



Minutes of April 16, 2026 Board Meeting

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Randy Krag of the LCRCDD Board of Directors, called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m, Jing Wang will take the Minutes.

Directors Present: Randy Krag, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Joseph Sullivan, Merry Jo Velasquez, Harry Lyons, Tony Blyleven (Associate Director)

Directors Absent: None.

Others Present:

In Person: Jing Wang (Bookkeeper), Erica Lundquist (NRCS District Conservationist), Julia Sullivan (Executive Director)

Virtually: Member of public

1. **INTRODUCTIONS** and consideration of extra items not appearing on the posted agenda.
 - Board President Randy Krag called the meeting to order and opened the floor for introductions and consideration of any additional items not appearing on the posted agenda.
 - It was noted that there was one member of the public attending remotely via Zoom, the attendee did not respond when invited to introduce themselves.
 - No additional agenda items or amendments were proposed by Board members.
2. **PUBLIC INPUT** - Anyone may speak for three minutes on a subject not on the agenda; no action will be taken by the Board.
 - Board Director Kate Schmidt-Hopper shared comments during public input regarding her recent participation in meetings related to the Lake Area Planning Council (LPAC) process and the County General Plan update, including attendance at the Middletown Area Plan meetings.
 - Kate encouraged Board members and community members to attend their local LPAC meetings, continued public engagement in the General Plan update process.
3. **BOARD REVIEW AND UPDATES**
 - 3.1 UPDATE on staff activities - Julia Sullivan, Executive Director
 - Julia shared details from a recent trip to Washington, D.C., where she traveled with several other RCD Executive Directors and representatives from the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, including the CARCD Executive Director, to meet with representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Forest Service, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as staff from the offices of California Congressman Mike Thompson and Senator Adam Schiff. Julia explained that the meetings focused on increasing awareness of RCD work and advocating for funding opportunities, including Community Project Funding (CPF) proposals related to defensible space and prescribed grazing projects.
 - Julia reported that staff are currently managing a significant volume of grant writing work.

- o In addition to the forest health proposals previously presented by Nicole Lau, Noah Cornell has been coordinating on multiple proposals related to the SWEEP (State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Program) and Healthy Soils funding opportunities, with the goal of expanding the RCD's agricultural programming and support for local farmers.
- o Julia also reported that Fire Safe Council funding and the County Coordinator grant are moving forward, including submission of the County Coordinator extension application. She noted that the funding would support continued Fire Safe Council coordination and may allow the launch of a micro-grants program for local Firewise Communities, neighborhood Fire Safe Councils, and similar community groups.
- Kate asked for additional information regarding a potential landfill mitigation and restoration project associated with expansion work at the Eastlake Landfill. Julia explained that the County is required to mitigate impacts related to oak woodland removal and stream disturbance associated with the landfill expansion project, and that the County approached the RCD about potentially leading restoration and revegetation work associated with the mitigation requirements.
- The Board also inquired about staffing and hiring updates. Julia reported that the new Watershed Program Manager is expected to begin work within the coming weeks.

3.2 ROLL CALL on ongoing projects with Board Hosts

- Randy Krag –
 - o No update
- Harry Lyons –
 - o (See Kate Schmidt-Hopper)
- Kate Schmidt-Hopper –
 - o Kate provided an update on preparations for Field Day in the Creek. Harry has been coordinating many of the event logistics, including insurance, site coordination, equipment, and presenter outreach, while Harry and Shula have also been contacting presenters and supporting event setup. Kate shared that she has been serving as the primary contact for the Middletown Unified School District.
 - o Field Day in the Creek will take place at 9:30 a.m. on April 30 at Putah Creek in Middletown.
- Shula Shoup –
 - o (See Kate Schmidt-Hopper)
- Merry Jo Velasquez –
 - o Board Director Merry Jo provided an update on the upcoming Kids in the Creek event, scheduled for Wednesday, April 22 at 9:30 a.m. at the Middle Creek Campground in Upperlake.
 - o She explained that the event is being coordinated with the United States Forest Service and that adjustments had to be made because a fire engine demonstration may no longer be available.
 - o TERA is providing a presentation focused on good fire and wildfire education programming.
 - o Julia stated that RCD staff would be present to help support and coordinate both Field Day in the Creek and Kids in the Creek activities.
- Joseph Sullivan –
 - o No update
- Tony Blyleven –
 - o Board Associate Director Tony Blyleven provided an update on the Trout in the Classroom program. Tony thanked everyone who helped support the program efforts, giving special recognition to Kate for assisting with logistics and coordination. Tony explained that delays related to paperwork and approvals from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife had

created challenges earlier in the season, but that the issue has now been resolved and future coordination is expected to improve.

- o The Board discussed the importance of accurate media coverage and the use of prepared press releases for RCD events and programs.

3.3 UPDATE on NRCS activities - Erica Lundquist, NRCS District Conservationist

- Erica provided an update on ongoing NRCS activities, reporting that the ranking deadline has been completed and that project selections were actively being finalized during the current week.
- She stated that 33 applications were submitted, with five applications funded so far. Of those funded applications, two awards are going to Tribal applicants and three are funded through the Conservation Stewardship Program.
- Erica shared that staff are continuing to work closely with forestry program personnel to strengthen internal technical capacity and qualifications, and that she is encouraging forestry staff to obtain job approval authority and additional qualifications for all major forestry practices.
- Erica announced that she plans to retire from NRCS effective October 31, 2026.

3.4 UPDATE from President and Directors

- Randy Krag –
 - o Randy shared information about upcoming community and educational events relevant to the Board’s interests and ongoing work. Including the upcoming “Weeds and Wildflowers” event at the McLaughlin Reserve, scheduled for April 17, and an upcoming University of California webinar titled “Sheep in the Orchard: Grazing, Soil Health, and Food Safety in Organic Tree Nut Systems,” scheduled for May 27.
 - o Randy updated the Board regarding efforts to inform the County and recruit a replacement for the vacant Board seat following Steve Campbell’s resignation.
 - o The Board engaged in a broader discussion regarding pile burning, burn permits, and the approaching end of burn season in Lake County.
- Harry Lyons –
 - o No update.
- Kate Schmidt-Hopper –
 - o Kate shared information regarding existing community chipping programs.
- Shula Shoup –
 - o Board Director Shula Shoup informed the Board that State Senator Mike McGuire was hosting a wildfire prevention meeting via Zoom.
- Merry Jo Velasquez –
 - o No update.
- Joseph Sullivan –
 - o No update.

4. ACTION – Includes discussion.

4.1 VOTE on approval of March 2026 meeting minutes

Discussion:

- Merry Jo noted that the minutes did not include a recorded count for “nays” during prior Board votes and asked that they should be formally reflected in the meeting record.

Motion to Approve: Kate Schmidt-Hopper

Seconded: Shula Shoup

Ayes: Randy Krag, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Joseph Sullivan

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstained: Harry Lyons, Merry Jo Velasquez

Result: Passed

4.2 VOTE on acceptance of February 2026 financial report

Discussion:

- Randy and Kate commented positively on the improvement in the organization's accounts receivable status, specifically noting that the aging report showed a significant reduction in outstanding older balances.
- Randy asked clarifying questions regarding references in the report to "Q1" and "Q2," noting some confusion between use of the calendar year versus the fiscal year in financial reporting terminology.
- Julia reminded the Board that large upcoming project-related payments may require additional authorization procedures.

Motion to Approve: Harry Lyons

Seconded: Joseph Sullivan

Ayes: Randy Krag, Harry Lyons, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Merry Jo Velasquez, Joseph Sullivan

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstained: Shula Shoup

Result: Passed

5. **DISCUSSION** – Does not include action.

5.1 Initiating recruitment process for vacant Board seat

- The Board discussed initiating the recruitment process for the vacant Board seat following Steve Campbell's resignation.
 - Randy stated that he would like to see the RCD take a more active role in recruiting new Board members rather than relying solely on the County appointment process. He encouraged Board members to actively solicit and identify potential candidates who may be interested in serving as directors.
 - Randy also noted that he had already communicated with County representatives regarding the vacancy and had shared the RCD's internal recruitment policy outlining procedures for identifying and reviewing applicants.
- Kate requested a refresher on the timeline and process for renewing Board memberships. Julia reviewed the current Board roster and term expiration dates and stated that an updated roster and related information would be included in the next Board meeting package.

- The Board discussed strategies for outreach and recruitment, including communicating directly with County Supervisors and prospective applicants.

5.2 Reviewing results of Board survey, initiating Board development curriculum, and discussing committee assignments

- Julia reviewed the results of the recent Board survey and thanked Board members for their participation and thoughtful feedback throughout the process.
- The Board discussed the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Executive Director.
- Julia described the proposed Board development approach prepared by Amy Stork (Strategic Planning Facilitator), outlining a multi-month process which would include ongoing discussion, self-assessment, and refinement of Board procedures and expectations.
- Julia asked the Board to make decisions regarding current year committee assignments:
 - The Board agreed that the FY26-27 Budget Committee would consist of Board President Randy Krag and Board Director Joseph Sullivan.
 - The Board also discussed the Executive Director Review and Personnel committee process and determined that the Executive Director review would instead be conducted as a closed session item at the next Board meeting, rather than through a standing personnel committee.

6. AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS

- Julia informed the Board that the Board development curriculum and governance discussions would continue as a recurring standing agenda item through at least September.
- The Board also confirmed that the Executive Director personnel review would be agendized as a closed session item at the next Board meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn: Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Harry Lyons

Ayes: Randy Krag, Harry Lyons, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Merry Jo Velasquez, Joseph Sullivan

Nays: None.

Absent: None.

Abstained: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.