



BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 17, 2026

The regular meeting of the **Contra Costa Resource Conservation District** was held Tuesday, March 17, 2026, Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill, California.

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Walter Pease, Renee Fernandez-Lipp, Bethallyn Black & Igor Skaredoff

ASSOC. DIRECTORS PRESENT: Derene Allen
Remote: Bob Peoples, Soumya Suresh & Tracey Rogers Brandt

RCD STAFF PRESENT: Chris Lim
Remote: Patty Pell, Ben Weise & Evan Green

NRCS STAFF PRESENT: Luis Rivera-Cruz

DIRECTORS EXCUSED: Lorena Castillo

Call to Order: Renee Fernandez-Lipp called the meeting to order at 8:35 A.M.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:
Indy Rishi Singh, potential Associate Board Member

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: (Gov. Code 54954.2 (b)): None added

NRCS REPORT: Luis Rivera-Cruz provided updates on applications submitted for the March 27, 2026 deadline, including number of eligible applicants and potential funding candidates. Luis Rivera-Cruz also reported on the status of the new regenerative pilot program, explaining how funding is being confirmed and noted challenges associated with the confirmation requirement. Luis Rivera-Cruz shared that he is currently splitting his time with the Vacaville office and will be travelling frequently.

PRESENTATIONS: No presentation

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Item 7.1-Approve February 17, 2026 Board Minutes
Item 7.2-Accept February 2026 Financial Reports

Motion: Bethallyn Black moved to approve items 7.1 & 7.2; seconded by Walter Pease.
Motion carried 4:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Castillo

DETERMINATION ITEMS:

8.1 Approve service agreement with Prometheus Fire Consulting LLC.

Ben Weise described the project, location, deliverables, and potential challenges, including timing and cattle grazing impacts.

Motion: Igor Skaredoff moved to approve; seconded by Bethallyn Black.

Motion carried 4:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Castillo

8.2 Approve service agreement with Safe Organized Spaces (SOS).

Chris Lim explained that this agreement extends the time of the current project supporting the unhoused population with a new funding source.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Igor Skaredoff.

Motion carried 4:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Castillo

8.3 Approve agreement amendment with Habitat Potential.

Chris Lim reviewed past work with Habitat Potential and described planned activities. Chris Lim explained the ivy-removal technique and noted that subcontracting is more cost-effective.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Bethallyn Black.

Motion carried 4:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Castillo

8.4 Approve Amendment with California State University East Bay for Year 3 of current project.

Chris Lim updated the Board on the status of the multi-year project with CSUEB, noting that the amendment reflects CSUEB's annual contract requirement and stated that the RCD is a subcontractor.

Motion: Bethallyn Black moved to approve; seconded by Walter Pease.

Motion carried 4:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Castillo

8.5 Approve Indy Rishi Singh as Associate Board Member.

Since Indy Rishi Singh has previously shared his background, so he expanded on his interests, including his farming experience, commitment to food security, support for farmers, focus on ecosystem development and dedication to building community.

Motion: Bethallyn Black moved to approve; seconded by Igor Skaredoff.

Motion carried 4:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Castillo

8.6 Approve Resolution 2026-03 nominating Renee Fernandez-Lipp to the CSDA Board.

Renee Fernandez-Lipp expressed her interest in supporting agencies and shared her motivation behind serving on the CSDA Board. The Board noted that Renee Fernandez-Lipp's experience in large organizations could be a positive influence for CSDA.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve with edit; seconded by Igor Skaredoff.

Motion carried 3:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black, & Skaredoff

Nays: None

Abstain: Fernandez-Lipp

Absent: Castillo

8.7 Consider approving Policy #4226 "Minor Amendments to Grants and Contract".

Chris Lim described the purpose of the policy and the dollar thresholds for eligible amendments according to this policy. The Board discussed timing and expressed a preference for being informed rather than voting on minor amendments. It was agreed that the Executive Director will report such amendments in his regular report.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve as proposed; seconded by Bethallyn Black.

Motion carried 4:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Castillo

8.8 Approve Contract with Take Flight Ag Solutions LLC.

Ben Weise described the contractor, project purpose, and background on previous spray treatments. The Board discussed the proposed drone-based application, potential alternatives, and possible impacts on native habitats. The Board expressed a preference for using pesticides only as a last resort and requested mitigation strategies if pesticides must be used.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Bethallyn Black.

Motion carried 3:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black & Skaredoff
Nayes: None
Abstain: Fernandez-Lipp
Absent: Castillo

8.9 Approval joining Community Alliance of Family Farmers Coalition Letter.

Ben Weise reviewed the budget appropriations and related projects, noting that two projects align with the RCD's Agriculture Program. Ben Weise is monitoring the programs as they move through committee. Questions followed regarding Prop. 4 funding availability, delays, and original language.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Bethallyn Black.

Motion carried 4:0.

Ayes: Pease, Black, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp
Nayes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Castillo

DISCUSSION:

Indy Rishi Singh announced a Cesar Chavez celebration at John Swett School on April 3, 2026.

Bob Peoples reported that East Bay Regional Park District is developing a Wildland Vegetation Management Plan and seeking feedback. Ben Weise added that the stewardship network is to encourage broader collaboration on a larger scale wildland management plan. Ben Weise will update the Board as information becomes available.

Chris Lim announced upcoming Earth month activities and opportunities to participation.

REPORTS:

10.1 President Reports—Renee Fernandez-Lipp expressed appreciation for the Board engagement, respect for differing viewpoints, and encouraged sharing ideas and feedback.

10.2 Directors' Reports –

Walter Pease expressed appreciation for the depth of substance covered in the Board packet. Walter Pease also shared that his wife recently saw former RCD employee, Elizabeth Harrison, who now works at Pleasant Hill Parks & Recreation and sends her greetings.

10.3 Staff Reports—There were no questions on staff reports.

Chris Lim recognized and thanked retiring Board members Igor Skaredoff and Lorena Castillo.

10.4 Executive Director Reports—Chris Lim provided updates on new grant applications, potential project funding opportunities, and staffing for Office Administrator position.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to adjourn; seconded by Bethallyn Black.

President Renee Fernandez-Lipp adjourned the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Patty Pell, Board Clerk, CCRC