



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 19, 2026

The regular meeting of the **Contra Costa Resource Conservation District** was held Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill, California.

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Renee Fernandez-Lipp, Bethallyn Black, Martin Steinpress & Walter Pease
Remote: Soumya Suresh

ASSOC. DIRECTORS PRESENT: Igor Skaredoff, Indy Rishi Singh, & Derene Allen
Remote: Bob Peoples & Tracey Rogers Brandt

RCD STAFF PRESENT: Chris Lim & Marisa Ortiz
Remote: Ben Weise & Heidi Petty

NRCS STAFF PRESENT: Luis Rivera Cruz

DIRECTORS EXCUSED: None

Call to Order: Renee Fernandez-Lipp called the meeting to order at 8:52 A.M.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:

David Linell, Executive Director, Meals on Wheels - Diablo Region
Michelle G., Presidio Grad School
Tracey Ley

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

NRCS REPORT: Luis Rivera-Cruz reported that NRCS is currently developing contracts for five selected applicants, representing approximately \$336,000 in conservation project funding. Of the selected projects, two are associated with environmental programs and three with stewardship programs. Selection is still in progress, and NRCS is seeking additional funding to support eligible applications. Luis also provided updates on a virtual fencing initiative that supports targeted grazing and discussed current implementation efforts. He concluded by noting that he is now able to focus fully on the Clayton service area while coverage for Vacaville is being provided by another staff member.

PRESENTATIONS: N/A

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Item 7.1: Approve April 21, 2026 Board Minutes
Item 7.2: Accept April 2026 Financial Reports

Motion: Martin Steinpress moved to approve items 7.1 & 7.2; seconded by Bethallyn Black.
Motion carried: 3-0-1

Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp & Steinpress

Nays: None

Abstain: Pease

Absent: None

DETERMINATION ITEMS:

8.1 Consider approval of Policy 2205 Electronic Resources Policy and Procedures (Weise/Lim)

Ben noted that the previous Electronic Resources Policy was adopted in 2017 and no longer reflects current technology and employee use of electronic resources. An updated policy was presented to the Board for consideration and approval.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Martin Stepress

Motion carried: 3-0-1 (Walter Pease abstained due to not being present at the last board meeting)

Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp & Steinpress

Nays: None

Abstain: Pease

Absent: None

8.2 Consider approval of contract with eDNA Explorers for eDNA sample laboratory processing (Weise/Fudin)

Ben Weise presented a contract amendment with eDNA Explorers for laboratory processing of eDNA samples. He explained that additional funding is needed due to expanded sampling efforts across approximately 28–29 ponds. Sampling has been reduced from three rounds per pond to two rounds per pond. Ben also reviewed the contract payment structure, which includes an upfront payment and year-end reconciliation.

Motion: Martin Steinpress moved to approve; seconded by Bethallyn Black

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp, Steinpress & Pease

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.3 Consider approval of placement agreement with Bay Area Community Resources to be a host partner site for four CA Climate Action Corps Fellows for 2026-2027 for a term of 1700 hours (Lim/Petty)

Heidi Petty provided an overview of the Fellowship Program, noting that this would be the third cohort of fellows. Fellows are placed with participating organizations to gain career training and community engagement experience while supporting conservation-related work. Several fellows from the current cohort are expected to return, and up to six fellows may be placed with CCRCD during the next term.

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

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp, Steinpress & Pease

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.4 Consider approval of contract with APEX Civil Engineering & Land Surveying for the Crockett Shoreline Flood Mitigation Supplemental Environmental Project (Petty)

Heidi Petty provided an update on the Crockett Shoreline Flood Mitigation Supplemental Environmental Project, noting that the APEX survey drainage plan has already been approved.

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

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp, Steinpress & Pease

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.5 Consider approval of subcontract with John Steere for CEQA and permitting support for the Ambrose Community Center Green Infrastructure Enhancement Project (Lim)

Chris Lim presented a contract for consulting services related to the Ambrose green infrastructure project. Chris noted that a title correction will be made to Exhibit B and explained that services will be billed as needed, not to exceed the amount specified in the proposal.

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

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp, Steinpress & Pease

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.6 Consider approval of Bay Area CPI rate increases (Lim)

Chris Lim requested approval of an annual staff salary adjustment based on Bay Area Consumer Price Index (CPI) data. He noted that the adjustment will be incorporated into the upcoming fiscal year budget.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Martin Steinpress

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp, Steinpress, & Pease

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Pease

DISCUSSION:

Chris Lim provided an update on the upcoming Fish Migration Day event. He noted that staff and volunteers will be providing educational tours highlighting fish passage improvements and local watershed projects, including sites associated with EBMUD.

REPORTS:

10.1 President Reports:

Renee Fernandez-Lipp shared highlights from a recent California Choice conference. She discussed topics related to energy and water resources, including increasing electrical demand and challenges associated with balancing the power grid. Potential opportunities to collaborate with Marin Clean Energy and pursue grant-funded projects were noted.

10.2 Directors' Reports:

Igor reported on a recent memorial service honoring an early supporter of the RCD, Cece Salbrin, who played a significant role in watershed planning efforts and later worked with Contra Costa County Flood Control. He noted the individual's contributions to the community and leadership within Alzheimer's advocacy following a diagnosis of the disease. He also provided an update on the City of Martinez's efforts to enhance the waterfront area, including plans to improve the public pier. Additionally, Igor shared updates from Friends of Alhambra Creek regarding participation in the Thriving Earth Exchange program.

Indy Rishi Singh reported on community initiatives supporting seniors and accessible green spaces, including a presentation highlighting retirement communities designed around gardens and outdoor gathering areas. He discussed opportunities to increase access to fresh produce and gardening activities for seniors, including those with mobility limitations.

The Board also noted the upcoming retirement of John Steere, long-serving Watershed Council member and chair.

10.3 Staff Reports:

Chris Lim provided an update on recent staff activities, projects, and partnerships.

10.4 Executive Director Reports/Report on Fundraising:

Chris Lim provided an update on a potential Bay Point project focused on improving air quality and community spaces around bus stops along Willow Pass Road. Tri Delta Transit has expressed support for the project, and discussions are ongoing with Contra Costa County and private property owners. Chris also reported that Tri Delta Transit is pursuing funding for additional electric buses and that project partners are exploring opportunities to combine transportation improvements with environmental and community benefits.

Motion: Bethallyn Black moved to adjourn; seconded by Martin Steinpress
President Renee Fernandez-Lipp adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Marisa Ortiz, Board Clerk, CCRC