

**DRAFT Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Thursday, August 15, 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, Michelle Weil, Steve Stielstra, Troy Guy

Associate Directors: Helen Wolter, John Wade (Absent: Zahra Kassam, John Keener)

RCD staff: Kellyx Nelson, Cesar Aguilar, David Cowman

NRCS staff: Jim Howard

Guests: Vinney Arora

1. Call to Order

Kossy called the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

ACTION: Etherton moved to approve the agenda, Weil seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Introductions of Guests and Staff

All in attendance introduced themselves.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Agenda

- Nelson and Etherton noted an autocorrect error in the June minutes.
- **ACTION:** Weil moved to approve the consent agenda with the error corrected. Etherton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5.2 Resolution 2024-4: Approval of the Grant Funds from the CAL FIRE Forest Health Research Program as Provided through the California Climate Investments

- Discussion included the purpose of the grant, what it would fund, the lack of funding for monitoring, the need to monitor forest health projects to understand their outcomes, how our RCD and partners in the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network developed a shared set of monitoring protocols for Forest management projects, that the RCD is the only non-academic institution to be awarded throughout the state, how the project will help with a regional approach to measuring effectiveness, and that there is more focus on monitoring protocols and scientific research in the Sierra Nevada but less in the Santa Cruz mountains due to some unique challenges.

6. Regular Agenda

6.1. Board will consider an application from Denise Phillips to serve as Associate Director.

- Discussion included Phillips' background on other boards and community orientation, her appreciation of the RCD and our mission.
- **ACTION:** Weil moved to approve Denise Phillips' application to serve as an associate director. Stielstra seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6.2 October event planning: Discussion with The Arora Collective and potential board action

- Vinney Arora from The Arora Collective (TAC) introduced himself. TAC is a consulting group for non-profits that works mostly in San Mateo County.
- We are telling the RCD story at the event and helping people understand what the RCD is, how we advanced conservation and why it is important to invest in the RCD.
- Some goals are to expand the base of supporters and new donors for the RCD, increase visibility, and raise funds.
- Discussion included the value of the board's network, why people would want to come to the event, the consultants' role as a partner in this process, techniques to explain what the event is, how the stations that have food will tell a story of how the food was sourced and how the RCD does work with those farms, what an asset the RCD's staff is and a great opportunity for people to meet them.

6.3 Board will discuss and take possible action regarding proposed changes to the bylaws of the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts.

- California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) is a nonprofit and it is good practice for nonprofits to periodically update their bylaws; Nelson was on the by-laws committee.
- RCDs are under Division 9, not bylaws, and we have a different structure than CARCD which is under non-profit law.
- The updates help improve consistency in the bylaws, update to reflect current practices of CARCD, and balance requests for reporting and transparency with pragmatism about CARCD having an all-volunteer board.
- The group discussed some of the topics that had come up in the by-laws committee.

6.4 Executive Director's Report

- Two of our 3 instream fisheries habitat enhancement projects are not moving forward this year because of delays due to a new interpretation of how to conduct Section 106 consultations with tribes. An individual new in this role at our federal funder is interpreting the law differently in a new

way that is alienating some of our local tribes, disrupting local relationships, adding hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs, and delaying or ultimately compromising projects while not improving the protection of cultural resources. One local tribe has told us that “the politics of inclusion are undermining the doctrine of sovereignty.”

- We send newsletters 2-3 times a year, 4 at most. July newsletter was sent to 2,532 recipients and re-sent a week later to people who did not open the original. In total 59% (1,503) were opened, 5% bounced, 10% of those who opened engaged by clicking on a link, and .5% (13 people) unsubscribed. Please read the newsletters, forward them to your network, share them on social media, use them as talking points, ask questions about what you read.
 - Weil recommended more use of LinkedIn in social media.
- The Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects, a pilot exemption under CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) has been extended. This is part of the Cutting Green Tape initiative.
- Erica Harris is leaving the RCD and moving to Mt. Shasta area.
- The RCD and Granada Community Services District (GCSD) have an MOU that was a condition of Granada Sanitary District expanding to include park services, i.e. become GCSD. It essentially says they will not replicate the RCD's work and that we are their partner regarding natural resource management. There is some significant interest among some community members about a project GCSD is planning on their Burnham Strip property to create a park. Some are supportive of the project and some are not. Nelson wanted the board to be advised in their roles in the community.
- The County is updating their tree ordinance, which we began asking for in 2006 because it inadvertently protected eucalyptus and other invasives.
 - Kossy and Nelson were on the previous advisory committee and did not receive notice that it was being updated or that there was a deadline for comments.
- Nelson will be doing some site visits in the future and will invite directors to join spontaneously if visits are difficult to schedule in advance. Directors are always welcome to see sites and projects.
- Nelson and Kipreos (Barb) are nearing completion of the draft DEIJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice) plan and will bring it to directors.
 - They changed the acronym from JEDI to DEIJ at the request of staff.
 - We have begun a program to recognize laborers on our projects who are exceptional and should be recognized for their environmental contributions. Typically company owners,

executives, and elected officials are recognized but rarely the workers. We made plaques in Spanish and English to recognize them.

- We participated in two days of Spotlight Stewardship this year. One was a tour of the Quiroste Valley project and the other was about the Pescadero watershed. Participants in this year's program are mostly legislative staff.
- Cowman (David) and Federal (Timothy) led a five-mile hike of a forest management site with the Sierra Club to share information and deepen understanding of active forest stewardship that includes thinning.
 - Stielstra praised the Sierra Club for going on the hike and seeing the site instead of posting what they thought was going on, as others have.
- Nelson has been meeting with many organizations and the community regarding our water quality monitoring report for San Vicente Creek, which has been the focus of attention by GGNRA staff and equestrians/community members regarding GGNRA's potential plans to reduce the number of horses along the creek.

6.5. USDA NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) report

- Jim Howard reported that it is a big year for Farm Bill dollars. There is a lot of pressure on the state conservationist to get those dollars spent.
- 2025 may be even more pressure. There will be 70 million from the Inflation Reduction Act, all planned for carbon sequestration and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Other scope of work has made Howard appreciate the work that is done in water quality in San Mateo County.
- Nelson added that one of the challenges has been putting together a report that can convey to everyone that our water quality looks much better than most others, without having them lose their sense of stewardship over watersheds and thinking that their work is done.
- Constantly trying to remind people that there is a lot more to conservation than Farm Bill contracts.

6.6. Directors' connection and reports

Kossy reported:

- She has been president of this board for about 4 years and is happy to open the opportunity for someone else to take that role.
- There was discussion on some other roles like the Vice President and Secretary and why we do not have them at the RCD.

- Montrose Beach in Chicago has been restored to have native vegetation and some threatened species do return. It is a splendid example of how, even in an urban environment, if you put in a patch of habitat, the creatures will use it.

Etherton reported:

- She is the only person on the Personnel Committee and is hopeful that a second would join her.
- Nelson asked if Etherton is looking to get the Dark Sky Ordinance passed in other cities as she had succeeded in passing it in Millbrae. Etherton stated that there have been talks with many other groups about it, but nothing major as there is not the bandwidth to take on such a task. Etherton is happy to discuss it with any cities who want to talk about it. They can be sent her way.

Stielstra reported:

- He has been focused on the fundraiser for October.
- He will be at the CARCD meeting in December and there are still openings for other directors.

Wade reported:

- The *Hypericum* control project is moving forward on The Mushroom Farm.

Weil reported:

- She is excited about the October event, will attend and invite people.

Guy reported:

- Happy to be here and excited for the opportunity.
- Described his research background in fisheries, marine mammals, and seabirds in the Pacific Northwest.
- Became an Extension agent in Washington; similar approach to what the RCD does.
- Described his local volunteering in Pescadero Marsh and Ano Nuevo related to natural history, which he enjoys.

6.7. Board will consider changing the October 17, 2024, regular board meeting date

ACTION: Staff will reach out to directors to reschedule.

7. Adjourn Meeting

Kossy adjourned the meeting at 6:24pm

RESOLUTION 2024-4

APPROVAL OF THE GRANT FUNDS FROM THE CAL FIRE FOREST HEALTH RESEARCH PROGRAM AS PROVIDED THROUGH THE CALIFORNIA CLIMATE INVESTMENTS

WHEREAS, the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (District) is a special district organized under Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code with an original petition granted on July 1, 1939;

WHEREAS, the District is defined in Government Code Section 3501 as a public agency;

WHEREAS, the Governor and Legislature of the State of California enacted Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funding, which provides funding for forest health programs;

WHEREAS, the State Department of Forestry and Fire Protection administers the program within the State and sets up procedures governing application by local agencies and non-profit organizations under the program;

WHEREAS, the District has been awarded funds through the program to develop a forest treatment monitoring framework for the coast redwood region across treatment types through establishment of long-term monitoring network across the Santa Cruz Mountains;

WHEREAS, State Department of Forestry and Fire Protection requires the applicant to certify by resolution the approval of application before submission of application to the State; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the San Mateo Resource Conservation District board of directors:

1. Approves the filing of an application for Forest Health grant program funds;
2. Certifies that said applicant has or will have sufficient funds to operate and maintain the project if awarded the grant;
3. Certifies that said applicant will expend grant funds prior to March 31, 2029;
4. Appoints Kellyx Nelson, Executive Director, or a designee, as agent of the District to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents including, but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project.

ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the board of directors of the San Mateo Resource Conservation District on August 15, 2024.

Barbara Kossy, President

Date

Adopted: August 20, 2015

**APPLICATION TO SERVE AS AN ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
of the
SAN MATEO COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

A cover letter and/or additional materials may be attached.

DATE: July 30, 2024

NAME: Denise L Phillips

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Moss Beach, CA 94038

TELEPHONE: [REDACTED]

E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

1. What is your interest in serving as an associate director?

I've lived on the San Mateo County coast since 1993 and feel so fortunate to be a part of this community and to live in this beautiful place. It appeals to me to be a part of an organization like the RCD that successfully works with a wide variety of members of the community to effectively manage the resources here on the coast and to help best conserve them for the future.

2. Please share information about your background that will benefit the RCD.

I've been an active volunteer here on the Coast since we moved here and have many years of experience serving on boards. My work with The HEAL Project both as board member and board chair helped me hone my fundraising skills.

3. What other skills will you bring to the district?

I am a good communicator and am adept at connecting people. I have strong organizational skills and when I commit to doing something I follow through and get it done. I am also a consensus builder and a good team player.

4. What direct or indirect conflicts of interest may you may have in serving as an associate director?

None.

6. **Meeting Attendance:** Associate directors are encouraged to participate in all regular meetings of the Board of Directors to provide technical support and personal opinions regarding district programs, long-range plans and annual plans in connection with the goals and visions of the district.

7. **Duties:** Associate directors can attend meetings and provide the district with expertise. Associate directors are expected to support the district beyond board meetings, but cannot represent the district without approval of the Board of Directors. Generally, associate directors may accomplish the same duties and tasks as full directors, except voting. Associate directors may chair standing or ad hoc committees and may be voting members of committees of which they are members.

8. **Expenses:** An associate director may be reimbursed for approved expenses in connection with his/her activities on behalf of the District. Expense claims must be submitted in the manner stated in the district's financial policies.

9. **Conflict of Interest:** Associate directors shall comply with the Conflict of Interest laws and policies applicable to directors, except the requirement for filing Statements of Economic Interests.

10. **Training:** Associate Directors will be required to complete Ethics Training, as required by law for directors of RCDs.

The undersigned acknowledges that he/she has read and understands the above policy, and hereby applies for appointment as an Associate Director of the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District.

Signature Denise L Phillips Date: 8/1/24

Print Name: Denise L Phillips Phone: 