



Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday January 18, 2024

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>

If you are using a computer or other device to join the meeting, you may click [here](#). A computer video camera is not required to participate. If you do not have access to a computer or internet during this meeting, or if your computer does not have audio, you can call in by phone: (669) 900-6833 and enter the meeting ID: 896 7573 3636 when prompted.

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Introduction of Guests and Staff

4. Public Comment- The board will hear comments on items that are not on the agenda. The Board cannot act on an item unless it is an emergency as defined under Government Code §54954.2.

5. Consent Agenda

The Board of Directors approves:

5.1. October 18, 2023 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes

5.2. November 16, 2023 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes

5.3. [Board will consider Resolution 2024-1: Approval of the Grant of Funds from the State Coastal Conservancy for the Vallemar Sewer Infrastructure Relocation Project.](#)

The Board of Directors receives into record the following media about the RCD:

5.4. October 2023 **Aquatic Science Center**, "[Where Creeks Meet Baylands: Opportunities to re-establish freshwater and sediment delivery to the Baylands of San Francisco Bay.](#)"

5.5. October 25, 2023 **Half Moon Bay Review**, "[Resource Conservation District recounts 15 years of work](#)"

5.6. November 11, 2023 **TomKat Ranch Education Foundation** newsletter, "[Pilot Training to Expand Access to Conservation Planning and Integrate Regenerative Agriculture.](#)"

5.7. November 29, 2023 **Sustainable Conservation** newsletter, "[Restoration round-Up: Butano Creek Floodplain and Streamflow Enhancement Project.](#)"

5.8. December 14, 2023 **The Daily Journal** article, "[Coho salmon habitat restoration underway in Pescadero.](#)"

5.9. December 22, 2023 **KQED Radio's California Report**, "Conservationists Help Coho Salmon Return To Pescadero"

- [Online article](#)

- [Radio piece](#)

5.10. January 10, 2024 **NPR's All Things Considered**, "A rare salmon went extinct in a California creek. People are trying to bring it back."

- [Online article](#)

- [Radio piece](#)

6. Regular Agenda

6.1. Discussion about biological control of cape ivy in San Mateo County with Erica Harris, Conservation Ecologist.

6.2. Reports and discussion about California Association of RCDs' 2023 annual conference.

6.3. [Board will consider allocation of 2023 earnings for eligible employees to the Employer Sponsored 401K Plan.](#)

6.4. Executive Director's report

6.5. USDA NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) report

6.6. Directors' connection and directors' reports

7. Adjourn Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be February 15, 2024.

Public records that relate to any item on the open session agenda for a regular board meeting are available for public inspection. Those records that are distributed less than 72 hours prior to the meeting are available for public inspection at the same time as they are distributed to all members, or a majority of the members of the Board.

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Thursday January 18, 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

Associate Directors: Zahra Kassam

RCD staff: Kellyx Nelson, Cesar Aguilar, David Cowman, Erica Harris, Eddie Sanchez, Ainé Javier, Stephanie Macdonald, Timothy Federal, Amy Kaeser, Barb Kipreos, Ryan Silsbee

NRCS staff: Jim Howard

1. Call to Order

- Kossy called the meeting at 4:03 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

- Nelson requested that agenda items 5.1, 5.2, and 5.4 be removed from this agenda and on next month's agenda
- **ACTION:** Etherton motioned for approval of agenda, as amended, Stielstra seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Introduction of Guests and Staff

- All in attendance introduced themselves.
- Nelson introduced Javier, the new Conservation Associate, and Silsbee, the new Conservation Project Manager
- Kossy suggested that board members, staff, and guests read the staff page on the website to familiarize themselves with new staff bios.

4. Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

5. Consent Agenda

- **ACTION:** Wiel motioned to accept the consent agenda with 5.1, 5.2, and 5.4 removed. Etherton seconded, motion passed with no abstentions.

6. Regular Agenda

6.1. Discussion about biological control of cape ivy in San Mateo County with Erica Harris, Conservation Ecologist.

- Harris introduced the RCD, programs, and partners.
- Harris explained how invasive the plant cape ivy is, and how difficult it is to remove.
- Harris explained how it escaped cultivation after being brought to the coast in the 1950's.
- Harris explained that biocontrol involves reducing pest populations through natural enemies such as parasitoids, predators, pathogens, antagonists, or competitors suppress pest populations.
- Harris explained that the USDA has stated that biocontrol is a practical option.
- Nelson asked for an explanation on what target specific means.
- Harris explained that target-specific biocontrol is a strategy used to get rid of a target specific organism without harming others. An example would something that would only target mosquito larvae, wouldn't kill dragonfly larvae or frogs' larvae.
- Harris explained that extensive research is now done to make sure bio control will only impact the invasive species in question.
- Harris shared examples of non-target-specific biocontrol that harmed ecosystems, like the mongoose released in Hawaii to control rats in sugar cane fields. It was not considered target-specific biocontrol because the mongoose did not eat just the rats, but also the birds. There weren't enough studies done prior to the release to make sure it would only target rats.

- Harris introduced the cape ivy gall fly, a target-specific biocontrol that lays eggs in cape ivy to form galls and stunt its growth.
- Harris summarized the USDA released the cape ivy gall fly in 13 locations from Humboldt to Santa Barbara County. If anyone sees the galls, send coordinates and photos to her email as it could be vital information.
- Kossy summarized a WMA presentation about biocontrols as a good strategy to have habitat-wide control since they are not constrained by fences or borders.
- Stielstra asked if the gall fly is dependent on cape ivy. Harris said it won't use other plants as host plants, which is what the USDA tested for over 7 years before releasing it.
- Kossy asked if they are always red or if they can be green.
- Harris answered that they can be both and advised no one to remove the gall because it would cause it to shrivel up.
- Wiel asked if the cape ivy disappears, would the flies die out. Harris said they would.
- Harris said another option that could be released is the stem-boring moth that looks promising. Could be 1-3 years before released
- Nelson asked if the moth kills cape ivy or slows the spread if introduced. Harris said she believes it to be the same since it's stem-boring and stunts growth.
- Kossy asked if there is any RCD project specifically dealing with cape ivy control. Nelson said there is, but it is difficult to get funding because cape ivy is ubiquitous and aggressive. The RCD uses mitigation funds strategically to protect patches of quality habitat near cape ivy.
- Ketcham asked why cape ivy is found growing in carport gutters. Harris said she's not sure, but has observed juvenile red tailed hawks picking up cape ivy and dropping it.
- Wiel asked if cape ivy removed at home should go in the compost. Harris said if you can keep an eye on the compost, yes, since temperatures can get high enough to kill it, but it's recommended to bag and throw in the trash. Nelson elaborated that you would need to be experienced in composting and be measuring temperature, otherwise, bag it and throw it away.
- Kossy asked if private landowners can come to the RCD for assistance. Nelson said the RCD has offered technical assistance to private landowners removing cape ivy.
- Kaeser asked where we should send pictures. Harris said to send them to her or upload them to iNaturalist or send them to USDA with coordinates.
- Nelson asked if the USDA will release cape ivy gall fly in more locations. Harris said she is not sure, but likely not, since they haven't taken in many places.
- Etherton asked for a recommended plant to replant after cape ivy has been removed. Harris said she recommends following up treatments and try to get it out entirely before you attempt replanting.
- Stielstra asked if goats eat it. Harris said she doesn't know, but goats do eat English ivy.
- Kossy said that since it took the USDA 20 years to develop this one biocontrol, and it is not dispersing as well as they hoped, it shows how long it takes to do a thorough job.
- New attendees were introduced, including Zahra Kassam, a new associate director at the RCD, and Dave Olson, who has worked on cape ivy removal and the past and was hoping to catch the talk. Nelson said Erica can fill him in after if he reaches out (erica@sanmateoRCD.org)

6.2. Reports and discussion about California Association of RCDs' 2023 annual conference.

- Nelson gave an overview of what the conference is, shared that there was a lot of energy, and asked if staff had reflections.

- Kipreos said she learned about several RCDs have created a working group to share best practices when working alongside unhoused populations.
- Javier said she liked hearing about other RCDs' focus areas.
- Sanchez said there were a lot of shoutouts to our RCD and Nelson specifically and it was great to see how many people and RCDs were there.
- Silsbee said he enjoyed seeing how each RCD has a different focus and role in their community, depending on community concerns.
- Howard said he enjoyed seeing the evolution of different RCDs over time and the diversity of those who attended. He observed there being more young people than in the past. He enjoyed Eliza Milio and Kevin Watt's presentation about their training event on regenerative agriculture.
- Kossy asked how we can make sure more board members can go next year. Nelson said to respond sooner, since it was first asked in summer 2023, and board members can also register themselves and get reimbursed.
- Kossy shared that she went to a CARCD conference in the early 2000s, and is excited to hear about there being more diversity in participants. Kossy thanked RCD staff for attending.

6.3. Board will consider allocation of 2023 earnings for eligible employees to the Employer Sponsored 401K Plan.

- Nelson reviewed the [memo](#) in the board packet.
- Board discussion included appreciation for Nelson's leadership and that one of the RCD's greatest strengths is how it supports staff; how risk-taking to support staff has benefited the RCD, constituents, and stakeholders; how supporting staff minimizes risk, rather than increasing it, and pride to be part of that; and why staff under 21 and people working less than a year can't participate (it is determined by the financial institution's rules).
- There was no public comment.
- **ACTION:** Etherton made a motion to approve the allocation of 2023 earnings for eligible employees to the Employer Sponsored 401k plan, Weil seconded, motion passed unanimously.

6.4. Executive Director's Report

- The County has promised to notice the RCD board vacancy; please let Nelson know if someone might be a good candidate.
- Noah Katz is moving on from the RCD. The position will be revised as a specialist rather than a program manager and the water quality program will join the Water for Farms, Fish, and People program into the new Water Resources Program area. Jarrad Fisher has been promoted to Water Resources Program Director.
- Kasey Butler, RCD Agricultural Stewardship Senior Project Manager, is leaving next week, and she had generously stayed on much longer than she had wanted with a commute from Carmel. She is going to Monterey RCD. We offered glowing recommendations for her and hope to partner with her in her new role. We have been receiving great applications for the position, but she will be missed.
- Stephanie MacDonald is moving to North Carolina in April. She has agreed to stay on and work remotely for a period of time, particularly as Jarrad will be on paternity leave and she is a key member of his team managing a number of complex projects.
- Two vacant positions are to be filled soon for the forest team and ag team.
- Nelson introduced Silsbee and Javier.
- CA's budget deficit is \$37.8 billion dollars, though significantly less than the deficit that had been projected. It was largely driven by the steep decline in the stock market that took place during 2022 that finally showed up in November when 2022 tax filings were made do, as the IRS had provided extensions to people filing in 55 of CA's 58 counties. To balance the budget, the Governor is proposing a mix of tapping into state reserves, reductions in spending that may affect us, internal borrowing, delays in payments fund shifts, and deferrals.

January 18, 2024 Minutes

- There is no mention of a climate bond, which many of us have been hoping for. It was not quite the hit to the climate budget that we anticipated and very little being cut from the nature-based solutions funding- primarily WCB, which is a significant funder for our work. There is significant proposed cuts to watershed climate resilience, coastal protections, sustainable agriculture, and some reductions to wildfire programs. We have already seen some grant programs get cancelled or reduced.
- Staff are working on getting into contracts as fast as possible before any claw backs. Trying to lock in funding that has been awarded but not yet received.
- Nelson is on CARCD's legislative committee. Its current focus is on Division 9 of the Public Resources Code, specifically amending the landownership requirement for prospective district directors. She was also appointed to the bylaws committee (7 people, including 3 members of CARCD board) to update CARCD's bylaws to better enable formation of committees and other aspects of CARCD to improve their advocacy efforts on behalf of RCDs.
- Nelson is thinking and planning for Jim Howard's retirement.
- In the next month or two Nelson will present the 2023 Year in Review with updates from specific programs. Over the next 2-3 months, we will hear from Adria, Eliza, and report on First Flush this past fall.

6.5. USDA NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) Report

- Howard gave updates on the Inflation Reduction Act. They are trying to accelerate output, but there are capacity issues. There are IRA funds earmarked for work on working lands, such as for carbon sequestration and increasing organic matter.
- Howard talked about his retirement and transition. It is Allan Curry's job to replace him. They might hire a soil conservationist to overlap their positions. Hiring will be open to the public. Howard will support Nelson's involvement in decision-making and input for replacement.
- Nelson asked if Howard will join ACES retired annuitant program to continue work after retirement. Howard said yes.
- Etherton asked when he'll leave. Howard said he will leave at the end of April 2025.

6.6. Directors' Connection and Directors' Reports

- Kossy shared her appreciation for the RCD's work on JEDI issues, including board support and training, and having DEI in the strategic plan.
- Etherton: Brisbane is creating an equity style guide and thinks the RCD's JEDI strategic plan should also include one. The Brisbane Dark Skies Ordinance should pass soon. There is a winter planting day on San Bruno Mountain on February 3rd.
- Kassam is working for a site plan for the Mushroom Farm and is working with the RCD for removing invasive species.
- Weil gave an update on the website. From April 2023 to today, there were 9,000 visits. The most visited page is the homepage, then staff and job opportunity pages. The most visited project page is the Chipper Program page then the Water for Farms, Fish, and People page. It was very clear that visitors are people who are purposely looking us up rather than encountering the page.
- Stielstra presented the recent budget and let us know that the finance committee is ramping up.
- Stielstra states that he will be at the CERCAL conference in May. There is future collaborations from the other JEDI committees that are being looked at.
- Stielstra expressed that the regional meetings from the Central Coast Region of RCDs was poorly planned. There was only a couple weeks' notice and they didn't have a compelling agenda.
- Stielstra also expressed frustration with the CARCD meeting for delegates at the conference that was held through Zoom. It was very disorganized with many people showing frustration on the chat and a lack of IT support. It was cancelled and supposed to be deferred to the next day but there was no place to call in. Kossy wanted to know if they rescheduled. No one was sure.

7. **Adjourn Meeting**

Kossy Adjourned the meeting at 6:15.

RESOLUTION 2024-1

APPROVAL of the Grant of Funds from the State Coastal Conservancy for the Vallemar Sewer Infrastructure Relocation Project

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

WHEREAS, RCDs are defined in Section 3501 of the Government Code as a public agency;

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has established the State Coastal Conservancy ("Conservancy") under Division 21 of the California Public Resources Code, and has authorized the Conservancy to award grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations to implement the provisions of Division 21; and

WHEREAS, the Conservancy awards grants for projects that it determines are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code and with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan and that best achieve the Conservancy's statutory objectives, in light of limited funding.

WHEREAS, at its January 18, 2024 meeting, the Conservancy adopted a resolution authorizing a grant to San Mateo Resource Conservation District ("grantee") for Vallemar Sewer Infrastructure Relocation Project ("the project"). The resolution was adopted by the Conservancy pursuant to and is included in the Conservancy November 30, 2023 staff recommendation, a copy of which is on file with the grantee and with the Conservancy.

WHEREAS, the Conservancy requires that governing body of the grantee certify through a resolution that it approves the award of Conservancy grant funding and authorizes the execution by a representative of the grantee of a grant agreement on terms and conditions required by the Conservancy grant agreement no. 23-075-01.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the grantee hereby:

1. Approves the award of grant funding from the Conservancy for the project.
2. Acknowledges that it has or will have sufficient funds to complete the project and, if any property is acquired as part of the project to operate and maintain the property, and, if any facilities are constructed as a part of the project, to operate and maintain the facilities for a reasonable period, not less than the useful life of the facilities.
3. Agrees to be bound by all terms and conditions of the grant agreement and any other agreement or instrument as may be required by the Conservancy and as may be necessary to fulfill the terms of the grant agreement and to complete the project.
4. Authorizes its Executive Director to conduct negotiations, execute, submit, and sign all documents including but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments,

payment requests, and other documents which may be necessary for the completion of the proposed project.

ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the San Mateo Resource Conservation District on January 18, 2024.

Barbara Kossy, President

Date

Cape Ivy Biological Control

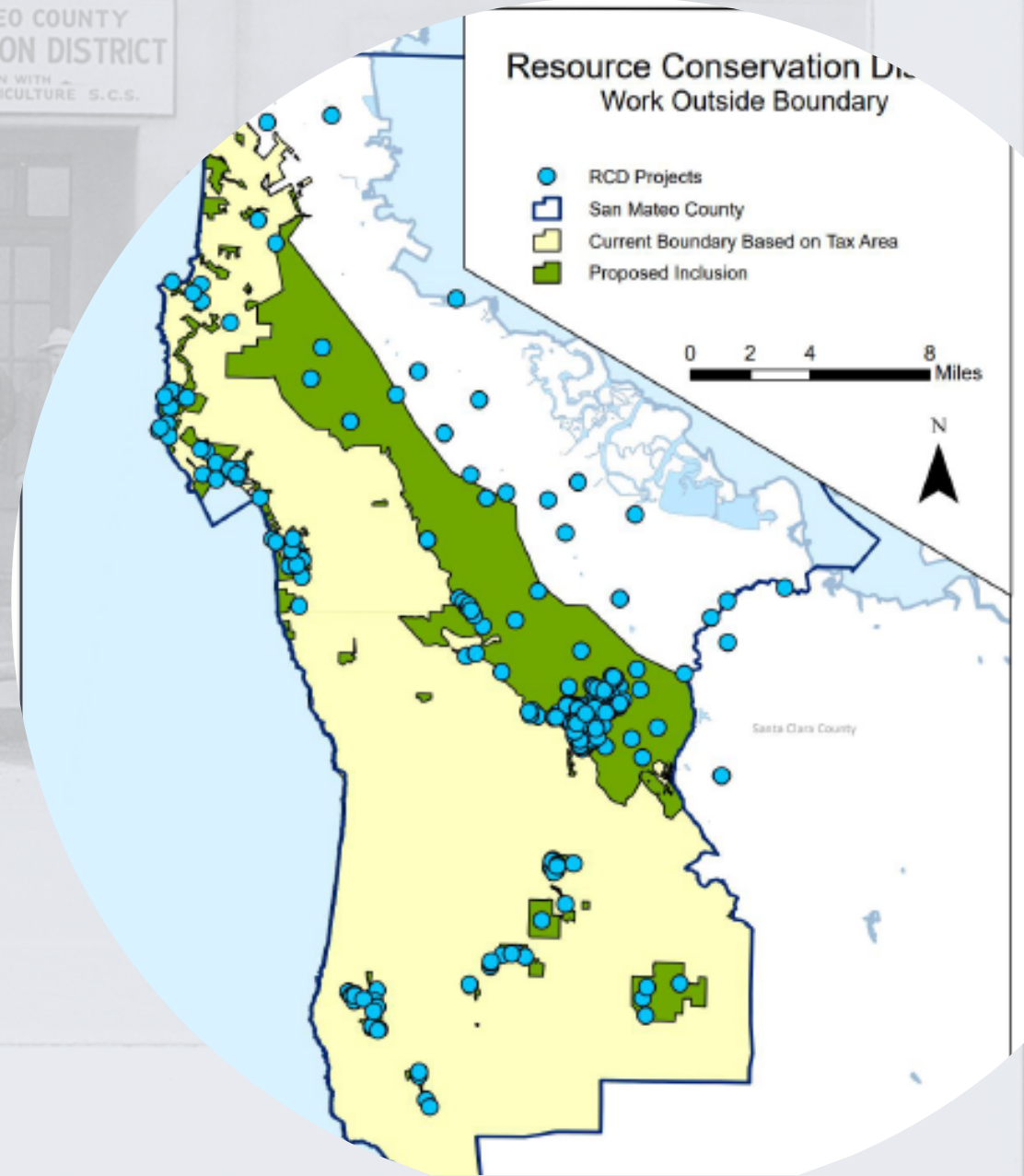


SAN MATEO

RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD)

- Special district to help people help the land
- Since 1939
- With USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



What we do

- Work in partnership
- Local hub for natural resource conservation
- Nonregulatory- work where invited
- Primarily grant-funded





Water



Climate



Wildlife



Agriculture



Forest Health & Fire Resiliency





Everything done in partnership



RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



Coastal Regional
Prioritization Group



Santa Cruz Mountains
Stewardship Network



Cape Ivy (*Delairea odorata*)

- Brought to California in the 1950s as a landscape ornamental
- Highly Invasive vine that covers vegetation
- Especially problematic in coastal riparian areas
- Forms dense mats, blocks sunlight and smothers plants and trees underneath
- Reduces biodiversity – toxic to animals and fish
- Clogs water flow, interferes with flood control and consumes water resources





ARS releases first biocontrol insect for Cape-ivy

Biocontrol insect released to fight the invasive weed known as Cape-ivy has become established

PUBLISHED ON **NOVEMBER 11, 2020**



ARS scientists have established a reproducing population of shoot tip-galling flies at Glen Deven Ranch (Big Sur Land Trust) as a biocontrol for Cape-ivy, one of the top ten worst invasive weeds in California. (Photo by Scott Portman)

Biological Control

Biological control (biocontrol) involves the reduction of pest populations through the use of natural enemies such as parasitoids, predators, pathogens, antagonists, or competitors to suppress pest populations.

-USDA



USDA says Biocontrol is a Practical Option

- it is easy and safe to use
- it is a very cost effective and environmentally sound, especially compared to the broad-spectrum pesticides often used
- it reduces the use of conventional pesticides
- it can be implemented as part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program
- once established, populations are self-sustaining, and
- it is target specific





HOME / ALL PRODUCT

Mosquito Dunks Ready To Use Tablet Mosquito Killer (2-Pack)

\$4.00

10000 in stock

- 1 +

ADD TO CART

SKU: 018506001025

Category: All Product

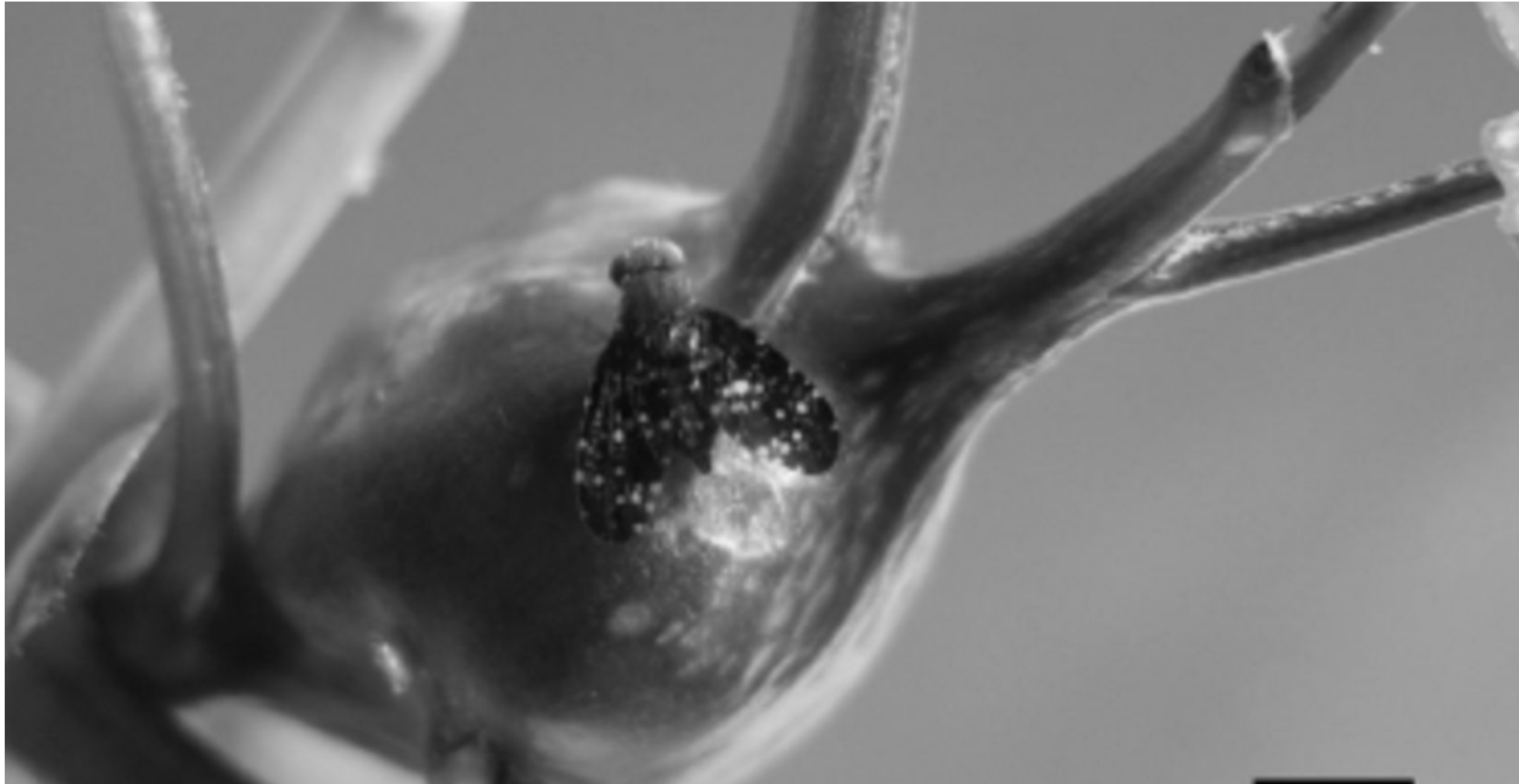


Can it go wrong?

- Biocontrol is a robust scientific field
- Research is done to identify a predator or pest of a given invasive species from its home range
- Extensive research is done to determine whether the predator or pest would **ONLY** impact the invasive species in question



Cape Ivy gall fly (*Parafreutreta regalis*)



Galls – be on the lookout





What Next?



- Stem boring moth that is looking promising (*Digitivalva delaireae*)
- 1-3 years before a release permit is available
- Gall fly rearing protocol available from County Ag



QUESTIONS ?

Memorandum

Date: January 18, 2024
To: Board of Directors
From: Kellyx Nelson
Re: Recommendation for Allocation to Employee 401K Plans

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board of Directors approve an allocation of 9% of calendar year 2023 earnings for each eligible employee to the RCD's Employer Sponsored 401K Plan. The estimated cost to the RCD would be \$169,102.93.

Background

The RCD participates in an Employer Sponsored 401K Plan through Paychex, with Fidelity Investments as the money manager. Eligible employees who enroll in the program can contribute to their 401K plan. In addition, the RCD offers a discretionary match (also with Paychex and Fidelity Investments) in which the employer contribution allocation can vary from year to year based on the RCD's financial position rather than a standard annual employer match or profit share. The discretionary match program was chosen as the most feasible option for the RCD to offer employees the benefit of an employer contribution to a 401K plan when the organization's revenues depend heavily on grants and contracts which are inherently uncertain. The Board of Directors annually determines the RCD's discretionary contribution allocation towards staff 401K plans for the previous calendar year. For calendar year 2022 the Board approved a 9% allocation. The previous two years were 7%.

Staff recommends a 9% allocation for calendar year 2023 as a reasonable expense given:

1. The RCD's current financial position can afford this one-time expense and the structure of the retirement plan does not require a future commitment at this rate.
2. Unlike comparable governmental entities, the RCD does not offer a pension plan and tries to make allocations that are competitive when financially feasible.
3. The RCD's strategic plan includes goals to be an attractive workplace.

Eligibility

Eligibility requirements for the 401K Plan, set by the financial institution and not by the RCD, are that participants must 1) be at least 21 years of age and 2) have been an employee of the RCD for 12 months and worked a minimum of 1,000 hours in that period. The employer contribution is available only to employees who are eligible and enrolled in the RCD's Sponsored 401K Plan. Employees are not required to contribute to the 401K Plan to receive

the employer contribution. For calendar year 2023, 18 people are eligible¹. Sixteen are current staff members; two are staff members who left the RCD in 2023; and nine current staff members are not eligible.

¹ This does not include the Network Manager of the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, who is also eligible. He will receive a separate allocation as determined by the network's leadership. The RCD is the fiscal sponsor of the network but does not make compensation decisions for the Network Manager.