

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Richard C. Brody  
President

Nancy Helsley  
Treasurer

Beth Burnam  
Director

Laurie Price  
Director

Riki Clark  
Director

District Manager  
Tracy Lovric

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING

### EIGHT-HUNDRED SIXTY-FIRST MEETING

**Monday March 24, 2025—6:00 P.M.**

Location: RCD District Office, 4505 Las Virgenes Road, Suite 215, Calabasas

The meeting can also be accessed remotely via Zoom. Members of the public are able to watch/listen to the meeting and provide comment at appropriate times by selecting this link:

<https://rcdsmm-org.zoom.us/j/83062285194?pwd=UG5hVlF4Z3NBRjNHR2RyWjNBclY2UT09>.

You may also join the meeting by dialing the following phone number: (669) 900-6833 and entering the meeting ID and passcode: **Meeting ID: 830 6228 5194 Meeting Passcode: 370601**

## AGENDA

Information about, and copies of, supporting materials for agenda items are available for public review at the RCDSMM office at (818) 597-8627. A fee may be charged for copies.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

### 2. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

A. Presentation for recognition for former Board Director S. Rosentweig.

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

This is the time set aside for those wishing to address the Board on matters which fall under the Board's jurisdiction. If the matter you address is not on the agenda, Directors may not discuss or take action on comments made here except to put the matter on the agenda, at their discretion, for a future Board meeting. If the matter you address is already on the agenda, the Board will consider your comments when making their decision. Each commenter will have a time limit of three minutes.

A. Melina Watts, North Santa Monica Bay Watershed, to speak on Safe Clean Water L.A. grant opportunities.

B. Topanga Association for a Scenic Community and Topanga Chamber of Commerce to speak on Caltrans' work on the reopening of Topanga Canyon Blvd.

### 4. USDA/NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE REPORT: Summary of NRCS programs and activities by District Conservationists.

### 5. MINUTES: Approval of minutes for meeting on February 24, 2025.

### 6. FINANCIAL REPORTING: Presentation of expense & other reports, through February 2025

- A. Report on Reserve Fund replenishment (*verbal*)

## 7. REGULAR CALENDAR.

- A. Approval of Resolution No 2025-03-24 A; Contract from the department of regional planning, Los Angeles County for “significant ecological areas study and CEQA analysis for conservation and natural resources element update (RFP-DRP-53825)
- B. Approval of Resolution No. 2025-03-24 B; Application for grant funds from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) through the California Department of Conservation’s regional forest and fire capacity program.
- C. Consideration for potential future contribution for CARCD's federal lobbyist.
- D. Updating board members and acquiring wet signatures for Cal TRUST accounts.

## 8. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:

- A. Staff Reports for February 2025:
  - i. Summary of general fund vs. billed hours (not in packet)
  - i. Clark Stevens, Director of Resource Design
  - ii. Dan Cooper, Principal Conservation Biologist
  - iii. Rosi Dagit, Principal Conservation Biologist
  - iv. Marilyn Brody French, Education & Engagement Director
  - v. Shelly Backlar, Director of Community Resilience

## 9. DISTRICT MANAGER’S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Presentation by Director of Education M. Brody French on education programs

## 10. DIRECTORS’ COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

## 12. CLOSED SESSION

- A. Public Employment; District Manager position (Cal. Govt. Code section 54957)

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**Monday February 24, 2025—6:00 P.M.**

Location: RCD District Office, 4505 Las Virgenes Road, Suite 215, Calabasas

**Minutes**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** this meeting was called to order by President R.C. Brody at 6:01 PM. A quorum was established with Directors Richard Brody, Nancy Helsley, Laurie Price and Riki Clark in attendance. Also in attendance were Associate Directors Dennis Washburn, District Manager Tracy Lovric, Administrative Operations Manager Lisa Rand and Controller Art Renzi.
2. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Brooks Engelhardt (NRCS), Staff members Shelly Backlar and Marilyn Brody French and community member Bill Neill joined virtually
3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None
4. **USDA/NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE REPORT:** Brooks Engelhardt gave a report on recent NRCS activities. Mr. Engelhardt informed on NRCS and CALFIRE post fire programs as well as teams in place for post fire erosion control. Nancy Helsley asked about changes to NRCS national leadership, Mr. Engelhardt informed that there is an interim director in place for the Chief of the NRCS.
5. **MINUTES:** Approval of minutes for the Board meeting on January 27, 2025. The Board reviewed the minutes and voted to approve them as presented. President R.C. Brody motioned to approve. Ms. Price/Ms. Helsley approved 4-0
6. **FINANCIAL REPORTING:**
  - Controller Art Renzi informed \$75K was put back into reserves in February and projected 50K to go back in April pending receipt of April tax revenue.
  - The Board discussed exploring alternate resources for interest-bearing accounts in the future to build up reserves.
7. **REGULAR CALENDAR**

- Guest Bill Neill gave a presentation on post fire invasive arundo control in lower Topanga. Mr. Neill expressed the importance of implementing control now and informed of opportunities for herbicide use. Mr. Neill requests that RCDSMM help to educate on this matter.
- Board Member Nancy Helsey requested RCDSMM pay \$600 to support the continuation of the Envirothon website. President R.C. Brody motioned to approve. Ms. Clark/Ms. Price approved 4-0
- Regular item updating CALTRUST signatures postponed until the next meeting.
- Request for the districts signature seeking congressional support for USC Sea Grant programs. District Manager T. Lovric to sign. President R.C. Brody motioned to approve. Ms. Price/Ms. Clark 4-0

**8. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:** Staff Reports for November 2024 were presented in a board packet.

- Administrative Operations Manager L. Rand requested a discussion on the Board's preference for information for staff reports. The board agreed on 1 page document that highlights the department's achievements. General fund/Billed time ratios to be presented outside of board packet.

**9. DISTRICT MANAGER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- District Manager T. Lovric gave a slideshow presentation on 2024 in review.
- Informational on Santa Monica Bay Foundation Commission chairs and that RCDSMM still holds a chair.

**10.DIRECTORS' COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Director R. Clark proposed the district go after prop W funding.
- Associate Director D. Washburn urged the district to speak on funding opportunities with the North Santa Monica Business Advising Committee.

**11. ADJOURNMENT:** This meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM Ms. Price/Ms. Clark 4-0

**12. CLOSED SESSION:** Opened at 7:59 PM, closed at 8:47 PM. Ms. Clark/Ms. Helsey

- Personnel issues discussed

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Rand, Administrative Operations Manager

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
R.C. Brody, president, Board of Directors

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-03-24 B  
MARCH 24, 2025**

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS (RCDSMM) APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (MRCA) THROUGH THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION'S REGIONAL FOREST AND FIRE CAPACITY PROGRAM.

**WHEREAS**, funds were made available to Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains to be administered by the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority (MRCA) through the California Department of Conservation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) program. This brings more than \$72 million to communities across the state to build more fire-resilient communities. This brings total investments to \$140 million for regions working to improve ecosystem health, community wildfire preparedness, and fire resilience – part of \$2.7 billion the Newsom Administration has committed to achieve the goals of the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan.

**WHEREAS**, this grant will allow the RCDSMM to increase its capacity to create safer communities by conducting home ignition zone evaluations, hosting community wildfire training workshops, training evaluators and building community connections throughout our sphere of influence.;

**WHEREAS**, Additionally, this funding will support management of the Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB) threat in Southern California through education development, public outreach, and taskforce organization.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Directors of the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains hereby:

1. Approves \$850,000 in grant funds from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority; and
2. Certifies that the RCDSMM will comply with all federal, state and local environmental, public health, and other appropriate laws and regulations applicable to the project and will obtain or will ensure that the other project partners obtain all appropriate permits applicable to the project; and

3. Further commits to the terms and conditions specified in the grant agreement; and

4. Appoints Tracy Lovric, District Manager, as representative of RCDSMM to conduct negotiations, execute, submit and sign all documents including but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests, and other documents which may be necessary for the completion of the proposed project.

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED** this 24<sup>th</sup> day of March 2025 by the Board of Directors of the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains in the County of Los Angeles in the State of California.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Brody, President

MOTION TO ADOPT:

**Yeas:**

**Nays:**

**Abstain:**

**Absent:**

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution 2025-03-24 was duly and regularly adopted by the Board of Directors of the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains at the meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of March 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Rand, Secretary for the Board



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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-03-24 A  
MARCH 24, 2025**

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS (RCDSMM) APPROVING THE CONTRACT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING, LOS ANGELES COUNTY FOR “SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS STUDY AND CEQA ANALYSIS FOR CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT UPDATE (RFP-DRP-53825)”

**WHEREAS**, funds totaling \$379,905 were made available to Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains to survey and analyze Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) countywide as part of a CEQA analysis and Natural Resources Element update; and

**WHEREAS**, RCDSMM is partnering with StreamScape Environmental, Hamilton Biological, and Occidental College to apply for this funding and complete this contract;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Directors of the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains hereby:

1. Approves the proposal of RCDSMM (the “Applicant”) to the County of Los Angeles, Department of Regional Planning; and
2. Certifies that said Applicant will comply with all federal, state and local environmental, public health, and other appropriate laws and regulations applicable to the project and will obtain or will ensure that the other project partners obtain all appropriate permits applicable to the project; and
3. Further commits to the terms and conditions specified in the contract agreement; and
4. Appoints Tracy Lovric, District Manager, as representative of RCDSMM to conduct negotiations, execute, submit and sign all documents including but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests, and other documents which may be necessary for the completion of the proposed project.

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED** this 24 day of March, 2024 by the Board of Directors of the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains in the County of Los Angeles in the State of California.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Brody, President

**MOTION TO ADOPT:**

**Yeas:**

**Nays:**

**Abstain:**

**Absent:**

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution 2025-03-24 was duly and regularly adopted by the Board of Directors of the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains at the meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary for the Board



To: Board of Directors, RCDSMM  
From: Marilyn Brody French, Director of Education  
Re: Education Department Report February 2025

### **Virtual Education Programs**

# of programs delivered: 28

- 8 week spring series launched with Rio School District
- coordinated by Ashley Meier, part time Education Programs Coordinator

### **Field Education Programs**

# of programs delivered: 10

- Malibu Lagoon, Tapia Park (self-paid groups)
- Sepulveda Basin funded by San Fernando Valley Audubon Society
- Partnership with National Parks Service allows for transportation coverage

### **Special Programs**

- LA City Recreation and Parks attended Malibu Lagoon

### **WILD CITY Workshops**

# of programs delivered: 0

- launched and marketed 3 workshops for spring 2025 series

### **Staff Management**

- hosted meeting for 10 Field Site Leads
- implemented new and improved field site safety protocol
- put out a job announcement for environmental educators

### **CCC Watershed Stewards Program (AmeriCorps partner)**

- As Site Supervisor, submitted application for 2025-26
- Supported current Corpsmember (CM) in on campus ed programs

### **Funding Development**

- not selected for Whale Tail Grant
- not selected for Youth Access Grant
- awaiting response for Safe Clean Water Grant
- applying for Malibu City grant
- planning to work with funding development agency to access private/unrestricted funding

## **March 24, 2025 Board Report, Community Resilience Department**

**Shelly Backlar, Community Resilience Director**

**Project Manager: Newhall Wildlife Crossing and South LA Habitat Connectivity Master Plan**

### **February update**

#### **Newhall Wildlife Crossing- WCB grant**

- We have a signed Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans to begin the PID/PEAR phase of the Environmental Compliance process.
- We scheduled our kick-off meeting with Caltrans for March 19, 2025.

#### **Community Resilience- Various grants. CR Team:**

- We submitted a grant to the MRCA to build the RCD's organizational capacity to expand our HIZ evaluations and wildfire protection (\$750k). The request also includes \$100k for GSOB. They meet on Wednesday the 5th at 10 AM.
- KTLA filmed our HIZ Evaluators, Molly and Dayana, conducting an HIZ evaluation at Brody's house. The piece will run toward the end of this week (Wed. night at 10pm). They will share the link with us.
- The Business Insider interviewed Clark, Tracy and Shelly about our wildfire prevention and recovery programs. We met at the office and took the reporter to the Demonstration House.
- We will be hiring more HIZ evaluators.

#### **Regenerative Agriculture- NRCS Capacity Building grant**

- The Regenerative Agriculture grant was completed in September.
- We are uncertain about whether there will be future funding and partnership opportunities with NRCS under the current administration.

#### **Urban Wildlife Connectivity Plan for South Los Angeles County- Grant proposal**

- The grant amendment we submitted to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) for the balance of funds needed to complete the Master Plan, \$787,000, was approved at the Board's February 26, 2025 meeting was approved.
- We have signed the grant agreement with the Wildlife Conservation Network, \$500,000, and will soon receive an executed agreement.

## **February 2025 Board Report**

**Dan Cooper, Principal Conservation Biologist**

March 3, 2025

### **Bio/Restoration/Resource Design**

- The 2025 season of the Los Angeles Raptor Study (joint project with RCDSMM and Friends of Griffith Park) kicked off in Feb., and we have c. 300 volunteers and c. 600 nests we're monitoring citywide. We did in-person training in early Feb. at Sepulveda Basin and Griffith Park.
- We attended a walkthrough at Topanga Elementary School to assess major fire damage to a site we had been working for c. 4 years to restore, following damage from brush clearance contractors.
- Continued to develop prospectus for Eastern Santa Monica Mtns. Land Bank (with local client, and staff incl. Bella Isles).
- Met with several potential new clients for projects, incl. City of Santa Monica (airport reuse), LA Urban Forestry staff on post-fire assessment and conservation land banking.
- Worked on various small projects for clients, including monitoring restoration site in Malibu (Harvester Rd.).

### **Misc.**

- Attended both days of our staff communications workshop (facilitated) in early Feb.
- Represented RCDSMM at Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee, helping provide comments on USACOE Master Plan update.

February 2025  
Rosi Dagit  
Research and Restoration

**Topanga Lagoon Restoration Planning 3226**

Prepared monthly report. Prepared new work plan and budget tracking. Supervised water quality testing. Jamie and Danielle worked on the revised scope of work for the state parks visitor services elements.

**CDFW Topanga Lagoon CEQA Grant 3238**

No charges this month. Waiting for additional CEQA efforts once design is further along.

**WCB Topanga Lagoon Grant 3247 Part 1**

Prepared monthly report and invoice. Coordinated with MN and Caltrans regarding project report, design, and landowner agreement. Project Team coordination calls. Reviewed invoicing and reporting. Project Report finally approved!!!!

**CDPR Malibu Snorkel Survey 3244**

Prepared invoice and monthly report, reviewed data. Franklin Fire impacted all critical habitat. Revised scope of work to substitute longitudinal habitat mapping to provide a baseline for the Rindge Dam removal effort instead of snorkeling in the spring. Little habitat remains due to sedimentation.

**CDFW Genetic Conservation Plan 3243 CDFW**

Prepared monthly report. Worked with Edison High School and vendors to begin setting up the new holding facility. Isaac started working on permit revisions. Set up site visit for Escondido Creek in April.

**WCB Oak Restoration 3248**

No action this month.

**Topanga Elementary School Oak Violation Contract 3246**

Met on site with new interim principal and did walk through with state parks to observe bulldozer damage from the fire and potential remedies. Alyssa set up a site visit with LAUSD, Parks, LAC Regional Planning and Violations for Wed 12 March.

**WCB Topanga Lagoon Grant 3251 Part 2**

Prepared invoice and monthly rpt. Calls with Caltrans, MN and Project team to coordinate next steps.

**Topanga Snorkel 3252 CDPR**

Prepared invoice and monthly report, reviewed data. Palisades Fire impacted all critical habitat. Revised scope of work to substitute longitudinal habitat mapping to provide a baseline for the lagoon restoration instead of snorkeling in the spring. Little habitat remains due to sedimentation.

**Fire Response 3117**

Responded to community concerns regarding EPA use of Topanga lagoon site for staging hazardous materials. Worked with USFWS to coordinate on-going care of tidewater gobies which are getting fat in captivity. Conducted site visits to document Topanga Creek conditions and supervised water quality collection to contribute to SCCWRP project which is collating all WQ data and will be hosting a website to share info from all contributing entities such as LAC Public Health, Regional Water Quality Control Board, several universities and NASA remote sensing. Sediment samples are being collected and shipped to CSULB and UCSC for analysis. Worked on videos showcasing both fish rescues.

Trout video is found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-R6TBY7jd20>

### **Sea Grant Fish Rescue 3255**

Executed emergency grant proposal to Sea Grant to assist with fish rescue costs. Moved Topanga trout to Arroyo Hondo 2/10 before the storms.

### **NEW PROJECT DEVELOPMENT 1009**

- Worked with Dan, Tracy and Alyssa on emergency grant proposals for post fire recovery.
- Submitted proposal to Supervisor Horvath's Social Program grant fund to cover costs of data analysis and mapping for the habitat surveys in Malibu and Topanga.
- Provided input for Tracy on CARCD and other possible funding sources

### **Other updates**

- WSP Volunteer project will be ice plant removal at Zuma Beach on Sat 22 March!  
**Please come support her if you can.**
- Compiled and updated job descriptions for all Research and Restoration employees.
- Participated in Communications Workshop
- Attended the annual Stream Survey Meeting with USGS, Pepperdine, NPS, State Parks, SB Zoo and other partners to coordinate 26<sup>th</sup> year of stream surveys for the spring.
- Site visit with WSP Coordinator Jody Weseman