LAKE COUNTY
Resource Conservation District

Minutes of June 18, 2026 Board Meeting minutes

CALL MEETING TO ORDER
Randy Krag of the LCRCD Board of Directors, called the meeting to order at __1:03_____ p.m. Jing Wang will take the Minutes.

Directors Present: Randy Krag, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Joseph Sullivan, Merry Jo Velasquez.

Directors Absent: Harry Lyons.

Others Present:
In Person: Jing Wang (Bookkeeper), Julia Sullivan (Executive Director), Erica Lundquist (NRCS District Conservationist), Megan McCluer Lopez (Finance Manager), John Vandervort (Conservation Program Manager)

Virtually: None.

1. **INTRODUCTIONS** and consideration of extra items not appearing on the posted agenda
   - None.

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 information about an upcoming agave & grape presentation taking place on July 14 2026. (UCCE Agave & Grape Field Day at CEÀGO Vinegarden in Nice, CA)

3. **BOARD REVIEW AND UPDATES**
   3.1 UPDATE on staff activities - Julia Sullivan, Executive Director
   - Executive Director Julia Sullivan provided an update on staff activities and highlighted that Dalynn Dykstra is doing excellent work in her role as Watershed Restoration Program Manager.
   - Julia shared an update on the RCD's internal staffing structure and presented an updated organizational chart.
   - Julia also reported that the RCD was selected to host a GrizzlyCorps Fellow and that the organization chose to move forward with the Fire Safe Council-focused position.
   - Julia provided an update on the vacant Communications Specialist position.
   - The Board discussed how the updated organizational structure helps address issues raised during the prior year's retreat, including the need for clearer supervision, staff roles, and program responsibilities.
   - The Board and Executive Director discussed the relationship between the Lake County Risk Reduction Authority, the Lake County Fire Safe Council, and the Lake County RCD.
   - Board members asked about the LCRCD acronym list and requested that it be kept current and expanded.
   - Board President Randy Krag inquired whether the RCD had formally thanked the County or public services staff for their work on the RCD's new office space.

3.2 ROLL CALL on ongoing projects with Board hosts

- Randy Krag – No update.
- Harry Lyons – Absent.
- Kate Schmidt-Hopper – No update.
- Shula Shoup – No update.
- Merry Jo Velasquez – No update.
- Joseph Sullivan – No update.

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

- Erica reported that NRCS is currently in the middle of the contract obligation process for applicants that were selected for funding.
- Erica noted that RCD staff are conducting field visits with existing NRCS clients. After completing documentation and follow-up for current projects, RCD staff will begin planning for new forestry projects for the upcoming year.
- Erica also discussed the upcoming Local Working Group meeting, which NRCS and the RCD use to gather input on how NRCS programs are serving the community and identify resource concerns that should be prioritized. The meeting is scheduled to take place on July 28th, 2026, with staff also considering sending a follow-up survey to clients who do not attend.

3.4 UPDATE from President and Directors

- Randy Krag – No update.
- Harry Lyons – Absent.
- Kate Schmidt-Hopper – No update.
- Shula Shoup – No update.
- Merry Jo Velasquez –
  - Board Director Merry Jo Velasquez reported that the "Bumps in the Road" webinar, jointly organized by CARCD and the California Council of Land Trusts, had been postponed.
  - Merry Jo informed the Board about the Seigler Valley/Mountain Mitigation Bank, a wetland mitigation bank, and that the Lake County Land Trust currently holds the easement on the property, and that once all mitigation units are sold, ownership of the property is expected to transfer to the LCRCD.
    - The Board, Julia, and Megan McCluer Lopez (Finance Manager), discussed the implications of the RCD potentially becoming responsible for the property, including questions about long-term maintenance, stewardship responsibilities, and whether an endowment would accompany the transfer.
  - Merry Jo reported that she had provided an annual update to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Middle Creek Restoration Project.
  - Merry Jo also stated she is stepping away from involvement in contract or MOU discussions between the RCD and the Lake County Land Trust due to her roles with both organizations.
- Joseph Sullivan –
  - Board Director Joseph (Joe) Sullivan inquired if any current or upcoming RCD funding could be used to address mitigation and invasive species issues along St. Helena Creek.
    - Julia responded that she had recently met with Napa, Sonoma, and Gold Ridge RCDs to discuss the possibility of a joint regional invasive species funding proposal.
  - The Board discussed invasive species management strategies more broadly.

4. ACTION

Includes discussion.

4.1 VOTE on approval of May 2026 meeting minutes

Discussion:

- None.

Motion to Approve: Kate Schmidt-Hopper
Seconded: Merry Jo Velasquez
Ayes: Randy Krag, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Merry Jo Velasquez, Joseph Sullivan.
Nays: none.
Absent: Harry Lyons
Abstained: none.
Result: Passed

4.2 VOTE on acceptance of April 2026 financial report

Discussion:

- The Board and Finance Manager discussed the April 2026 financial report, including minor corrections/clarifications, budget-versus-actual items, and the organization's overall financial position.
- The Board discussed the organization's overall financial position and complimented staff on the continued improvement in the RCD's financial reporting and financial stability.

Motion to Approve: Joseph Sullivan
Seconded: Merry Jo Velasquez
Ayes: Randy Krag, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Merry Jo Velasquez, Joseph Sullivan.
Nays: none
Absent: Harry Lyons
Abstained: none
Result: Passed

4.3 VOTE on approval of update to personnel policy: LCRCD-sponsored health insurance

Discussion:

- Julia introduced the proposed update to the personnel policy for LCRCD-sponsored health insurance, explaining that the existing policy language would be replaced to reflect the RCD's move toward an employer-sponsored group health insurance plan.
- Julia explained that the RCD is moving away from the current QSEHRA reimbursement model, which the RCD's is no longer eligible for after moving to an employer-sponsored group plan.
- Julia and the Board discussed budgetary implications of adopting a group plan.
- Julia also stated that she is currently working with legal counsel to get clarification on the related HR and legal requirements that come with adopting an employer-sponsored health insurance plan. She noted that additional approvals may be needed in the coming months related to policy language or organizational processes.

Motion to Approve: Merry Jo Velasquez
Seconded: Kate Schmidt-Hopper
Ayes: Randy Krag, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Merry Jo Velasquez, Joseph Sullivan

Nays: none
Absent: Harry Lyons
Abstained: none
Result: Passed

4.4 VOTE on approval of AGREEMENT BETWEEN COUNTY OF LAKE AND LCRCD FOR TREE MORTALITY SERVICES

Discussion:

- Julia provided context for the proposed Agreement Between the County of Lake and LCRCD for Tree Mortality Services, explaining that the agreement is connected to the RCD's existing Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) work.
- Julia explained that the new County agreement would allow the RCD to expand the amount of implementation work that could be completed.
- Julia noted that the RCD made the decision to focus the work on county roads, particularly evacuation routes, in order to support County priorities and align with the available County funding.
- The Board discussed the financial and operational benefits of the agreement. Julia noted that, if approved by the LCRCD Board, the agreement would also go before the Lake County Board of Supervisors, likely on July 7, and that County Counsel had reviewed and approved the agreement language.

Motion to Approve: Joseph Sullivan
Seconded: Kate Schmidt-Hopper
Ayes: Randy Krag, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Merry Jo Velasquez, Joseph Sullivan
Nays: none
Absent: Harry Lyons
Abstained: none
Result: Passed

4.5 VOTE on approval of RESOLUTION 2026-04: APPROVAL FOR FUNDING FROM THE CAL FIRE FOREST HEALTH GRANT PROGRAM AS PROVIDED THROUGH THE PROP 4 CALIFORNIA CLIMATE BOND

Discussion:

- Julia provided an update on the RCD's application for funding through the CAL FIRE Forest Health Grant Program, as provided through the Proposition 4 California Climate Bond.
- Julia explained that Board approval of Resolution 2026-04 is required as part of the application process. The resolution confirms that, if awarded, the Board accepts the funds and authorizes the Executive Director to administer the grant. The Board then discussed the resolution language.

Motion to Approve: Merry Jo Velasquez
Seconded: Joseph Sullivan
Ayes: Randy Krag, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Merry Jo Velasquez, Joseph Sullivan
Nays: none
Absent: Harry Lyons
Abstained: none
Result: Passed

4.6 VOTE on approval of CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant application: "Enhancing Wildfire Prevention through Targeted Defensible Space and Fuels Reduction Projects in Lake County's High-Risk Clearlake and North Shore Neighborhoods"

Discussion:

- John Vandervort (Conservation Program Manager) made a presentation on the proposed CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant application.
    - John explained that the RCD submitted a similar application in 2025, and that the current 2026 grant round is available sooner than usual because additional funds were made available through Proposition 4.
- The proposed grant emphasizes the urgency of reducing wildfire hazards in Lake County, particularly on tax-defaulted and unmaintained private parcels that create fire risk for surrounding neighborhoods.
- John presented the proposed scope of work, budget and an overview of project partners & collaborators; including implementation work led by the RCD, outreach and project coordination, wildfire education and community engagement, and partner roles for North Coast Opportunities (NCO), Lake County Office of Emergency Services (County OES), Lake County Community Development Department, CLERC, Lake County Fire Safe Council partners, and City of Clearlake representatives.
- Julia noted that the project administration includes substantial outreach to homeowners, community meetings, application processes for property treatments, contractor oversight, and coordination.
- The Board discussed the long-term value and visibility of the project, including the importance of community outreach and public communication.

Motion to Approve: Shula Shoup
Seconded: Joseph Sullivan
Ayes: Randy Krag, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup, Merry Jo Velasquez, Joseph Sullivan
Nays: none
Absent: Harry Lyons
Abstained: none
Result: Passed

5. DISCUSSION

Does not include action.

5.1 Budget Committee: Presentation of FY26-27 budget, version 1

- Randy introduced the FY26–27 budget, version 1, and provided an overview of the current budget development process. He noted that version 1 is a top-down budget based on available and anticipated grant funding, including some projections for grants that have been submitted but not yet awarded. Randy explained that the next step, to be presented at the July 2026 Board meeting, will be a more detailed bottom-up budget process for version 2, which helps the RCD to better gauge personnel capacity.
- Megan and the Board discussed how the proposed FY26–27 budget compares to current-year budget-versus-actual results.
- The Board discussed several components of version 1 of the FY26–27 budget, including personnel costs, workers' compensation, communications, equipment maintenance, office needs, scholarships, stipends, and general operating expenses.
- Julia noted that some operating costs are increasing because prior RFFC capacity funding, which had helped absorb some general expenses, has been spent down.
- Megan invited Board members to provide suggestions between version 1 and version 2 of the budget.

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5.2 Updates on recruitment process for vacant Board seat

- The Board discussed the ongoing recruitment process for the vacant Board seat and provided updates on outreach and possible candidate leads
- Joe suggested that the Board consider recruiting someone younger. The Board discussed recruiting younger candidates, including the time commitment required to attend meetings and participate in Board work.

5.3 Scholarship (re)establishment and next steps

- Julia recapped the prior RCD scholarship effort, noting that the RCD had previously administered a scholarship program but that those funds have been expended. She explained that, following Greg Dills' passing, staff proposed establishing or reestablishing a scholarship in his honor and had included $5,000 in the draft budget as a base pool for the scholarship.
- The Board discussed the appropriate process for approaching Greg's family about the proposed scholarship in his name.

6. AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS

- For the July 2026 Board meeting:
  - The Board asked to revisit the scholarship discussion (5.3)
  - The Board also asked to continue discussion of the vacant Board seat recruitment process.
  - Board President Randy Krag requested that a closed session be included in the agenda.

7. CLOSED SESSION

Personnel performance review

- Start: 4:12
- Finished: 4:31
  - No action was taken.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at ___4:31_____ p.m. in the closed session.