MINUTES

Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta Resource Conservation District
Regular Board Meeting
Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 4:00 PM

Truax Building
41923 Second Street, Fourth Floor
Temecula, CA 92590

I. PRELIMINARY FUNCTIONS

Call to Order – 4:02 p.m. by President Biancardi. Director Corona led the Pledge of Allegiance. Meeting recorded by Zoom.

Roll Call/Establish a Quorum

Directors Present: Teri Biancardi, President; Arturo Garcia, Director; Rose Corona, Director; Newt Parkes, Director; Stuart Kuhn, Director (arrived shortly after roll call). A quorum was established.

Directors Absent: None

Also Present: Clifton Meek, District Manager; Kit Swift, Conservation Technician.

Public Guests (via Zoom): Ann Calnan and Christopher Scott (Jacobs); Nardin Metwashla (T.Y. Lin International); Winston Vickers; and one additional participant identified only as "Michael."

Approval of Agenda

Director Parkes moved, and Director Garcia seconded, to approve the Agenda as presented. Upon voice vote, the motion passed unanimously by those present (Director Kuhn had not yet arrived).

Biancardi: Aye
Corona: Aye
Garcia: Aye
Parkes: Aye

Public Comment

There was no public comment on items on or off the agenda.

II. CONSENT CALENDAR:

The consent calendar included two sets of minutes (March 12 and April 9); the March 12 minutes had been omitted from the prior packet and were re-included. Director Corona pulled both sets of minutes and noted for the record her objection that the minutes do not fully reflect the meetings. She requested that the minutes carry a "Draft" watermark and that the ordering of the roll call, agenda approval, and closed session be corrected.

Director Parkes moved, and Director Garcia seconded, to approve the remainder of the consent calendar as presented. Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

Biancardi: Yes
Corona: No
Garcia: Yes
Kuhn: Yes
Parkes: Yes

Director Parkes moved, and Director Kuhn seconded, to approve the March 12 and April 9 minutes pending the edits raised by Director Corona. Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

Biancardi: Yes
Corona: No
Garcia: Yes
Kuhn: Yes
Parkes: Yes

III. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Subject: I-15 Rainbow Canyon Wildlife Crossing – Caltrans Cooperative Agreement

Background: The Wildlife Conservation Board approved a first advance of $997,000 for the project, with an invoice submitted and funds expected in the June timeframe. The Request for Proposals for the design consultant was issued May 1, a consultant site visit was held the day of the meeting with approximately seven interested firms, and proposals are due June 3. The Caltrans cooperative agreement establishes Caltrans as the NEPA and CEQA lead and has completed counsel review.

The District Manager reported on the project status and recommended approval of the cooperative agreement and his designation as the District's signatory and point of contact. The board discussed the environmental approach, including the pursuit of a statutory exemption for restoration projects to streamline CEQA and NEPA review, and the anticipated cost of geotechnical studies.

Director Kuhn moved, and Director Garcia seconded, to authorize District Manager Clifton Meek to execute the Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans, to serve as the District's authorized signatory for the agreement, and to serve as the point of contact for the project. Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

Biancardi: Yes
Corona: No
Garcia: Yes
Kuhn: Yes
Parkes: Yes

B. Subject: Consultant Selection Committee – Reconfiguration

The board discussed reconfiguring the previously established consultant selection committee to include District Manager Clifton Meek, with Ron Moreno of the city moving to an advisory role. The board also took an informal temperature on authorizing the selection committee (two board members and the District Manager) to make the final consultant selection between the June and July meetings without convening a special meeting; the board expressed support, and the District Manager indicated he would formally agendize the authorization for the June meeting. A question arose as to whether the consultant selection could be discussed in closed session, which Director Biancardi indicated she would research and report back.

Director Garcia moved, and Director Parkes seconded, to approve the updated consultant selection committee lineup, which now includes District Manager Clifton Meek. Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

Biancardi: Yes
Corona: No
Garcia: Yes
Kuhn: Yes
Parkes: Yes

<u>C. Subject:</u> Staff Credit Cards

The proposal to issue credit cards to the Conservation Technician and District Manager was discussed. The board directed that a credit card use policy, including parameters for appropriate use and disciplinary action for misuse, be developed before action is taken. The District Manager will draft the policy and circulate it to directors individually for feedback to avoid serial communication, and the item will be brought back for action at the next meeting. This item was tabled; no vote was taken.

<u>D. Subject:</u> Dedicated Bank Account – WCB Grant WC-2593DC

Background: Establishment of a dedicated bank account for the Wildlife Conservation Board grant (WC-2593DC) is a recommended action by the state. Interest accrued on the advanced grant funds must be tracked and reported quarterly to the grantor and becomes grant funds available for the project.

The board discussed the merits of a dedicated account versus tracking the funds within the existing accounting system. Director Parkes objected, expressing a preference for using the District's existing accounting system rather than opening an additional bank account. Other directors noted the state recommendation, the size of the grant, simplified audit and interest tracking, and the added protection of segregating the funds.

Director Garcia moved, and Director Kuhn seconded, to approve the creation of a dedicated bank account for WCB Grant WC-2593DC funds and to authorize the Board President and District Manager as authorized signatories. Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

Biancardi: Yes
Corona: No
Garcia: Yes
Kuhn: Yes
Parkes: No

<u>E. Subject:</u> Policy Manual – Personnel Policies and Policy 2020.3

The board discussed retiring outdated personnel and job description policies in favor of the CARCD employee manual, under which District staff (shared with CARCD) are already governed, and deleting conflicting language in Policy 2020.3 that is addressed by a policy adopted in April of the prior year.

Director Kuhn moved, and Director Parkes seconded, to retire Policies 3010–3385 and 3390–3480 and acknowledge the CARCD employee manual as the governing document for personnel matters for all current and future staff, and to remove the final two sentences from Policy 2020.3. Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

Biancardi: Yes
Corona: No
Garcia: Yes
Kuhn: Yes
Parkes: Yes

<u>F. Subject:</u> CARCD Inland Region Delegate

CARCD has requested the appointment of a delegate to attend regional meetings, which may require travel. President Biancardi, who has served in the role, indicated her willingness to continue.

Director Kuhn moved, and Director Garcia seconded, to appoint President Biancardi as the delegate to represent TEAM RCD at CARCD Inland Region meetings. Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

Biancardi: Yes
Corona: No
Garcia: Yes
Kuhn: Yes
Parkes: Yes

<u>IV. DISCUSSION:</u>

<u>A. Subject:</u> District Manager First-Month Report

District Manager Clifton Meek reported on his first month, including support from neighboring district managers, field work with SAWA on an easement property, and upcoming meetings with the Bureau of Reclamation and NRCS. He noted active regional grant activity through the SoCal hub, including healthy soils and SWEEP opportunities, and confirmed his intent to balance the Wildlife Crossing project with the District's core conservation work.

<u>B. Subject:</u> Conservation Technician Project Updates

The Conservation Technician provided updates on current projects:

- Wildfire Defensible Space Assessments: Approximately 20 assessments completed over three weeks, with appointments scheduled every other week through October across the district. A six-month report is due to the Inland Empire Community Foundation; clarification on the reporting period and grant timeline is being sought. Staff is pursuing continued funding and a community wildfire protection plan.

- Greer Ranch Easement: A breakthrough was reached, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorizing a verification request to CDFW that would allow fuel modification and invasive removal work to proceed, pending CDFW and HOA board approval.
- Cannabis Cleanup and Healthy Soils / SWEEP: A regional Healthy Soils and SWEEP grant application is in progress and reported to be strong.

V. DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Director Garcia reported that the Riverside LAFCO Special District Selection Committee election has concluded and that Stephen Corona of the Eastern Municipal Water District was elected Western Region Commissioner, with results now official.

Director Kuhn disclosed, for transparency and to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest, that he was selected for an EQIP grant for fire brush clearing on his 400-acre ranch in Warner Springs, San Diego County, and has not yet signed the commitment. He noted the program is available to any farmer.

Director Corona reported on a recent indictment involving a Fire Safe Council in another county. Following up on the closed session question raised during the consultant selection committee discussion, she reported that, under the Brown Act, bid awards and final contract actions generally must occur in open session.

VI. MANAGEMENT REPORT

The District Manager's report was provided under Discussion, Item A.

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Credit card use policy and issuance of staff credit cards.
- Formal authorization of the consultant selection committee to make the final consultant selection.
- Personnel policy and Policy 2020.3 housekeeping edits as developed by the District Manager.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Director Corona moved, and Director Garcia seconded, to adjourn. There being no further business to come before the board, the board unanimously voted to end the meeting.

Newt Parkes
Newt Parkes (Sep 9, 2026 11:41:43 PDT)

Newt Parkes, Secretary
TEAM RCD

June 11, 2026
Date of Board Approval