

**DRAFT Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Monday, October 23, 2023**

4:00 – 6:00 pm

**Location: 80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
and via Zoom at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89675733636>**

Directors: Barbara Kossy, Steve Stielstra, Adrienne Etherton

Associate Directors: John Keener, John Wade, Zahra Kassam

RCD staff: Kellyx Nelson, Lau Hodges, Eliza Milio, Sara Polgar, Christina Kelleher, David Cowman, Timothy Federal, Noah Katz, Joe Issel, Grace Allen, Maaya Hensman, Jarrad Fisher

Guests: Patricia Mayall

1. Call to Order

Kossy called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

- Nelson requested item 5.1 be moved to the regular agenda
- **ACTION:** Etherton moved to approve the agenda as amended, Stielstra 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 requested item 5.1 be moved to the regular agenda for discussion.
- Nelson noted the August 2023 minutes would be brought to the board in November.
- Nelson noted that receiving items into the record does not imply agreement or endorsement of accuracy, just a recognition of the record.

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

6. Regular Agenda

5.1 Contracting with Storesund Construction to install electrical infrastructure for the Butano Creek Backfield Floodplain and Streamflow Enhancement Project.

- Nelson explained that, per the new procurement policy, contracts are brought to the board on consent. She requested this one be moved to the regular agenda because bids came in higher than planned. The request is amended for approval of an amount not to exceed \$1.1M. The original request had been for approval up to \$900K.
- Etherton asked if bids were coming in higher across programs; if there was a pattern. Nelson agreed that the price of projects have been increasing. Kaeser

noted that in general costs are going up but expressed general confidence with the estimates of engineers that the RCD has been working with.

ACTION: Stielstra moved to contract with Storesund Construction, Etherton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6.1 Board will consider application from Helen Wolter to serve as Associate Director.

- Kossy expressed excitement to have interest from the community as represented in the two applications being considered.
- Directors, associate directors, and staff described having known Wolter through her previous role at Committee for Green Foothills and current role working for the California Legislature. She was described as thoughtful, highly recommended by those who know her, familiar with the coastside community and natural resource issues, the RCD and its programs, and RCD partners. All who spoke endorsed her appointment. It was noted that she resides in Portola Valley, which is within the district.

ACTION: Etherton moved to appoint Helen Wolter as an Associate Director, Stielstra seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6.2 Board will consider application from Zahra Kassam to serve as Associate Director

- Kassam was described as the owner and chief steward of the Mushroom Farm south of Pescadero and someone who is familiar with and a customer of the RCD's work.
- Stielstra reported that he had the opportunity to speak to Kassam, found it very informative, and that he was thrilled to have her apply.
- Keener and Kossy expressed support.
- Wade had been working with Kassam for years and appreciated her commitment to conservation and the ease of working with her.
- Kassam thanked everyone for their kind words and noted that she is a happy customer of RCD programs.

ACTION: Etherton moved to appoint Zahra Kassam as an Associate Director, Stielstra seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6.3 Program Manager reports

- Habitat Enhancement – Amy Kaeser (presentation below)
 - Q&A included: impacts to the San Bruno Mountain work due to mudslides (sediment release resulted in more weed seeds and a need for maintenance); how the Mindego Fish Passage removal had been funded (Wildlife Conservation Board and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
- Water Quality – Noah Katz

- Discussion/ Q&A included: staff desire to shift more towards opportunities for water quality improvement and less focus on regulatory compliance”; monitoring of the dredge was pointing to its success and combined with modeling would be used to inform future restoration design concepts; the importance of the blufftop sewer relocation and right-fitting roles for sewer authorities and RCD.
- Water for Farms, Fish & People – Jarrad Fisher (presentation below)
 - Fisher described a lot of work happening to find win/win solutions for farms, domestic water supply, and fish habitat. Highlights included replacing a water supply pipeline from the 1930s in the community of Loma Mar; replacing drinking water pipeline in Butano State Park; and partnering with Peninsula Open Space Trust and Fifth Crow Farm to restore the floodplain and build water storage.
 - The water storage project at Portola State Park was delayed due to bids coming in over budget but is on track for next year.
 - Planning is underway for eight different storage ponds.
 - Working to improve State processing of water rights which can take up to four years; the State asked the RCD to be a test case for expediency.
- Sediment Management – Sara Polgar (presentation below)
 - Discussion and Q&A included: requests for technical assistance coming in after recent RCD rural roads workshop; Old Haul Road is the biggest source of sediment into Pescadero Creek; we are the only entity in California we know of to secure compensation for damages from State-contracted post-fire abatement firm for 2020 CZU fire- thanks to the RCD having the base line data and engineered specs for the road damage and the advocacy of Congresswoman Eshoo's office.
- Agriculture and Climate – Eliza Milio
 - The compost broker program is working with all 20 jurisdictions in San Mateo County to provide affordable compost to farmers. This past year 3.6K tons were spread and staff are hoping to spread 65K tons in the future. Nelson explained that the jurisdictions had to reduce their waste and farmers can use the compost for soil health and carbon farm planning. Etherton noted that all cities have to produce a certain amount of compost which is based on population size.
 - Several conservation and carbon farm plans are currently in the works.
 - Two wind break, hedgerow, pollinator plans are being developed.
 - We recently hosted a highly successful Conservation Planner training over four days in Pescadero, including staff from RCD and partner agencies across the state. Milio was hoping to scale it up because it had been so well received. Nelson noted she'd had a chance to observe the training and it had a great energy.

- We are working with San Mateo County Office of Sustainability to secure money for carbon farm plans that would help put the money into farmers hands for climate mitigation practices.
- Forest Health and Fire Resiliency – Timothy Federal (presentation below)
- Miscellaneous – Joe Issel
 - Discussion about the Pescadero Creek corridor project included: incentives for landowners to participate; landowner involvement in designs; how some are voluntarily giving land back to the creek; how the project supports and creates collaborative capacity for managing a shared resource; and the type of flow regime being modeled.

6.4 Executive Director's report

- Invited directors to attend the California Association of RCDs annual conference; at the director regular meeting in November staff would agendaize an item to select a voting representative. Directors described their experiences at previous years' conferences: as eye-opening and excellent; providing the texture of the different RCDs throughout the state; having a good vibe and being a joy getting to know the RCD staff; how proud it made them of our RCD staff and how well respected they are; and that it was great to be among a large group of people committed to taking care of the planet.
- Staff is getting ready to send out the annual appeal and asked directors for help spreading the word.
- Staff will be updating the field safety protocol because the current one is outdated and therefore, likely, not being used.
- Wood, Water and Creeks – Preparing for Winter” was a great community event and well attended. People were there to learn and the conversation was collegial; eyes were opened to the benefits of working with neighbors on a shared resource. A few days later Issel led a walking tour of the creek and about a dozen people attended.
- Issel and Nelson had also done a walking tour for Pescadero High School students.
- RCD had participated in the San Mateo County Climate Summit; they were the only Coastside representation on the panel.
- Plan to follow up over winter with landowners/ partners of previous projects.
- Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network's Spotlight Stewardship wrapped up another successful year. SanMateo RCD hosted two days: one about restoring a watershed at scale and one with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust and State Parks at Quiroste Valley about Indigenous stewardship.
- Postponing the Roundup on Roundup forum, as the conversation was evolving in the community and it was less clear how the conversation we planned would add value. Mayall introduced herself as a La Honda Community member and asked if the RCD planned to host the discussion in the future; Nelson confirmed it would happen but not sure how.

6.5 Directors' connections and reports

- Wade presented the questions, “what were the experiences you had grown up with that made you passionate about land conservation?” For next month he proposed, “what can we do to stimulate other & the next generation of conservationists?” Directors and associates reflected on the prompt.
- Stielstra reported on a volunteer day at Potrero Nuevo Farm and how he represented the RCD there as well as at the a recent meeting of ACEC (American Council of Engineering Companies)
- Etherton reported that she participated in Spotlight Stewardship and it was amazing and the Brisbane Open Space Committee is bringing their Dark Sky Ordinance before the Council.

Adjourn Meeting

Wiel adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape. In the foreground, a hillside is covered with a dense forest of green trees. To the left of the forest, there is a patch of dry, brownish ground with scattered small green shrubs. In the background, a flat expanse of land leads to a sandy beach and the ocean. The sky is bright and clear.

Habitat Enhancement Program Updates October 2023

Mindego Creek Fish Passage



Before

Dam and clogged fish ladder block fish movement



After

Creek restored to allow fish movement & safe water diversion maintained





Pescadero Creek Habitat Enhancement



Vegetation Management at Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve



San Bruno Mountain Habitat Enhancement for Butterflies





WATER FOR FARMS, FISH AND PEOPLE

SAN MATEO RESOURCE CONVERSATION DISTRICT



SAN MATEO
RESOURCE
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

Water for Farms, Fish and People

- Use **less water** through improved efficiency.
- **Minimize impacts** of water diversions by changing timing and rate of diversions.
- Improve **water security** for farms, fish and people through above actions, increasing water storage capacity and working to institute forbearance agreements with water users.



Approach

- Help farmers and domestic water users conserve, strategically manage, and store water.
 - Identify needs of landowners and watersheds
 - Assess and address infrastructure
 - Improve water pumping, delivery and storage facilities.
 - Coordinate water users to balance demands on limited resources.
 - Restore water to creeks for threatened and endangered species.



Benefits

How Are Benefits Measured

- Irrigation evaluations, distribution uniformity and storage needs
- System assessments and pump tests for domestic water users
- Total current water demand vs. target demand

What Can Be Done with the Information

- Irrigation and domestic water system upgrades
- Water management plans
- Water storage
- Forbearance agreements
- Timing and rate of diversions



Accomplishments

- 155 AF (50M gallons) of Water Storage
- 175 AF (57M gallons) of Water Conserved Annually

25 Farms Assisted

6 Domestic Water Systems Assisted

What's the Significance?

- Enhancing 25-100% of stream flow at critical times





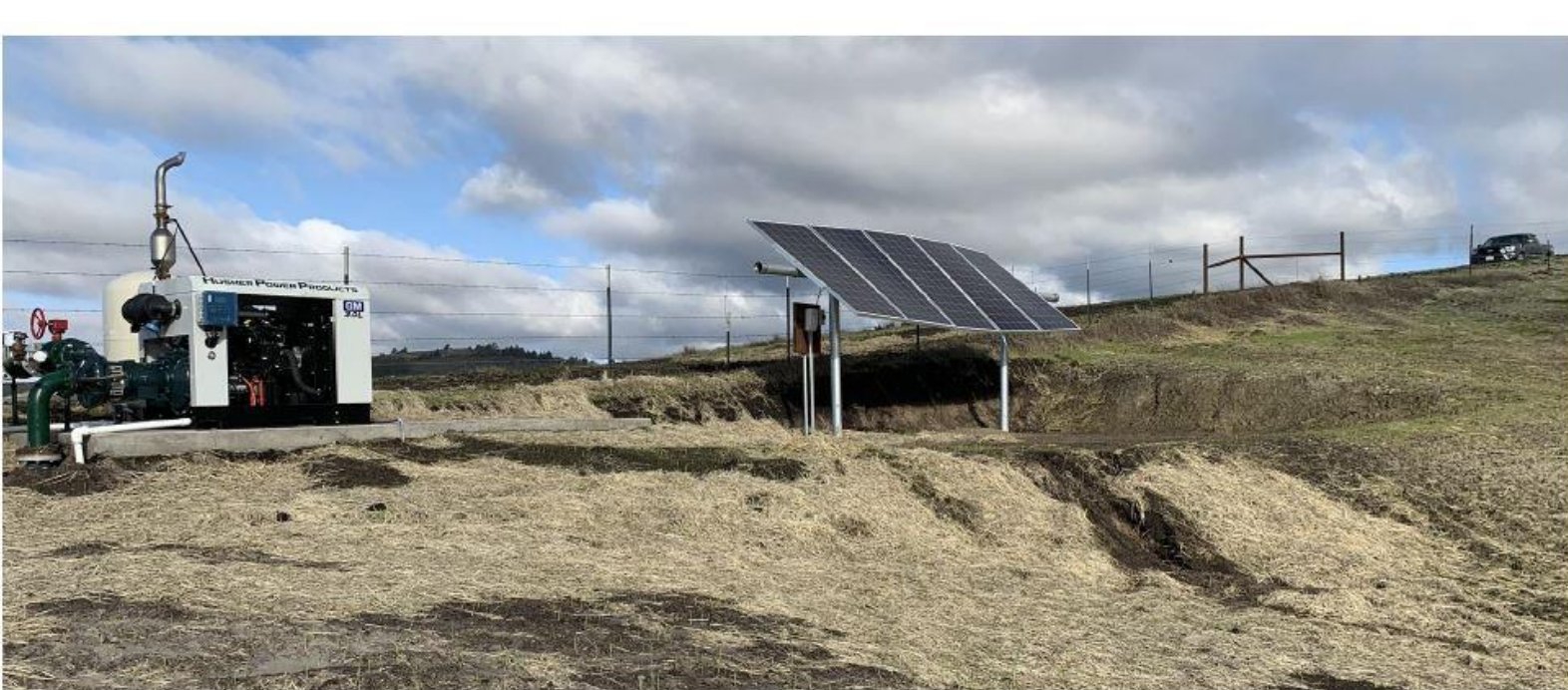
Initial Site Clearing



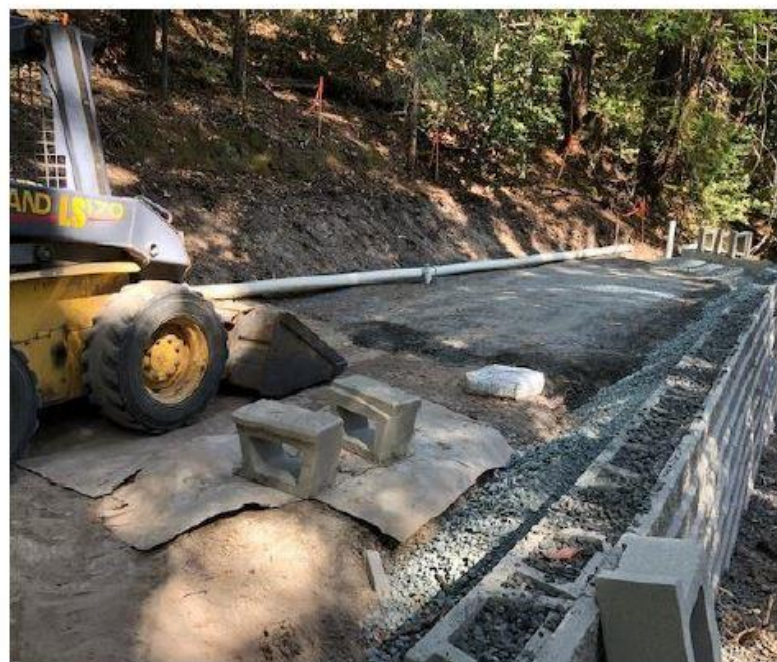
During Construction



Completed Pond w/ Erosion Control Measures Installed



Upgraded irrigation
system



Construction of retention
wall & tank pad



Initial Site Clearing



Completed project

What's Next...

Questions?



Rural Roads Workshop

Highway 1 Brewery

July 2023



MANAGING RURAL ROADS



WHY DO WE CARE?

- ACCESSIBILITY
- WATER QUALITY
- LIABILITY and ECONOMICS

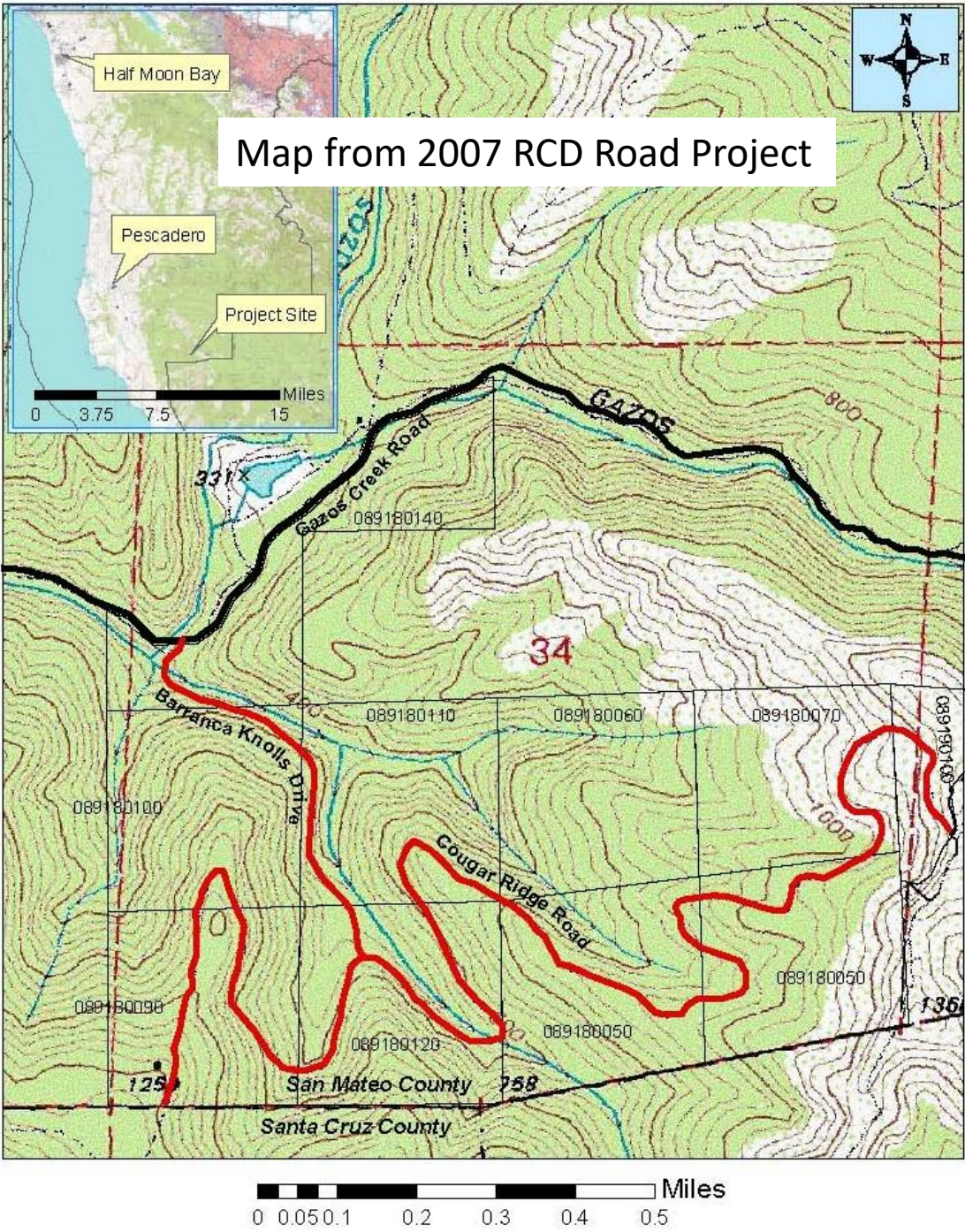


Rural Roads and Wildfires

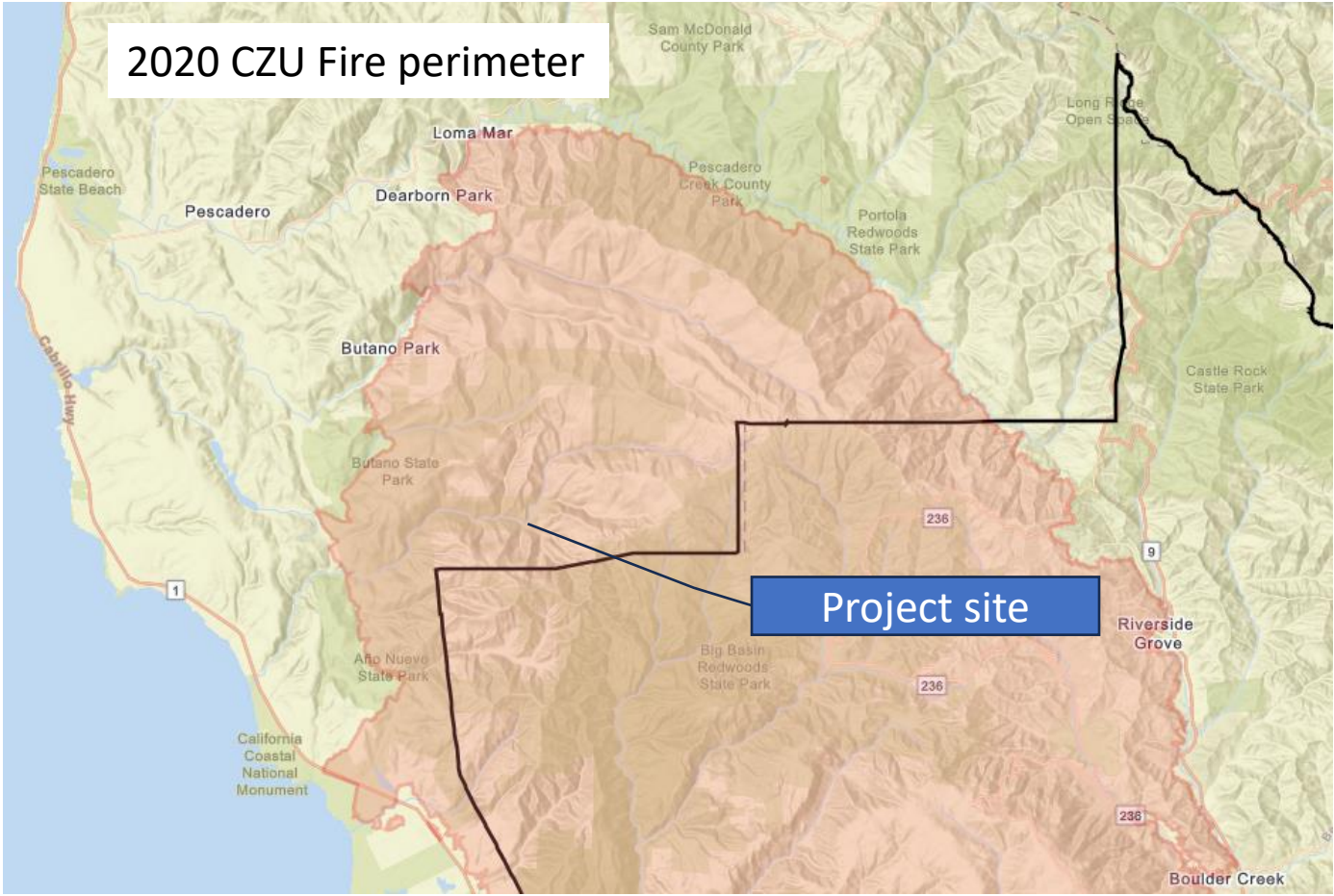
Considerations for Pre and Post-Fire Management

RURAL ROADS
WORKSHOP
JULY 19, 2023



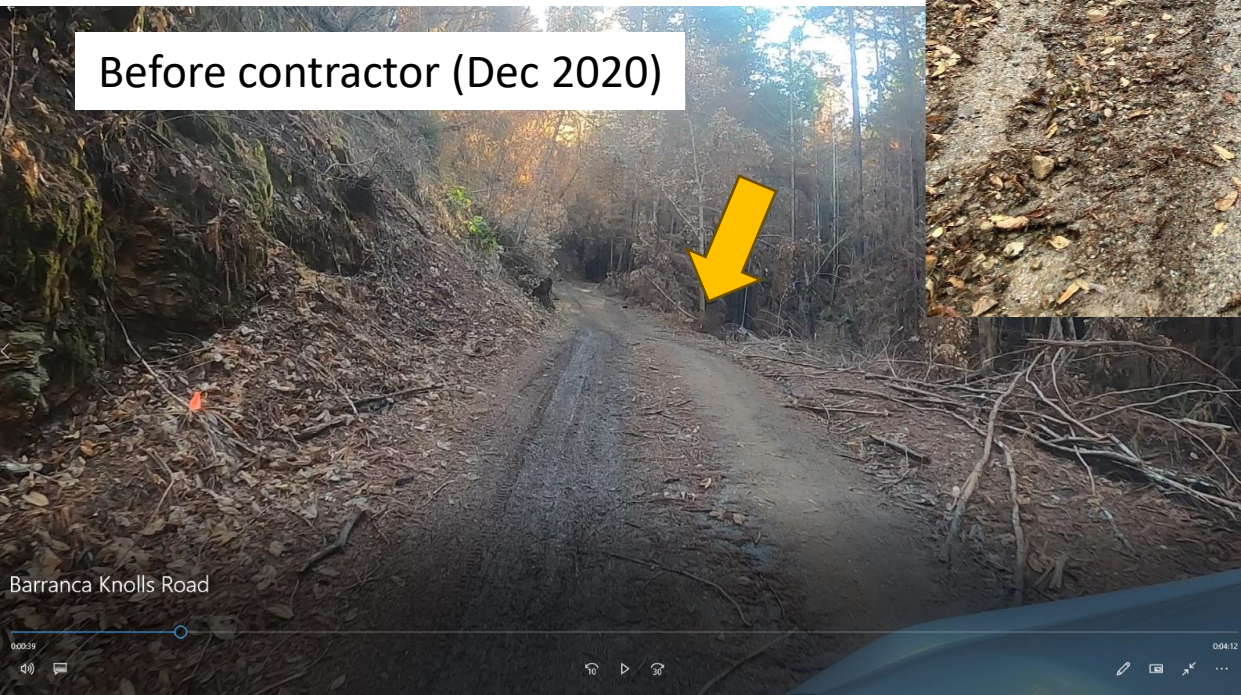


Barranca Knolls & Cougar Ridge Roads in Gazos Creek Watershed



Post-fire debris removal contractor scraped the roads & destroyed the engineered drainage features (installed in 2007)

Before contractor (Dec 2020)



After contractor (Jan 2021)



Result: Road failure & erosion into Gazos Creek tributary (Jan 2022)



Fall
2023
Repairs



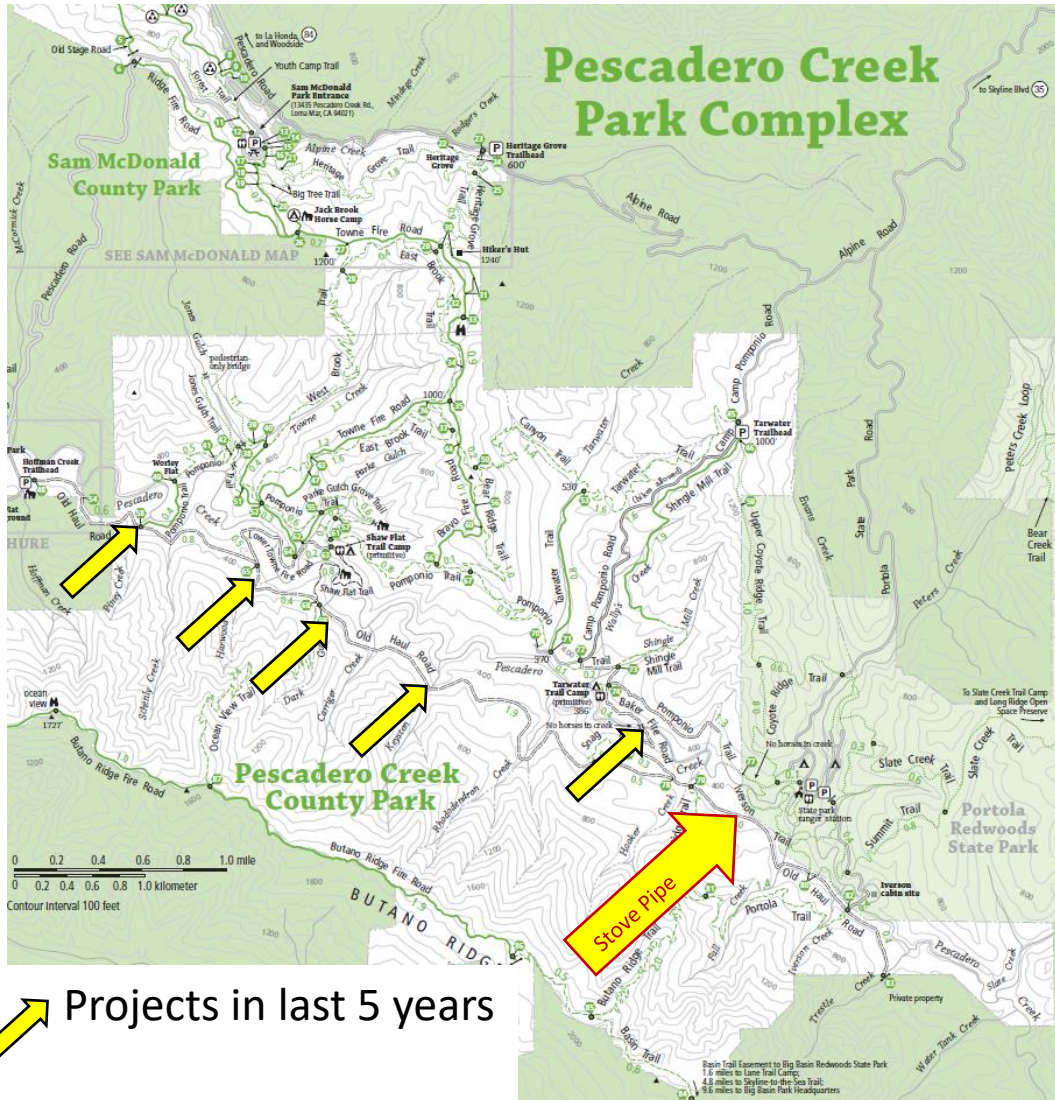
Before



After



Stove Pipe Crossing Repair on Old Haul Road in Pescadero Creek County Park





Forest Health and Fire Resilience Program Updates



Presentation to the Board of Directors
October 23, 2023



SAN MATEO
RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT





Eddie
Project Manager



Erica
Conservation Ecologist



David
Forest Ecologist



Timothy
Program Manager

Active Projects

- Butano State Park Forest Health
- Quarry Park Hazard Tree and Fuel Reduction
- Hypericum Eradication
- La Honda Shaded Fuel Break
- Neighborhood Chipper Program





Butano State Park Forest Health

- Funded by CAL FIRE Forest Health Grant and DPR Interagency Agreement
- Multi-benefit project focused on ecosystem restoration
- Began implementation in June 2023
- Over 240 acres of project work completed





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Quarry Park Shaded Fuel Break

- Funded by Coastal Conservancy and San Mateo County Parks
- Focus on fuel reduction and hazard tree removal
- Began implementation in 2021
- 150 acres of project work completed
- 327 large hazard trees removed
- Continued work on storm damage and fuel reduction





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Hypericum Eradication

- Goal: control and remove *H. canariense* on private and public property
- Current work includes protecting high value grassland and coastal prairie
- Seeking funding for full project
- Exploring opportunities to partner with local native groups





La Honda Shaded Fuel Break

- Goal: protect community of La Honda from extreme wildfire behavior
- CEQA in progress
- Implementation set for Spring 2024
- Funded by CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant



Neighborhood Chipper Program

- Partners: Fire Safe San Mateo County, South Skyline Fire Safe Council, La Honda Fire Brigade, Coastside Fire Protection District
- Funders: San Mateo County, CAL FIRE, Coastal Conservancy, California Fire Safe Council
- Increased service area to over 4000 addresses
- Over 800 homes participated



Other Projects

- Regional Prioritization Planning
- San Mateo LiDAR update
- CAL FIRE Change Detection Project
- Future project development



Landscape Scale Forest Health and Fire Resiliency

