MINUTES

Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta Resource Conservation District
Regular Board Meeting
Thursday, March 12, 2026, at 4:00 PM

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

I. PRELIMINARY FUNCTIONS

Call to Order – 4:08 p.m. Meeting recorded by Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

Director Corona led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction of New Director

President Biancardi welcomed Arturo Garcia, who was appointed to the board on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, filling the vacant director seat. Director Garcia introduced himself, noting that he resides in the Temecula area and works for The Nature Conservancy and for an elected official in the state legislature.

Roll Call/Establish a Quorum

Directors Present: Teri Biancardi, President; Stuart Kuhn, Vice President; Newt Parkes, Secretary; Rose Corona, Director; Arturo Garcia, Director.
Directors Absent: None
Also Present: Kit Swift, Conservation Technician
Public Guests: Peter Van Dyke, Loma Prieta RCD (via Zoom); Kedar Sawant, Parsons (via Zoom).

Approval of Agenda

Director Parkes moved, and Director Kuhn seconded, to approve the Agenda as presented. Upon voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.
Biancardi: Aye
Corona: Aye
Garcia: Aye
Kuhn: Aye
Parkes: Aye

Public Comment

Peter Van Dyke of Loma Prieta RCD congratulated the district on the WCB grant award and offered advice on grant administration, recommending careful recordkeeping, separate accounts for grant monies, and specialized legal counsel.

Kedar Sawant of Parsons introduced himself as a general audience member listening in on the I-15 Rainbow Canyon project.

II. CONSENT CALENDAR:

Director Corona requested that Item 1, the February meeting minutes, be pulled from the consent calendar for separate consideration.

Items 2 and 3:

Director Kuhn moved, and Director Parkes seconded, to approve Items 2 and 3 of the consent calendar as presented. Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

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

Item 1 – February Meeting Minutes:

Director Corona noted for the record her objection that the February minutes did not fully reflect board conversations. She stated that the vote on the WCB agreement at the February meeting was not properly agendized for a vote. President Biancardi stated that the item had been agendized as a project update and the agreement was provided at the meeting due to the compressed timeline.

Director Garcia moved, and Director Parkes seconded, to approve Item 1, the February meeting minutes, as presented. Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

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

III. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Subject: Rainbow Canyon I-15 Wildlife Crossing – WCB Grant Ratification

Background: The Wildlife Conservation Board awarded the district approximately $4 million for the Rainbow Canyon I-15 Wildlife Crossing project. At the February 12, 2026 meeting, the board approved the WCB grant agreement contingent upon favorable legal review and authorized President Biancardi to sign the agreement and begin implementation upon receipt of the notice to proceed. Legal counsel reviewed the agreement, identified no issues, and President Biancardi signed the agreement as authorized.

President Biancardi acknowledged the significance of the grant award, noting that it represents a major step for the district in moving from a volunteer-led organization to managing a multi-million dollar project with a professional district project manager.

President Biancardi reported on the record that on February 25, 2026, she was informed by WCB staff that Director Corona had contacted WCB by phone and e-mail the afternoon before the $4 million vote, using her official district title and e-mail address. President Biancardi stated that Director Corona alleged the district planned to misuse indirect funds for non-grant-eligible activities. President Biancardi cited district Policies 2160 and 210, which provide that the board acts as a unit of authority and that directors are required to use internal channels for policy-related concerns. She stated the conduct was unauthorized and caused reputational damage with WCB and The Nature Conservancy.

Director Corona responded that she had contacted WCB to request clarification on the use of indirect funds, not to ask that the grant be denied, and that she believed she had a fiduciary duty to raise concerns. The board discussed the matter; Directors Kuhn, Parkes, and Garcia each expressed disappointment with the approach of contacting the funder directly rather than raising concerns through the board.

President Biancardi presented a board memo analyzing the indirect funding structure, concluding that there is no prohibition in the grant agreement, WCB guidelines, or enabling legislation that restricts the use of approved indirect funds to project-specific work.

Next steps: the district is awaiting the notice to proceed from WCB, expected within 35 days. An RFP for engineering and environmental consulting will be posted through Planet Bids and the district website. A kickoff meeting with project stakeholders has been tentatively scheduled for May 11.

Director Kuhn moved, and Director Parkes seconded, to ratify the February 12, 2026 approval of the WCB grant agreement and authorize President Biancardi to begin implementing the project upon receipt of the notice to proceed.

Director Corona raised a potential conflict of interest regarding Director Garcia, noting that he is employed by The Nature Conservancy, a project partner. President Biancardi ruled that no conflict existed because no funds are exchanged between TNC and TEAM RCD under this project.

Upon voice vote, the motion carried:

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

IV. DISCUSSION:

A. Subject: District Project Manager – Funding Analysis

President Biancardi presented a board memo on funding for the District Project Manager position. Working with CARCD, the fully loaded annual cost is estimated at $192,450 on a $150,000 salary (approximately 28.3% overhead). Over the 3.5-year grant period, the district projects a $109,500 surplus for legal and other expenses. Applications are being received through SharePoint; the board anticipates making a hiring recommendation at a future meeting.

B. Subject: Insurance Review

President Biancardi reported that SDRMA reviewed the district's coverage in light of the wildlife crossing project, home hardening program, and potential cannabis restoration project. SDRMA identified no coverage gaps and recommended that all contractors name TEAM RCD as an additional insured.

C. Subject: Conservation Technician Updates

The Conservation Technician provided updates on current projects:

- Wildfire Resistant Communities / Home Hardening: Program launched this month. The Cal Fire Qualified Entities workshop was missed due to a scheduling conflict; next workshop pending. Mailers are being sent to Anza and approximately 17 signups received to date via Jotform.
- Lake Elsinore Flood Control Cleanup: Work resumed after rain delays. GPS-located exhibits for north and south sites submitted to Riverside County Flood Control. An encampment on an adjacent EMWD parcel cannot be removed; coordination with EMWD is being explored.
- Flood Control Channel Work: SAWA crews beginning debris removal and mastication on Santa Gertrudis Channel and Temecula Creek, followed by tamarisk and tumbleweed clearing at French Valley and other sites prior to nesting season.
- WETA / NRCS Local Working Group: Second local working group meeting being planned for late March in Anza.
- Cannabis Restoration Grant Program: CDFW recommended expanding scope from two years/$150,000 to three years/$300,000. CDFW expressed interest in hazardous waste training capacity and noted 10–20% of the award can go toward capacity building. Budget revision in progress.

D. Subject: Wildfire Resilience Partnerships

The Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance has invited the district to join their advisory committee and proposed alternating monthly meetings between San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The Department of Conservation has $300 million available for wildfire resilience projects and has expressed interest in working with the district.

V. DIRECTORS' REPORTS

No additional reports.

VI. MANAGEMENT REPORT

No separate management report.

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Policy manual updates with a focus on lines of delegation in preparation for the District Project Manager hire.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Director Corona moved, and Director Parkes seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned.

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

Newt Parkes, Secretary
TEAM RCD

April 9, 2026
Date of Board Approval