



DRAFT Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, August 20, 2026

4:00 – 6:00 pm

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

Directors: Barbara Kossy, Michelle Weil, Steve Stielstra, (Absent: Troy Guy; on leave: Adrienne Etherton)

Associate Directors: (Absent: Denise Phillips, Zahra Kassam, John Wade)

RCD staff: Kellyx Nelson, Lau Hodges, Joe Issel (virtual), Amy Kaeser, Ainé Javier (virtual), Kati McHugh

NRCS staff (all virtual): Drew Mather, Allen Curry

Guests (all virtual): David Cosgrave (Office of County District 3 Supervisor Mueller), Michael Miller

1. Call to Order

Stielstra called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

- Item 5.5 (Resolution 2026-03: Declaring that Governing Body Members and Volunteers Shall Be Deemed to be Employees of the District for the Purpose of Providing Workers' Compensation Coverage for Said Certain Individuals While Providing Their Services) was moved above 6.2, to allow for discussion of the matter prior to a vote.
- **ACTION:** Weil motioned to approve agenda as amended. Kossy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Introduction of Guests and Staff

All in attendance introduced themselves.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Agenda

- Nelson requested that the board members forward agenda item 5.6 (First Flush 2026, recruitment flyer) to people they know.
- **ACTION:** Weil moved to approve the consent agenda. Kossy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Regular Agenda

6.1. Declaration of Emergency and Authorization for Noncompetitive Procurement for Wildfire Risk Reduction Activities

- Nelson reviewed the emergency declaration and procurement authorization.
- Discussion included the burden of reporting requirements compared to what is involved in standard competitive procurement; how the declaration would streamline administrative and procedural requirements and reduce delays associated with time-sensitive wildfire risk reduction work; reviewed the findings for the RCD to make its own declaration consistent with the Governor's proclamation; projects that could use the emergency procurement authority, including wildfire resilience, fuel reduction, forest health, and vegetation management efforts which addressed wildfire risks to infrastructure, homes, and evacuation routes; how the declaration would reduce uncertainty about whether actions could be taken quickly when needed; how board approval would not be required for individual procurements; and monthly reporting to the Board for public record.

5.5 Resolution 2026-03: Declaring That Governing Body Members and Volunteers Shall Be Deemed to be Employees of The District for the Purpose of Providing Workers' Compensation Coverage for Said Certain Individuals While Providing Their Services

- Resolution 2026-03, which would deem Board members and volunteers to be employees of the RCD for purposes of workers' compensation coverage.
- Nelson reported that Special District Risk Management Authority (SDRMA) had advised that extending coverage to directors is generally considered best practice. She stated that SDRMA identified two primary reasons for adopting the resolution: risk management by providing an alternative to litigation following an injury and ensuring that volunteers injured while providing service to the RCD would have access to care.
- Discussion included cost of the additional coverage (about \$100 per year); administrative burden (Hodges said it would be minimal); coverage limits and duration (same as employees), whether the coverage would limit the types of volunteer activities the RCD could undertake (no known limits beyond those that already apply to staff activities); that there appeared to be significant benefits with minimal cost and administrative burden while reducing organizational risk; that associate directors would be covered as volunteers; how volunteer participation would be tracked and reported; that insurance costs could change; that injuries are likely to occur over time and extending coverage would help ensure volunteers are protected; how volunteer injuries had been handled previously;
- Stielstra requested additional information about workers' compensation coverage limits and benefits at a future meeting so the Board could better understand the extent of coverage. Weil asked whether different levels of coverage were available under the policy.
- **ACTION:** Motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Staff “Show and Tell”: fish tracking dashboard

- Javier shared a new online fish tracking dashboard, available at fishtracker.net, developed to make fish movement data more accessible and useful for researchers, restoration practitioners, and the public.
- She described the regional fish tracking effort involving the RCD and numerous partners, including state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, parks agencies, and private landowners, and explained that tagged coho salmon and steelhead are tracked as they pass antenna arrays installed throughout local watersheds.
- She explained that the tracking data help researchers understand fish movement, habitat use, population dynamics, and the effects of restoration projects, including barrier removal and habitat improvements.
- Kaeser compared the tagging system to a FasTrak system for fish, with antennas recording tagged fish as they move through streams.
- Javier shared examples of raw tracking data and demonstrated the dashboard.
- Discussion included how data are currently interpreted; the dashboard’s potential for future public use; how the dashboard can help reduce extensive interagency coordination to determine where fish had been detected; that the tagging technology is well established but that a public-facing regional database of this type is unique within the region and designed to accommodate future expansion; plans for real-time data; opportunities for public engagement through the dashboard; balancing concerns about poaching with public engagement, community awareness and stewardship; the RCD’s role in the project (maintaining tracking arrays, managing the database effort, securing funding, and coordinating with partner organizations); partner agencies are responsible for tagging fish and conducting much of the scientific analysis, while the RCD helps coordinate resources and collaboration among participating organizations; and how research findings inform the RCD’s habitat restoration; how recent research has shown that some salmon and steelhead move between watersheds reinforcing the importance of restoring multiple watersheds and maintaining suitable habitat conditions throughout the region; public expectations for information; and general enthusiasm for being able to follow the fish.

6.3. Executive Director’s Report

- Nelson presented the attached Executive Director’s Report through a series of project photographs highlighting current fieldwork, restoration efforts, agricultural programs, and storm preparedness activities across the RCD’s service area.
- Construction is underway on the Johnston Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Water Supply Project, which will increase on-farm water storage, restore stream habitat, improve irrigation efficiency, and reduce the farm’s dependence on creek diversions during low-flow periods.

- Discussion included how the project will restore some agricultural production that had previously been lost due to water limitations, but will not fully replace the water resources that were historically available.
- Construction has begun on culvert and sediment management projects on Wurr Road in partnership with San Mateo County.
- Construction has begun at Little Butano Creek on Cloverdale Road, where sediment is being removed from a culvert and additional improvements to improve fish passage and habitat. The project included replacing a concrete fish passage barrier with a more natural streambed design.
- Discussion included the causes of sediment accumulation at the site and expected future maintenance to reduce recurrence.
- Portola Redwoods State Park Water Supply Project is largely complete and will provide approximately 600,000 gallons of water storage, allowing the park to avoid creek diversions during peak summer low-flow periods.
- Recent installation of about a half mile of native hedgerows on multiple farms to support pollinators, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and farm-specific objectives. One hedgerow installation was completed through a community volunteer planting honoring the late Rob Trice.
- Applied more than 5,600 tons of compost to 23 farms across four counties during 2026, to support soil health, carbon sequestration, and compliance with state organic waste diversion requirements.
- Discussion included the RCD's role (a broker connecting compost producers, local governments, and agricultural producers); how compost quality is ensured when material originates from municipal waste streams; how funding flows through the program; how the program reduces costs for existing users and encourages broader adoption; demand for compost and expansion beyond San Mateo County to connect available compost supplies with demand in neighboring counties.
- Irrigation and energy efficiency improvements at six farms, including pump replacements, solar-powered systems, leak reduction, and irrigation monitoring tools designed to reduce water and energy use.
- Preparations underway for the winter, including planning for logjam management, technical assistance, hazard tree response, permitting strategies, weather monitoring, and emergency watershed activities.
- Work with residents on Second Street in Montara to address roadway erosion concerns which could threaten critical infrastructure and nearby marine reserve.
- Discussion included directors' support during storm-related efforts and RCD's role focusing on natural resource management rather than emergency response performed by other agencies.
- Thanked Board members who participated in Pescadero Arts & Fun Festival
- Tabled at Half Moon Bay Farmers Market to recruit volunteers for First Flush.
- RCD received 2026 Outstanding Geotechnical Project award from the American Society of Civil Engineers for the Butano Floodplain Project.
- Passed around an example of recycled agricultural drip tape pellets and described the process through which used irrigation materials are recycled into new drip tape products rather than being disposed of in landfills.

6.4. USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) report

- Curry reported that the NRCS continued to navigate staffing changes and organizational restructuring, and that final information regarding the reorganization had not yet been released by national leadership.
- He thanked the RCD for its partnership, highlighted the quality and breadth of work being accomplished by staff, and expressed interest in featuring RCD projects and staff accomplishments through NRCS communications and outreach.
- He thanked the RCD for supporting NRCS operations during staffing shortages, including providing office space and accommodating staff from other offices who had helped maintain local conservation program delivery.
- He stated that NRCS was exploring future opportunities for partnership agreements that could provide additional on-the-ground conservation support and encouraged continued discussion about collaborative approaches to serve agricultural producers and natural resource needs.
- Nelson asked whether the Board or local partners would have any input regarding future NRCS staffing assignments in the area and specifically whether Mather could remain assigned to the RCD's service area. Curry responded that staffing decisions are tied to the ongoing reorganization process and that additional information will be available only after national decisions are finalized.
- Mather reported that a summer intern successfully contributed to conservation work in the region and said the internship program may continue through existing funding and future student placements. Mather noted that the internship experience was well received by both the student and university partners and could provide opportunities for additional conservation support in the future.
- Mather reported that all local conservation program applications submitted through NRCS were successfully funded, including ten funded applications overall.
- Curry reported that three Conservation Stewardship Program applications received funding totaling approximately \$82,000, and that Environmental Quality Incentives Program ("EQIP") contracts totaled approximately \$268,000. He stated that the increased funding reflected successful outreach efforts and participation growth by local agricultural producers in NRCS conservation programs. Curry credited Mather and partner organizations for expanded awareness of conservation assistance opportunities and increased participation in the available programs.
- Mather reported that efforts remain underway to allow RCD staff access to NRCS vehicles, and that required training and administrative steps were still being completed.
- Mather highlighted the importance of collaboration between the RCD and NRCS and stated that referrals from the RCD had helped producers access conservation assistance efficiently, regardless of which organization they initially contacted.
- Curry echoed Mather's comments and expressed appreciation for the RCD's collaborative approach, noting that the partnership had helped expand conservation assistance throughout the county.

6.5. Report from San Mateo County Supervisor Mueller's office

- Cosgrave reported that Supervisor Mueller remains highly appreciative of the RCD's work and was continuing to build familiarity with issues involving natural resources, infrastructure, wildfire preparedness, and flood resilience. He stated that wildfire concerns remain a high priority, but that county staff are increasingly focused on anticipated winter storm and flooding challenges.
- Mueller recently participated in discussions before the California Coastal Commission about proposed changes related to offshore drilling and had voiced San Mateo County's opposition.
- Update on ongoing County concerns regarding Vehicle License Fee funding- the issue centered on a complex state funding mechanism which affects how certain counties were reimbursed for revenue intended to support local government services.
 - Discussion included why so few counties were affected, uncertainty and delays in budget and funding, the extent of the shortfall impacts on priorities
- County is expected to consider updates to the Local Coastal Program related to permit allocations on the Midcoast and stated that the proposed approach was intended to provide access to previously unavailable building permits while maintaining annual limits.
 - Don Horsley County Park at Tunitas Creek recently opened to the public.
 - Nelson attended the dedication event and described remarks from Horsley's family, which highlighted his longstanding public service and contributions to the county.
- County staff continued to receive significant interest in matters involving wells, septic systems, and permitting throughout the coastal area.
- Recent National Weather Service presentation regarding winter climate forecasts and noted that warmer ocean temperatures could contribute to increased erosion, stronger storms, and more atmospheric river events the coming winter.
- County departments are actively preparing for winter conditions, including planning for sandbag distribution and other storm preparedness measures, and expressed appreciation for the RCD's ongoing preparedness efforts and coordination.

6.6. Directors' connection and reports

- Stielstra encouraged Board members to attend the upcoming CARCD conference and the regional RCD meeting hosted by the Monterey County RCD, noting that both events would provide valuable opportunities for networking and learning. He reported that CARCD governance and committee restructuring efforts continue to progress smoothly and noted increased educational programming, training opportunities, and communication from CARCD. He stated that CARCD has improved the consistency and quality of information and resources being provided to member districts. He shared that Sonrisas is developing a mobile dental clinic that would be located in Pescadero and would provide expanded access to dental care for Coastside residents.
- Weil reported that she staffed the RCD booth at the PAFF Festival with her daughter and said the watershed model was effective to engage children and facilitate conversations about RCD programs. She stated that booth traffic was somewhat limited due to the booth location but that attendees signed up for the RCD newsletter and participated in meaningful discussions. She relayed a question from a community member regarding sediment buildup

and creek flow conditions near Sweetwood Campground. She observed that many Pescadero residents appeared familiar with the RCD and its work, which she concluded reflected increased community awareness over time. She expressed interest to participate in future outreach and tabling opportunities.

- Kossy shared observations from a recent trip to the Pacific Northwest and described her visit to a cold-water steelhead refuge where visitors gathered to observe fish and learn about their habitat. She reflected on the strong public connection to steelhead conservation and the value of opportunities for people to experience fish and watershed resources firsthand.

7. Adjourn Meeting

- Meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.
- The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be September 17, 2026.



Johnston Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Water Supply

1



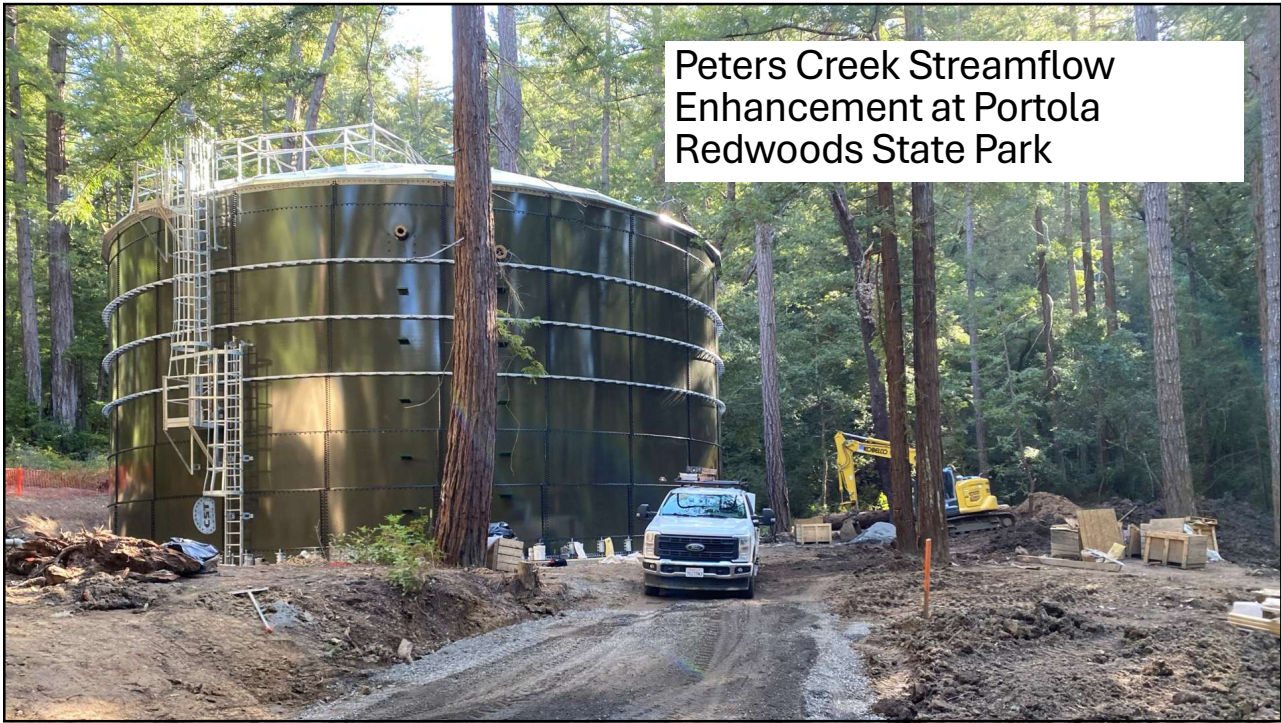
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Peters Creek Streamflow Enhancement at Portola Redwoods State Park

5

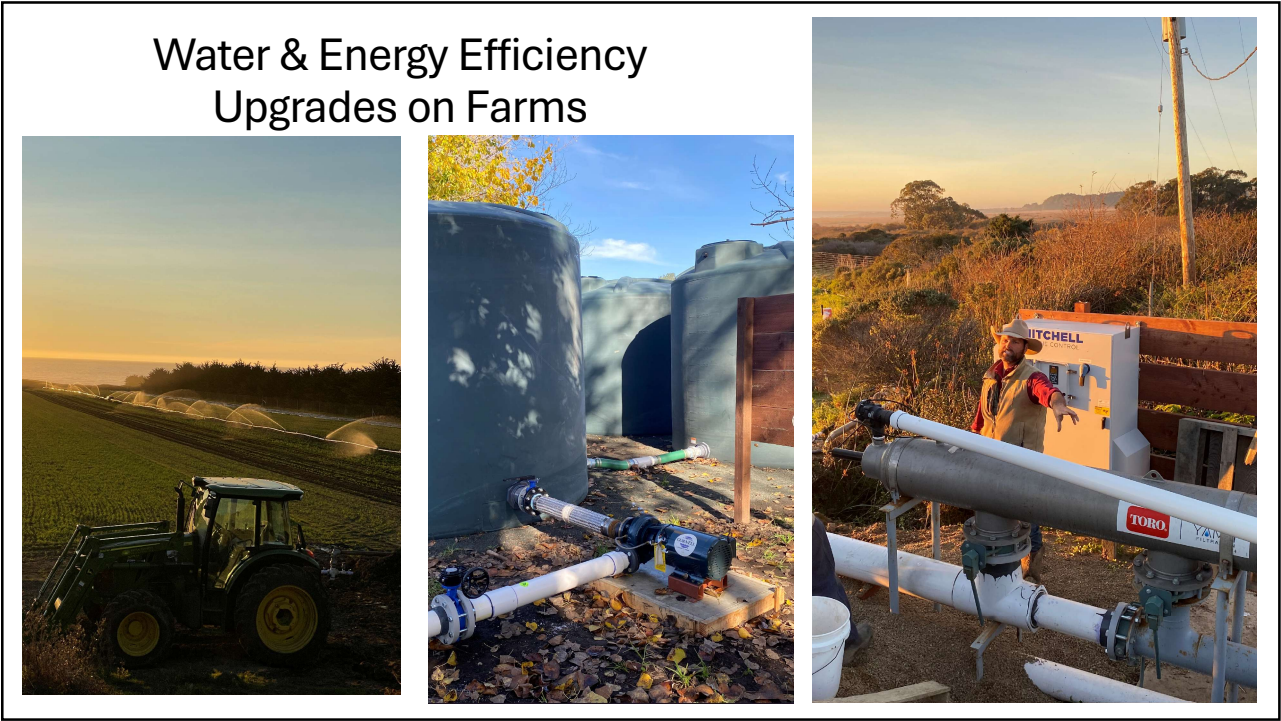


Hedgerow Plantings

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7



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A collage of four small photographs. Top-left: A large pile of cut logs and branches. Top-right: A wooden house on a grassy hill with some erosion visible. Bottom-left: A yellow excavator working on a pile of debris. Bottom-right: Three people standing on a blue tarp laid out on a muddy, eroded bank.

Super El Niño

- Pescadero log jam mitigation
- 0 Pescadero Creek Road
- Hazard tree mitigation
- 2nd Street Montara
- Monitoring our projects
- Technical Assistance
 - Log jams
 - Erosion
 - Hazard trees
- Emergency relief programs (NRCS, CAFF, FEMA, etc.)
- Two new weather stations we installed

10

Other

- PAFF
- Farmers Market
- CARCD conference
- Annual appeal
- 2026 American Society of Civil Engineers Golden Gate Branch Award: Outstanding Geotechnical Project -Butano Creek Backfield Floodplain and Streamflow Enhancement Project