northern California
- MROST
- POST
- Sempervirens Fund
- Save the Redwoods League
- YMCA of Greater San Francisco
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

## **FUNDERS**

- San Mateo County
- Cal-FIRE
- CARCD
- Coastal Conservancy
- California Fire Safe Council
- POST
- NRCS
- FEMA Region 9
- California Natural Resources Agency
- California State Parks

## **NETWORKS**

- Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network working groups
- CARCD
  - Joint Forestry Committee
  - Forest & Fire Working Group
- San Mateo County Fire Steering Committee
- Forested Lands Alliance
- Together Bay Area Forest and Fire Working Group
- Fire-Resilient Lands Alliance for the Management of Everything (FLAME)
- Coastal Prairie Fire Working Group

# WATER QUALITY

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- Monitoring
- Pollution reduction
- Outreach and education



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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- Held 24th Annual First Flush event, monitored 15 sites from Pacifica to Half Moon Bay for 9 parameters/ pollutants
- Monitored 58 sites from Pacifica to Pescadero
- Sent mailer about pet waste to 2,500+ residents
- Presented to HMB Parks and Rec Commission, Sewer Authority Midcoastside, Surfrider, RCD board
- Designed signage and flag system for Pillar Point Harbor to indicate water quality health risks
- Implemented Pacific State Beach Special Study, which will serve as a model for other similar swimming beaches
- Secured grant funding to advance designs for implementation projects





## **PARTNERS**

- Harbor District
- San Mateo County
- NRCS
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area
- City of Pacifica
- Sewer Authority Midcoastside
- Montara Water and Sanitary District
- City of Half Moon Bay
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

## **FUNDERS**

- San Mateo County Harbor District
- San Mateo County
- NRCS
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area
- City of Pacifica
- Sewer Authority Midcoastside
- San Mateo County Parks

## **NETWORKS**

- Coastside One Water
- South Coast One Water

# SEDIMENT AND EROSION

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- Road assessments
- Storm proofing and repair
- Gully erosion mitigation
- Outreach
- Emergency access



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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Hosted rural roads workshop for 35 public and private land owners

Conducted 5 erosion assessments

Provided technical assistance to 20 private landowners

Planned and completed Old Haul Road crossing repair

Repaired 1.8 miles of roads as part of post-fire recovery



## **PARTNERS**

- County Parks
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- NRCS
- POST

## **FUNDERS**

- NOAA
- Resources Legacy Fund
- Coastal Conservancy
- USFWS
- County Parks
- State Water Resources Control Board

# WATER FOR FISH, FARMS AND PEOPLE

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- Water system improvements
- Water storage
- Water management



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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- Conserved 175 acre feet of dry season flows annually
- Completed 2 pipeline replacement projects (about 1.5 miles of pipeline) for domestic water systems and created 100,000 gallons of water storage
- Provided technical assistance to 5 domestic water companies and 20 farms
- Gave 4 presentations (Coastside Land Trust webinar on salmonids, RCD Board, California Water Network, other)
- Advanced planning and design for 7 state-of-the-art improvements to farm irrigation systems that will be implemented over the next three years



## **PARTNERS**

- NRCS
- State Parks
- San Mateo County
- Trout Unlimited
- POST
- MROSD
- CDFW
- NOAA
- CEWN
- Association of Ramaytush Ohlone
- City of Half Moon Bay
- IRWMP Coordinating Committee
- San Mateo County Farm Bureau
- Simms Plumbing
- Sustainable Pescadero
- Redwood Glen
- Local water utilities

## **FUNDERS**

- WCB
- DWR
- IRWM
- POST
- MROSD
- San Mateo County
- SVCF
- Moore Foundation
- NRCS
- State Parks
- Private landowners

## **NETWORKS**

- Coastside One Water
- South Coast One Water
- California Environmental Water Network
- IWRP
- SV2 Epic
- IRWMP CC
- Round table of regions
- Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network
- SRF

# STAFF TRANSITIONS

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## Hired:

1. Barb Kipreos (Jan)
2. Grace Allen (Jan)
3. Caileen Viehweg (Feb)
4. Eliza Milio (Mar)
5. Ainé Javier (Aug)
6. Cesar Aguilar (Oct)
7. Ryan Silsbee (Oct)

## Changed:

1. Amy Kaeser: (Senior Conservation Program Manager)
2. Jarrad Fisher: (Water Resources Program Director)
3. Stephanie MacDonald: (Senior Project Manager)
4. Erica Harris: (Conservation Ecologist)

## Departed:

1. Cleopatra Tудay
2. Jeff Raifsnider
3. Noah Katz
4. Kasey Butler



Thank you!