SAN MATEO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

DRAFT Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Thursday, October 15, 2026
Location: 80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019 and via Zoom

Directors: Barbara Kossy, Michelle Weil, Troy Guy, Adrienne Etherton (Absent: Steve Stielstra)
Associate Directors: (Absent: Denise Phillips, Zahra Kassam, John Wade)
RCD staff: Kellyx Nelson, Lau Hodges, Amy Kaeser, Kati McHugh
NRCS staff: Drew Mather
Guests: David Cosgrave (virtual)

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of Agenda

- **ACTION:** Etherton motioned to approve agenda, Guy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Introduction of Guests and Staff

All in attendance introduced themselves. An entity was removed from the Zoom meeting after failing to respond to requests to indicate that they were human or answer questions regarding whether they were an autonomous agent.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Agenda

- Etherton noted that a name was misspelled in the draft minutes and requested a correction.
- **ACTION**: Etherton moved to approve the consent agenda as corrected. Guy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Regular Agenda

6.1. Executive Director's Report

- Nelson presented the attached slides providing updates across multiple program areas.
- She shared the new impact report in English and Spanish. Discussion included distribution of the report through annual appeal mailings, outreach events, newsletters, and the RCD website as well as commending the report's organization, writing style, and accessibility.

- Evans Creek dam removal project with State Parks used explosives to remove a fish passage barrier and reopened approximately 1.5 miles of upstream habitat for coho salmon and steelhead. Discussion included development of a joint press release and project video in partnership with California State Parks.
- Peters Creek fish passage project with State Parks that removed a longstanding migration barrier and reopened approximately 6.5 miles of aquatic habitat, restoring fish access throughout the watershed.
- Construction update on the Johnston Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Water Supply Project with POST, which combines stream restoration, agricultural water security, and protection of instream flows for fish.
- Wurr Road Culvert Repair Project with County DPW is nearing completion. It will improve road resilience to winter storms while reducing sediment delivery to streams.
- Construction update on the Little Butano Creek at Cloverdale Road Sediment Reduction and Habitat Enhancement Project removed fish passage barriers, restored habitat connectivity, and reestablished fish access into Butano State Park for the first time in decades. Discussion focused on the significance of reconnecting habitat within the watershed and opportunities for future fish passage improvements and temporary removal of riparian vegetation required to complete construction activities.
- Pescadero Creek County Park Forest Health Project has completed approximately one-third of planned forest restoration and fuel reduction treatments. Replacement contractor procurement is underway following the RCD's decision to mutually part ways with the original contractor. Project access challenges may affect implementation and project timelines.
- Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resiliency Project has begun with hazard tree removal activities, with additional fuel-reduction work planned for the spring. Discussion focused on project objectives, treatment approaches near homes and transportation corridors, and public information resources available through previously recorded community meetings.
- Regional compost application efforts remain on track to distribute approximately 25,000 tons of compost across participating counties by year end and are expected to generate significant agricultural, carbon sequestration, and regional partnership benefits.
- Staff is preparing for anticipated winter weather through emergency permitting coordination, flood mitigation planning, hazard tree management, technical assistance, community outreach, and emergency response planning. Discussion included the Governor’s emergency declaration; coordination with state agencies, local jurisdictions, and community members; flood and erosion concerns; preparedness efforts; managing workloads with existing grant commitments; permitting; contractor coordination; and staff deployment.
- Staff participated in presentations, workshops, outreach activities, and technical assistance related to carbon farming, rural water systems, fish monitoring, weed management, compost application, wetland-compatible agriculture, and agricultural stewardship. Discussion included agricultural production in and around wetlands and balancing conservation and farming objectives.

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- Staff continue supporting local producers with Farm Bill applications ahead of the November 6 application deadline and winter preparedness planning.
- Staff participated in regional, statewide, and national conferences and professional events, including the Restoring America's Estuaries Conference and the 30x30 Summit, and several staff members will present at the upcoming conferences of the California Landscape Stewardship Network and California Association of Resource Conservation Districts.
- Annual Day in the District staff event was a fun daylong scavenger hunt that included project site visits, educational activities, cross-program learning, team-building exercises, and opportunities for staff from different program areas to work together. Nelson thanked directors Stielstra and Kossy for volunteering. Discussion included organizational growth and introductions to newer staff members. The RCD currently employs approximately 30 staff members.

6.2. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) report

- Mather provided updates on NRCS staffing, technical assistance, conservation programs, project development, and post-fire forest management activities.
- NRCS staffing remains under a pause related to agency realignment, and the State Conservationist is expected to provide additional updates to RCDs as the process moves forward. Discussion included staffing capacity, use of retired contractors and partner support, statewide and regional resource-sharing systems, and the importance of maintaining local knowledge and continuity in conservation work.
- Technical assistance requests have increased, primarily related to El Niño preparedness, with approximately 30 site visit requests received in Santa Cruz County.
    - Applications for the current funding cycle are due November 6, and outreach efforts have generated applications for cropland, forestland, and organic transition projects in San Mateo County.
- NRCS continues to support organic transition projects and agricultural conservation practices, including financial assistance for installation of high tunnels and other conservation improvements. Discussion included previously delayed federal conservation program payments, which have now been distributed.
- NRCS is evaluating additional stream restoration opportunities within the Butano Creek watershed through the National Water Quality Initiative.
    - Discussion included a recent forest health site visit involving partners from San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties, opportunities for future prescribed burning and forest restoration work, and post-CZU Fire recovery. Topics included extensive regeneration of ceanothus, future forest composition, wildlife habitat values, targeted grazing, and long-term strategies for promoting biological diversity and forest resilience.
    - Discussion also included interest in additional information regarding forestry and post-fire landscape management, educational resources available through the RCD's YouTube channel, and a potential future presentation by Federal, Senior Program Manager of the Forest Health and Fire Team.

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- Related discussion addressed the Highway 92 Fuel Reduction Project, including challenges associated with balancing differing stakeholder priorities during project development. The RCD received an extension on the Coastal Conservancy grant and is reevaluating project assumptions, scope, stakeholder objectives, and funding needs before proceeding. Discussion included project costs, project delivery considerations, and evacuation-route safety objectives.

6.3. Directors' connection and reports

- Kossy reported outreach efforts to engage prospective community members with the RCD, shared upcoming participation in the California Invasive Plant Conference, noted strong bird migration activity at a previous RCD project site near Butano Creek, and expressed appreciation for participating in the Day in the District event.
- Guy shared observations from recent trips documenting rare native trout populations throughout the western United States, reflected on native fish conservation and forest stewardship, and expressed appreciation for the scale and quality of restoration work being completed by the RCD.
- Etherton reported plans to attend the upcoming California Association of Resource Conservation District (CARCD) annual conference and provided updates on City of Brisbane projects, including shoreline adaptation planning, oyster and eelgrass restoration research, urban forestry, dark-sky compliance, electric vehicle infrastructure, and Brisbane Baylands improvements.
- Weil reported that first-quarter financial statements will be presented at the December board meeting. She shared updates from the Spotlight Stewardship program, including recent visits to habitat restoration, species recovery, and climate adaptation projects in Santa Cruz County.
- Nelson shared an update on behalf of Stielstra, including the Central Coast regional RCD meeting, ongoing board compliance tracking efforts, and upcoming review of director training and filing requirements. Discussion included Board officer succession planning. December is expected to be Stielstra's final meeting as Board President, with discussion of officer succession anticipated in November and action anticipated in December.
- Nelson shared that former San Mateo RCD employee Arko is serving as an Associate Director of the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County.

6.4. 2026 Annual Appeal

- McHugh presented the 2026 Annual Appeal timeline, including distribution of printed materials in early November, campaign launch activities, Giving Tuesday outreach, and donor follow-up through January.
- McHugh reviewed appeal materials for board members, including impact reports, appeal letters, donation envelopes, and online giving options.
- Discussion included implementation of the GiveButter platform to support online fundraising, social media sharing, donor tracking, payment processing, donor anonymity, employer matching opportunities, and improved visibility into the results of board member outreach efforts.

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- Nelson noted that the appeal timeline reflects board feedback requesting earlier outreach and emphasized that board members are encouraged to engage their networks but are not expected to meet fundraising quotas.
- Discussion included charitable giving through donor-advised funds and organizations with 501(c)(3) giving restrictions, potential donor testimonials for future appeal materials, and recent fundraising successes.
- Nelson reported that the RCD recently received an unsolicited unrestricted $100,000 donation from Pescadero residents in recognition of the RCD's work in the community.

7. Adjourn Meeting

- Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.
- The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be Tuesday, November 12.

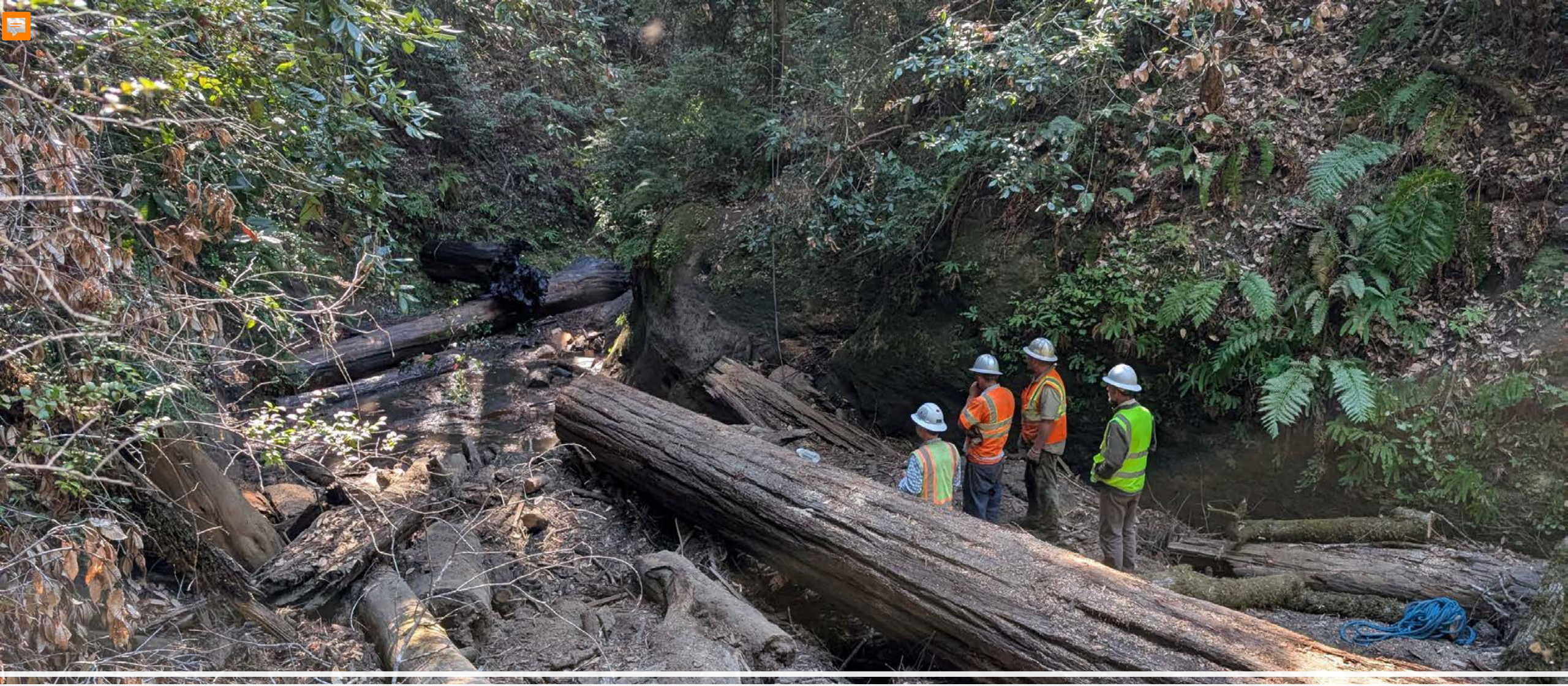
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Evans Creek Dam Removal in Portola Redwoods State Park





Fish Passage Enhancement in Peters Creek





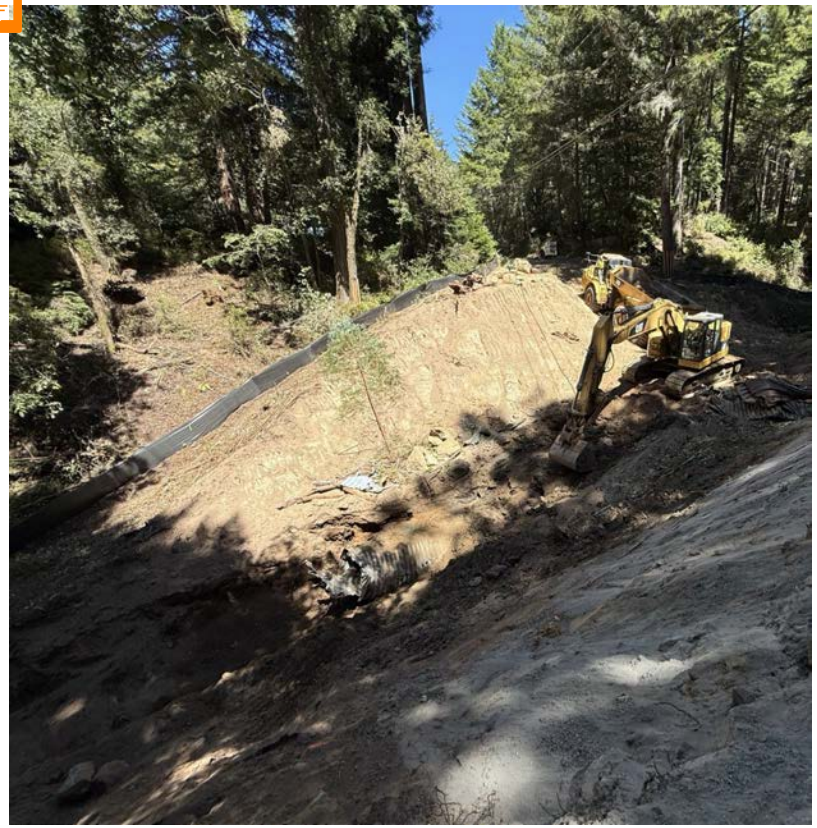
Johnston Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Water Supply



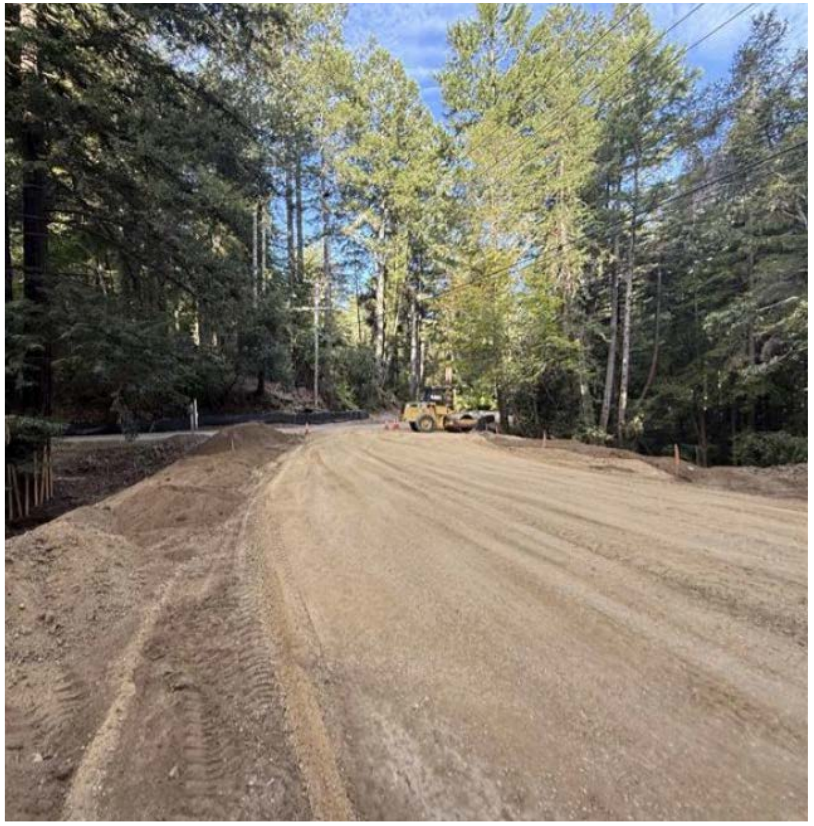
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Wurr Road Culvert Repairs





Little Butano Creek at Cloverdale Road Sediment Reduction &Habitat Enhancement











Pescadero Creek County Park Forest Health Project





Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resiliency

Compost on Farms

















Planning for El Niño

- Emergency permitting*
- Pescadero log jam mitigation
- 0 Pescadero Creek Road
- Hazard tree removal
- 2nd Street Montara
- Technical Assistance, emergency relief
    - establishing ground cover ahead of the rains, culvert and ditch maintenance, assessing erosion, etc.
    - Accessing emergency relief programs
- Outreach and events
    - Puente Winter Preparedness event
    - Wood, Water & Winter Storms community event in Pescadero Nov 7 *

Presentations & Outreach

- Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network
  - Eliza- carbon farming
  - Jarrad & Joe- domestic water systems
  - Amy- fish tracker and sharing weed management data
- PMAC Ag Roundtable about our services
- Town of Woodside about compost
- Farming with wetlands
- Supporting NRCS Farm Bill applications due November 6
- Winter prep

Day in the District
























RCD