
RESOLUTION 2026-2
Honoring Twenty Years of Service and Leadership by
Kellyx Nelson

WHEREAS, Kellyx Nelson has served the San Mateo Resource Conservation District for twenty years, including as Executive Director, bringing vision, courage, and deep commitment to conservation, community resilience, and stewardship of the lands and waters of San Mateo County; and

WHEREAS, Kellyx helped transform the San Mateo Resource Conservation District from an agency with one part-time employee into a 30-person public agency that has brought more than \$80 million in local conservation to San Mateo County since 2008; and

WHEREAS, through her leadership, the RCD has expanded its ability to serve the community in practical, lasting ways, creating over 51 million gallons of water storage, restoring more than 2,300 acres of habitat, removing eight dams to restore access to 118 miles of creek for fish migration, responding to more than 1,200 requests for technical assistance, and helping demonstrate that farms are part of the climate solution through regenerative practices that have sequestered more than 6,330 tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, Kellyx has helped change the trajectory of this region for the better by moving some of its thorniest natural resource challenges from long-standing conflict to practical, nature-based solutions that benefit both people and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, in the Pescadero marsh and Butano Creek watersheds, Kellyx's steady leadership, deep listening, and willingness to engage difficult conversations helped build trust across differences and among agencies, landowners, scientists, and community members, creating the conditions for work that reduced flooding in town, improved public safety and local resilience, reduced the factors contributing to fish kills, and restored habitat for salmon and steelhead; and

WHEREAS, Kellyx has advanced a model of conservation that recognizes the wellbeing of land and people as interconnected and treats equity as essential to effective stewardship, embedding these values across the RCD's work and demonstrating that DEI is not separate from conservation, but necessary to accomplishing it well; and

WHEREAS, through leadership that has required integrity, deep empathy, and the courage to take risks, Kellyx has helped model what it looks like to carry these commitments into every aspect of conservation, including in who benefits, who faces barriers, who is heard, and who has influence over decisions; and

WHEREAS, under Kellyx's leadership, the RCD has helped address some of the region's most pressing water challenges, supporting staff, partners, and community members in advancing practical solutions that improved water security for farms and rural residents, left more water

instream for fish and wildlife, and strengthened drought-vulnerable communities whose water systems were at risk; and

WHEREAS, through this leadership, Kellyx has helped make communities in San Mateo County safer and more resilient in the face of drought, wildfire, flooding, and other environmental challenges, improving safety, water security, and quality of life for the people who live and work here; and

WHEREAS, Kellyx strengthened the long-standing partnership between the Resource Conservation District and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, helping expand technical expertise, funding access, and conservation support in the community, and building a collaboration that has enabled staff and partners to better serve farmers, ranchers, and other land stewards; and

WHEREAS, Kellyx has been instrumental in building collaborative conservation networks at regional and statewide scales, including the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network and the California Landscape Stewardship Network, helping agencies, nonprofits, landowners, and communities work across boundaries, across public and private lands, and toward more meaningful stewardship of California's landscapes; and

WHEREAS, through this collaborative leadership, Kellyx helped advance statewide priorities including Cutting Green Tape, 30x30, and other efforts to increase the pace, scale, and quality of restoration in California; and

WHEREAS, Kellyx has helped make California a leader in regulatory innovation for nature-based solutions by advancing new permitting pathways that increase the pace and scale of conservation while maintaining strong environmental protections, including through the RCD's early use of new programmatic tools for restoration and forest health work such as the first adopted forest health Public Works Plan in the state, the first completed project using the California Vegetation Treatment Program, and the first expanded Restoration Management Permit; and

WHEREAS, the strength of the RCD today lies not only in its programs and projects, but in the culture Kellyx has built, rooted in trust, growth, accountability, and care, that has meaningfully shaped the lives of staff and helped make the organization what it is today; and

WHEREAS, among Kellyx's most important accomplishments are the people around her, as she has built a team, mentored staff, created space for people to grow, and helped launch the careers of many conservation professionals whose expertise and leadership continue to benefit communities and landscapes far beyond the district; and

WHEREAS, Kellyx is an extraordinary and beloved leader in this organization and community; and

WHEREAS, we know how fortunate we are to celebrate Kellyx's leadership, service, and care over the past twenty years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the San Mateo Resource Conservation District hereby expresses its deep appreciation to Kellyx Nelson for twenty years of exemplary service, visionary

leadership, and enduring contributions to conservation, stewardship, and community resilience; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board recognizes Kellyx Nelson’s extraordinary contributions to strengthening the San Mateo Resource Conservation District, advancing collaborative conservation at regional and statewide scales, and building more resilient communities, working lands, and ecosystems for the future.

ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the San Mateo Resource Conservation District on June 18, 2026.

Steve Stielstra, President
Board of Directors

Date