BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 15, 2026

The regular meeting of the **Contra Costa Resource Conservation District** was held Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill, California.

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

ASSOC. DIRECTORS PRESENT: Derene Allen
Remote: Tracey Rogers Brandt and Bob Peoples

RCD STAFF PRESENT: Chris Lim and Marisa Ortiz
Remote: Ben Weise and Adam Gelfand

NRCS STAFF PRESENT: Luis Rivera-Cruz

DIRECTORS EXCUSED: None

CALL TO ORDER: Renee Fernandez-Lipp called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE: None

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

NRCS REPORT: Luis Rivera-Cruz reported on NRCS staffing transitions, role changes, and vacancies, as well as the close of the NRCS fiscal year. He highlighted the Conservation Stewardship Program and the first locally funded virtual fencing installation for cattle at North Lime Ridge.

Rivera-Cruz noted that California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) will waive an approximately $325 initial certification application fee for eligible producers receiving NRCS technical assistance. He also discussed the pending update to the NRCS contribution agreement; the anticipated agreement amount is approximately $74,000.

PRESENTATIONS: None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Item 7.1: Approve August 18, 2026 Board Minutes
Item 7.2: Accept August 2026 Financial Reports

Motion: Martin Steinpress moved to approve; seconded by Bethallyn Black.
Motion carried: 5-0-0
Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp, Pease, Steinpress, and Suresh
Nays: None

Abstain: None
Absent: None

DETERMINATION ITEMS:

8.1 Consider approval of contract with Far Western Archaeological Consulting for the development of a research design protocol to inform possible archaeological excavation for the restoration of Marsh Creek at Marsh Creek State Park (Weise)

Ben Weise presented a contract to develop an archaeological research design protocol for the Marsh Creek restoration project. The protocol will guide future excavation and procedures for potential cultural resource discoveries. Tribal consultation and monitoring were discussed. The work under this contract is supported by existing grant funding; future construction is anticipated in 2027 or 2028, subject to funding. Directors also discussed erosion, sediment transport, and restoration approaches.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Bethallyn Black
Motion carried: 5-0-0
Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp, Pease, Steinpress, and Suresh
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

8.2 Consider approval of amended contract with Frye Restoration Inc. to treat Himalayan blackberry at the Dutch Slough Dunes (Gelfand)

Adam Gelfand presented an amendment to the contract with Frye Restoration Inc. to include an additional day of Himalayan blackberry treatment at Dutch Slough following further site assessments. Directors discussed invasive species management and broader restoration considerations.

Motion: Martin Steinpress moved to approve; seconded by Walter Pease
Motion carried: 5-0-0
Ayes: Black, Fernandez-Lipp, Pease, Steinpress, and Suresh
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

8.3 Consider approval of Travel/Conference Request to attend the California Association of Resource Conservation District (CARCD) Conference (Fernandez-Lipp)

President Fernandez-Lipp requested approval to attend the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts conference to support her duties as CCRCD Board President and Bay Delta Regional Representative and share information with the region.

Motion: Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Martin Steinpress
Motion carried: 4-0-1
Ayes: Black, Pease, Steinpress, and Suresh
Nays: None
Abstain: Fernandez-Lipp
Absent: None

DISCUSSION:

9.1 Current Events:

The following upcoming events were noted:

- **Grayson Creek Cleanup in Pleasant Hill District 1**
- **Lower Rodeo Creek Coastal Cleanup Day 2026**
- **Crockett Waterfront Coastal Cleanup Day 2026**
- **Upper Sand Creek Basin Coastal Cleanup Day 2026**
- **McNabney Marsh Coastal Cleanup Day 2026**
- **Bay Delta Regional Business Meeting**

REPORTS:

10.1 President Report:

President Fernandez-Lipp reported on her attendance at the California Special Districts Association conference, highlighting risk management, governance responsibilities, and effective special district operations.

10.2 Director Reports:

Board members expressed interest in visiting project sites. Staff agreed to explore scheduling opportunities. Steinpress reported on a Contra Costa Watershed Forum presentation regarding Marsh Creek water-quality monitoring and commended the project team. Bethallyn Black announced a September 25–26 plant sale at DVC and encouraged fall planting. Soumya Suresh reported on her participation in the July 30 Girls in Stream program at Lafayette Reservoir.

10.3 Staff Reports:

The Board expressed appreciation for the completeness, formatting, and photographs included in the staff reports.

10.4 Executive Director Report / Fundraising Report:

Chris Lim reported that CCRCD was invited to the next round of consideration for an extreme heat grant that would support planning and demonstration projects to improve bus stops. There is potential for broader implementation if Urban Greening funding becomes available.

Ben Weise described a Specialty Crop Block Grant application administered by the California Department of Food and Agriculture with federal USDA funding. The grant would fund workshops on farming systems and target farmers who have other occupations by scheduling these workshops during lunch hours and on weekends.

Lim also reported on a proposed $2 million mitigation project to restore marshes and riparian habitats in Newhall Park in Concord. CCTA advanced the funding proposal, with final agency approval pending.

Adjournment: Martin Steinpress moved to adjourn; seconded by Walter Pease.
President Renee Fernandez-Lipp adjourned the meeting at 9:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marisa Ortiz
Board Clerk, CCRCD

Reference: Zoom Chat from 08/18/2026 Board Meeting

2026-09-15 09:32:37 From Adam Gelfand CCRCD to Everyone:
Signing off now, thanks everyone!

2026-09-15 09:38:08 From Tracey Rogers Brandt to Everyone:
Thanks everyone.