

WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 3, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by Chair Natasha Johnson at 12:31 p.m., in the Board Room at the County of Riverside Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon Street, First Floor, Riverside, California, 92501.

2. ROLL CALL

Board of Directors/Alternates Present

Kevin Jeffries
Karen Spiegel*
Yxstian Gutierrez
Colleen Wallace
Julio Martinez
Jeff Cervantez
Dale Welty
Tony Daddario
Jocelyn Yow
Joe Males
Leslie Altamirano

Board of Directors Absent

Chuck Washington
V. Manuel Perez

*Arrived after the meeting was called to order.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Johnson.

At this time, Board Member Spiegel arrived.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no requests to speak from the public.

5. ADDITIONS / REVISIONS

There were no additions or revisions to the agenda.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR - All matters on the Consent Calendar will be approved in a single motion unless a Board Member(s) requests separate action on specific item(s).

M/S/C (Spiegel/Ruiz) to approve the following Consent Calendar items.

Abstain: Marquez and Martinez

6A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 6, 2023

6B. WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN FEE COLLECTION REPORT FOR JANUARY 2023

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Fee Collection report for January 2023.

6C. JOINT PROJECT REVIEW STATUS REPORT

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Joint Project Review (JPR) monthly status report as of February 28, 2023.

6D. ACQUISITIONS STATUS REPORT

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the acquisition status report as of January 31, 2023.

6E. MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT FOR JANUARY 2023

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Monthly Investment Report for the month ended January 31, 2023.

7. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Andrew Sall, Senior Management Analyst, Legislative Affairs, provided an update on state and federal legislative actions. The California Legislature is in full swing as bills have begun to work their way through committees, and hearings have been held regarding the Governor's proposed budget for 2023/2024. On March 1st, RCA staff made comments before the Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3 on Climate Crisis, Resources, Energy, and Transportation urging the committee to not cut \$6 million from the \$36 million available for Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) and National Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs) such as the MSHCP for land acquisition. The cuts are included in the Governor's budget proposal due to a projected deficit of more than \$22 billion the next fiscal year. RCA will continue to advocate to restore this funding.

RCA has also remained active in its' legislative efforts on the federal level. On March 22nd and 23rd, RCA staff traveled to Washington, D.C. with the National Habitat Conservation Plan Coalition. There the group held a series of successful meetings with professional staff from several federal agencies, congressional committees, the Offices of Senators Dianne Feinstein

and Alex Padilla, the Office of Representative Darrell Issa, Representative Ken Calvert, and Representative Mark Takano. These positive discussions centered around the National Coalition's strategic priorities, supported by RCA, such as implementing reforms to the Section 6 HCP Land Acquisition Grant Program to streamline habitat conservation. The group also advocated to increase funding for HCPs for land acquisition through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund from just over \$21 million to \$85 million. RCA formally requested this increase through programmatic funding applications submitted to several elected officials in congress over recent weeks.

The funding requests for Fiscal Year 2024 come on the heels of President Biden's budget proposal which calls for \$18.8 billion in discretionary budget funding for the Department of the Interior. This represents a boost of \$1.6 billion in spending for the department which manages and conserves the nation's natural resources. While this is just the first step in the federal budget process, RCA staff will continue to engage leaders in the administration and congress to increase funding to achieve conservation goals.

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file an update on state and federal legislative affairs.

8. BOARD OF DIRECTORS / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Anne Mayer, Executive Director, built on the previous comments about the recent trip to Washington, D.C. The trip made it very clear that at both the state and federal level, that while there are policy incentives for habitat conservation plans with the included benefits, the money just is not there to back the needs of the programs in the state and around the country. It is important for RCA to continue to demonstrate using real life examples in Western Riverside County about how the plan can be beneficial and why it is important.

If any Board Members travels to Sacramento or Washington, D.C., or meets with members of the delegations and need any information from RCA, please let staff know. RCA staff can put together some key talking points which make a difference when talking to state or federal elected officials about the importance of the MSHCP.

Walker Canyon remains closed for poppy viewing until further notice for the safety of the residents, visitors, and sensitive habitats. With the rainy and cool weather continuing, it is likely to result in an extended poppy bloom.

Chair Johnson shared that while it was previously thought April would end the poppy bloom, the weather is making the bloom season continue. The Interstate 15 corridor was very impacted this weekend with CHP citing those that used the interstate as a parking lot to stop and take pictures of the poppies. Although the efforts by many have been proactive and helpful, it is still not enough to control the public which is a reason to keep Canyon Walker closed. Based on the weather, it is possible there will be another 4-5 weeks of blooms.

Board Member Martinez noted that the City of Beaumont will be attending a Sacramento and Washington, D.C. for a lobbying trip and will reach out to staff for talking points.

9. CLOSED SESSION

At this time, Steve DeBaun, legal counsel, announced the Board will be going in to Closed Session to discuss the items on the agenda.

9A. CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS

Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8

Agency Negotiator: Executive Director or Designee

Item	Property Description	Property Owner	Buyer(s)
1	290-060-007, 290-060-017, 290-060-019, 290-080-012, 290-080-014, 290-080-015, 290-080-016, & 290-080-017	Indusi, L.P. a California Limited Partnership and Asgard L.P. a California Limited Partnership	RCA

9B. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION

Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to paragraph (2) or (3) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9: 1 case

9C. REPORT OUT FROM CLOSED SESSION

There were no announcements from Closed Session.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for consideration by the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors, Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 2:08 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled to be held on **Monday, May 1, 2023.**

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Mobley
Administrative Services Manager/
Clerk of the Board