



DRAFT Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, September 17, 2026

4:00 – 6:00 pm

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

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

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

RCD staff: Kellyx Nelson (virtual), Lau Hodges, Kati McHugh

NRCS staff: Drew Mather

Guests (all virtual): David Cosgrave, Michael Miller

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of Agenda

- Item 6.1, Staff "Show and Tell": Fish Tracking Dashboard Part 2, was pulled from the agenda due to staff availability.
- Items 6.7 and 6.8 were moved ahead of Item 6.5 to allow sufficient time for Board discussion.
- **ACTION:** Kossy motioned to approve agenda as amended, Weil seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Introduction of Guests and Staff

All but one guest introduced themselves.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Agenda

- **ACTION:** Weil moved to approve the consent agenda. Kossy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Regular Agenda

- 6.2. Board will consider contracting with Ventana Forestry to perform storm preparedness and hazard tree and debris management services**

- Nelson reviewed the associated memo recommending a sole source contract with Ventana Forestry for storm preparedness and hazard tree and debris management services in the Pescadero Creek watershed.
- Work will involve identifying, assessing, and removing hazardous wood and debris accumulations that could affect public infrastructure, emergency access routes, public safety, and creek function.
- RCD worked with Ventana Forestry during the January 2023 storm response and that the contractor has experience with the project area, access constraints, landowners, partner agencies, and previous debris management lessons learned.
- Discussion included consistency with the RCD's procurement policy; how to address performance standards and expectations in the contract when emerging and unknowable site conditions that make a fixed design-based scope infeasible; and the importance of documenting the basis for the procurement decision.
- **ACTION:** Kossy moved to approve contracting with Ventana Forestry for storm preparedness and hazard tree and debris management services. Weil seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6.3. Executive Director's Report

- Nelson presented the attached slides and provided construction and implementation updates on multiple RCD projects currently underway.
- Construction update on Johnson Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Water Supply Improvement Project- reservoir excavation complete and work continuing on the reservoir liner, pond embankment, pump station, electrical infrastructure, and restoration of a historic stream channel.
 - Discussion focused on the project's multiple environmental and agricultural benefits, and collaboration among multiple partners.
- Construction update on the Cloverdale Road stream crossing replacement project, which addresses failing culverts, road safety concerns, and sediment delivery to downstream habitat in partnership with the County Department of Public Works.
- Construction update on Little Butano Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project, including channel reconstruction, habitat enhancements, and removal of the final remaining migration barrier preventing fish access into Butano State Park.
 - Discussion focused on the significance of restoring fish access to the watershed and a vision for public outreach to commemorate the achievement and connecting future public outreach efforts with fish tracking and public engagement opportunities.
- Pescadero Creek County Park Forest Health Project has treated more than 142 acres of a planned 541-acre treatment area for ecological forest restoration and wildfire resiliency.
 - Discussion focused on the value of active forest management and the importance of collaboration among conservation organizations, public agencies, and private forestry operators.
- Hannah Ormshaw is the new Director of County Parks.

- Discussion expressed optimism about continued collaboration with County Parks.
- Compost application on farms is entering the busy fall season and is on track to deliver significant agricultural soil benefits and carbon sequestration outcomes across participating counties.
- Staff is preparing for anticipated winter storms, including log jam mitigation, drainage improvements, hazard tree assessments, community preparedness efforts, project monitoring, staff scheduling, weather monitoring, and public outreach in both English and Spanish.
- Discussion included funding and permitting; plans for the RCD-owned parcel at 0 Pescadero Creek Road; ongoing coordination with County agencies, community members, and property owners; current and planned community outreach in English and Spanish; lessons learned from 2023; and how to focus limited resources.
- Nelson emphasized that staff safety is the highest priority and described ongoing safety planning, communication protocols, training, and operational procedures.
- Nelson reviewed board compliance requirements, including annual Form 700 filings, annual ethics training, and biennial fiscal and financial management training.
- The group discussed the best process for tracking board compliance, methods for sharing information, and maintaining continuity between Board presidents.
- Volunteer request for the upcoming staff Day in the District event: we need site hosts for a district-wide scavenger hunt.
- Tri-annual impact report and newsletter are nearing completion.
- The dam demolition Evans Creek is upcoming; California Department of Fish and Wildlife has an explosives team that will remove the structure, substantially reducing project costs and site disturbance.
- Fuels reduction work on and near San Pedro Point in Pacifica will begin in the coming weeks.
- Discussion included the extensive community outreach that preceded the work and anticipated public interest, particularly regarding Highway 1 road closures; a recommendation by Kossy for directors to visit the site to better understand the work being planned; a recent news article regarding the project; and a recording of a recent community meeting posted to the RCD's YouTube channel.
- Nelson highlighted the RCD's growing library of educational and project-related videos available on our YouTube page and recommended directors visiting the site.

6.4. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) report

- Mather announced that he had accepted an early retirement offer from NRCS and expected to retire effective December 31, 2026. He reported that he was exploring returning in a contractor capacity through the Agriculture Conservation Experience Services program to help support continuity and transition planning.
- He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with the RCD and stated that he hoped to remain involved in supporting conservation efforts after retirement.

- NRCS and partner organizations are receiving increased requests for technical assistance related to anticipated El Niño conditions and storm preparedness.
- Rich Casale is assisting with preparedness efforts and additional technical support is being provided by NRCS staff from Livermore, Hollister, Petaluma, and Southern California offices.
- A recent forest health project involving forest density reduction was completed and the participating landowner received payment through.
- The proposed NRCS reorganization remains paused and discussions with RCD partners are continuing.
- An updated storm preparedness video developed in partnership with the Santa Cruz County RCD and NRCS will be released later in the month and accompanied by a webinar.
- Nelson stated that our RCD plans to share the materials through our channels.
- Received 41 Farm Bill applications across the Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz offices and estimates that full funding of all eligible applications could provide approximately \$1.3 million in conservation assistance.
- 21 applications have been funded and approximately \$350,000 in contracts have been obligated through the Half Moon Bay office.
- The Soquel office successfully completed a quality assurance review evaluating program compliance and civil rights requirements.
- He provided an update on NRCS vehicles assigned to the Half Moon Bay office and reported that efforts were underway to expand staff access through updated training requirements.
- Nelson asked whether low vehicle mileage resulting from administrative access challenges would affect vehicle retention, and Mather responded that he expected those circumstances would be taken into consideration.
- Mather shared a photo of oak seedlings sprouting from a Douglas-fir tree and described the unusual observation from a recent forest site visit. Nelson requested additional information about the phenomenon for the RCD's forestry staff.
- Directors thanked Mather for his service, wished him well in retirement, and expressed appreciation for his contributions.
- Mather anticipates continuing to support conservation work following his retirement and is exploring opportunities to remain involved through contract work.

6.6. 2026 Annual Appeal

- McHugh reviewed the timeline for the 2026 Annual Appeal and reported that directors would receive printed fundraising packets, including the annual impact report and outreach materials, before the October meeting to allow time for planning and donor outreach.
- Mailings are expected in early November and additional promotion planned around Giving Tuesday.
- Givebutter is our new donor management and fundraising platform. It will support online giving, allow directors to participate as fundraisers, improve tracking of donor outreach and contributions, improve fundraising logistics, and provide a foundation for

future enhancements such as matching campaigns and other donor engagement opportunities.

- Nelson noted that the earlier timeline was developed in response to Board feedback, that this year should provide directors with additional time and materials to support fundraising efforts, encouraged directors to begin thinking about ways to share about the RCD through their networks, and emphasized that fundraising materials could also serve as tools for community education and relationship building.
- Discussion included how the RCD's storm preparedness efforts could provide an effective theme for fundraising and outreach; and positive experiences with Givebutter outside of the RCD.

6.7. Board will discuss rescheduling the November 19, 2026 regular meeting.

- The Board discussed rescheduling the November regular meeting because it conflicted with the California Association of Resource Conservation District (CARCD) annual conference. November 12th was the best date for those present.
- Discussion also confirmed expected quorum for the October 15, 2026 meeting while Stielstra would be attending the Central Coast RCDs Regional Meeting in King City; the upcoming CARCD conference; and that the fiscal and financial management training required for directors would be offered during the conference.

6.5. Directors' connection and reports

(Taken up after Items 6.7 and 6.8)

- Kossy shared observations from kayaking and hiking along the coast, reflected on seasonal bird migration, and emphasized the importance of healthy shoreline habitats and public awareness of coastal ecosystems.
- Phillips shared observations about peak bird migration activity, described attending a forest therapy program at Memorial Park through the San Mateo County Parks Foundation, and noted strong community interest in nature-based wellness programs.
- Etherton reported that she had completed treatment and returned to work, provided updates on several City of Brisbane sustainability and urban forestry initiatives, enrolled in Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, and noted community fundraising efforts supporting the Qualar family following a recent house fire.
- Weil shared updates on significant storm damage affecting her family's property on Hawaii Island and discussed recent observations of increased coyote activity in the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve.
- Stielstra expressed support for the Qualar family, reported that he would attend an upcoming Central Coast regional RCD meeting, and noted that there were no significant updates from recent California Association of Resource Conservation Districts board or legislative committee meetings.

7. Adjourn Meeting

- Meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.
- The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be October 15, 2026.

Memorandum

Date: September 17, 2026
To: Board of Directors
From: Kellyx Nelson
Re: Recommendation to contract with Ventana Forestry to perform storm preparedness and hazard tree and debris management services

Staff recommends the Board of Directors approve contracting with Ventana Forestry for storm preparedness and hazard debris management services in an amount of \$80,000 with a contract maximum not to exceed \$200,000.

Ventana Forestry will support winter storm preparation and flood mitigation, including identification, assessment, and removal of hazardous wood and debris accumulations in Pescadero Creek that pose risks to public infrastructure, emergency access routes, public safety, and creek function. Similar services were successfully performed by Ventana Forestry for the RCD during the 2023 winter storm response effort.

The RCD's procurement policy establishes the District's requirements for procurement of services and allows exceptions to competitive procurement requirements under certain circumstances. Section 5.2.2 of the policy provides an exception when work or services are needed to maintain compatibility and continuity with an existing project or program and are provided by a contractor who has previously satisfactorily performed similar work for the District. Staff recommends use of this exception for this procurement.

Ventana Forestry previously performed winter storm response and hazardous debris removal services for the RCD in the Pescadero watershed and successfully completed that work in coordination with RCD staff and project partners. The current effort builds on that prior work and will require ongoing evaluation, prioritization, and implementation of debris management actions based on field conditions and storm preparedness needs. Maintaining continuity with a contractor familiar with the project areas, operational requirements, access constraints, and previous debris management activities will improve efficiency and support consistent implementation of storm preparedness. The locations, quantities, and prioritization of potential debris-removal actions will be developed jointly by staff, RCD consultants and the contractor based on evolving field conditions, making it impractical to prepare a sufficiently defined scope of work for a traditional competitive solicitation at this time.



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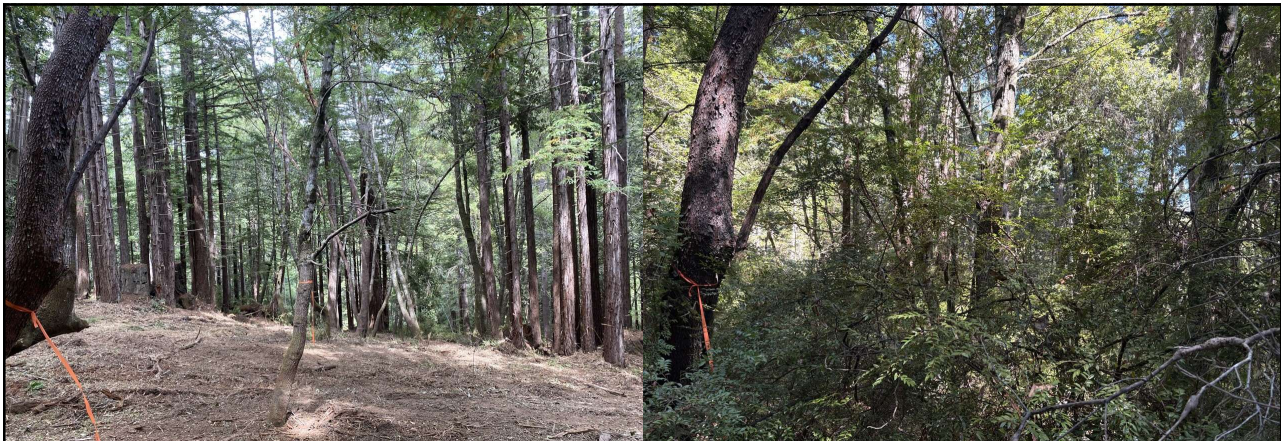


Wurr Road Culvert Repair

2



3



Pescadero Creek County Park Forest Health Project

4



5



6



Super El Niño

- Pescadero log jam mitigation
- 0 Pescadero Creek Road
- Hazard tree removal
- 2nd Street Montara
- Monitoring our projects
- Technical Assistance
- Emergency relief programs (NRCS, CAFF, FEMA, etc.)
- Two new weather stations we installed
- Tabling at Puente's Winter Preparedness Fair on October 7*
- Wood, Water & Winter Storms community event in Pescadero Nov 7 *

7

Board Development & Compliance

- Form 700 (Statement of Economic Interests) - to be completed annually
- AB 1234 - Ethics training (2 hours minimum on topics such as conflicts of interest, transparency, open meeting, gifts, public service ethics.)
- SB 827 - Fiscal/Financial Management Training (2 hours every 2 years, to cover public finance, budget, financial oversight, audits, and fiduciary responsibilities)
- October 8th Day in the District help?

8

Other

- Impact report at printer
- Newsletter soon
- Dam demolition on Evans Creek
- Pacifica fuels reduction projects
- Next ED report
 - Outreach, presentations, workshops, education
 - Administrative updates