



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 16, 2026

The regular meeting of the **Contra Costa Resource Conservation District** was held Tuesday, June 16, 2026, at Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill, California.

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

ASSOC. DIRECTORS PRESENT: Remote: Derene Allen & Bob Peoples

RCD STAFF PRESENT: Chris Lim & Marisa Ortiz
Remote: Ben Weise, Evan Green, Adam Gelfand, Zoe Fung

NRCS STAFF PRESENT: Luis Rivera Cruz (remote)

DIRECTORS EXCUSED: None

CALL TO ORDER: Bethallyn Black called the meeting to order at 8:32 A.M.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE: None

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: (Gov. Code 54954.2 (b)): Walter Pease moved that we add re-election of Board President/Vice President to the agenda, Bethallyn Black seconded.
Walter Pease moved that Renee Fernandez-Lipp be reinstated for another two-year term as Board President and Bethallyn Black be reinstated for another two-year term as vice president.

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

Motion carried: 3-0-1

Ayes: Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nays: None

Abstain: Black

Absent: None

NRCS REPORT: Luis Rivera-Cruz reported that NRCS is going to start working in Deer Valley and Black Diamond ponds in 2027. They will be working on 3 Livestock Water Systems and their first Virtual Fence contract. They are spending the rest of this week getting ready for a Quality Assurance Review. Office staff will be in Concord the 17th and 18th going through the building, records, contracts, etc to make sure they are following policy. Contract selections will continue until the end of the fiscal year so more contracts may be received.

PRESENTATIONS: **Pinole Creek Unhoused Pilot Program wrap up** - Evan Green (Watershed Conservation Coordinator) and Adam Gelfand (Habitat Restoration Manager) presented on the Pinole Creek Unhoused Pilot Program. The program was put on in partnership with SOS Richmond. SOS helps unhoused folks position themselves into homes through workforce development. Evan and Adam provided an update on the work they have

been doing with SOS on this initiative including removing poison ivy, and environment clean up. Board members noted that the unhoused issue is growing in our area and are grateful for this program to help address these needs while contributing to the environment in a positive way.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Item 7.1: Approve May 19, 2026 Board Minutes

Item 7.2: Accept May 2026 Financial Reports

Motion: Martin Steinpress moved to approve items 7.1 & 7.2; seconded by Walter Pease

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

DETERMINATION ITEMS:

- 8.1 Consider approval of grant agreement with East Contra Costa Habitat Conservancy for the “Tracking Movements and Identifying Nesting Habitat of Western Pond Turtles in East Contra Costa County” Local Assistance Grant to track Western Pond Turtle in four Contra Costa County ponds. (Weise)**

Ben Weise explained and requested approval for the “Tracking Movements and Identifying Nesting Habitat of Western Pond Turtles in East Contra Costa County” grant. The goal is to assist Alameda RCD in obtaining information related to Western Pond Turtles, who are currently candidates for being listed as an endangered species.

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

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

- 8.2 Consider approval of Professional Services Agreement with Alameda County RCD for services related to carrying out the “Tracking Movements and Identifying Nesting Habitat of Western Pond Turtles in East Contra Costa County” Grant to capture, survey, and track, Western Pond Turtles and complete analysis and reporting of results. (Weise)**

Ben Weise discussed and requested approval for the professional services agreement with Alameda County RCD related to capturing, surveying, and tracking Western Pond Turtles and providing a complete analysis and reporting of results.

Motion: Martin Steinpress moved to approve; seconded by Souyma Suresh

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.3 Consider approval of Professional Services Agreement with Swaim Biological Inc., for services related to carrying out the “Tracking Movements and Identifying Nesting Habitat of Western Pond Turtles in East Contra Costa County” Grant for services related to capture, survey, and track of Western Pond Turtles. (Weise)

Ben Weise explained and requested approval for the professional services agreement with Swaim Biological Inc. for services related to carrying out the Turtle Tracking project.

Motion: Martin Steinpress moved to approve; seconded by Souyma Suresh

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.4 Consider approval of Use Agreement for Project Development, Operation, and Maintenance with the mak-warép Ohlone Lands Conservancy (MOLC), the Regents of the University of California, acting through Berkeley Forests (Berkeley Forests), and CCRCDC for the Ohlone Cultural Gardens Restoration & Mitigation Project funded by the California Natural Resources Agency for land management and cultural garden restoration at the Russell Research Station in Lafayette, CA. (Weise)

Ben Weise discussed and requested approval for the Ohlone Cultural Gardens Restoration and Mitigation Project. Ben explained the major pieces of the project including restoring part of Bear Creek, restoring soil, and removing weeds.

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

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.5 Consider approval of Professional Services Agreement with the mak-warép Ohlone Lands Conservancy for services related to the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (EEMP) Grant for the Ohlone Cultural Gardens Restoration & Mitigation Project at the Russell Research Station in Lafayette, CA. (Weise)

Ben Weise requested approval for the professional services agreement with mak-warép Ohlone Lands Conservancy for services related to the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program.

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

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.6 Consider approval of travel reimbursement for Christopher Lim to attend the California Special Districts Association’s General Manager Leadership Summit from June 28-30 in Newport Beach, CA. (Lim)

Christopher Lim requested approval for travel reimbursement to attend the California Special Districts Association’s General Manager Leadership Summit from June 28-30.

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

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.7 Consider approval of the budget for fiscal year 2026-2027. (Lim/Ortiz)

Christopher Lim presented the 2026/27 budget noting that deferred revenue is the cause for the negative net income although cash flow remains healthy. The CCRCD will be putting increased effort into fundraising this year, which will include increased grant writing and fundraising for the ag team.

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

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.8 Consider approval of East Contra Costa Fire Restoration Project budget amendment. (Weise/Fung)

Ben Weise provided background on the CALFIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant awarded to CCRCD in 2024. CCRCD is requesting a budget amendment to best use all available funds to support the implementation of the project.

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

Motion carried: 4-0-0

Ayes: Black, Steinpress, Pease & Suresh

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

DISCUSSION:

The below upcoming events were noted:

- Webinar: Wildfire Response and Suppression Repair, June 16, 2026: 3:00-4:00p, Zoom
- An Exploration of the North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break, July 11, 2026: 9:00-11:00a, Orinda CA

REPORTS:

10.1 President Reports:

Renee Fernandez-Lipp thanked the board for the re-election of board president. She noted all the great information shared in the meeting.

10.2 Director Reports:

Reminded CCRCD that staff reports should be targeted towards the board and not the Director. They also noted that pictures of project progression are appreciated.

The suggestion was made that we bring back visioning meetings to the board: where we are, where we have been, and what direction we want to go in.

10.2 Staff Reports:

Chris noted that he discussed improving staff reports with employees and landed on the idea that staff reports will now be written as team updates instead of individual updates so they are not redundant and better capture project progress related to CCRCDs mission.

10.4 Executive Director Reports/Report on Fundraising:

Chris noted that CCRCD is currently working on a couple of CALFIRE grants. A letter of interest was also put in for a grant that entails retrofitting and reimagining of bus stops.

Motion: Walter moved to adjourn; seconded by Martin Steinpress
President Bethalynn adjourned the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Marisa Ortiz, Board Clerk, CCRCD