

# **WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, December 1, 2025**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by Chair Kevin Bash at 12:33 p.m., in the Board Room at the County of Riverside Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon Street, First Floor, Riverside, California, 92501.

### **2. ROLL CALL**

<b>Board of Directors/Alternates Present</b>	<b>Board of Directors Absent</b>
Karen Spiegel	Dan Temple
Colleen Wallace	Ron Holliday
Julio Martinez	Kevin Bash
Jeff Cervantez	David Starr Rabb
Dale Welty	Patricia Lock Dawson
Tony Daddario	Crystal Ruiz
Jocelyn Yow*	Jessica Alexander
Connie Howard-Clark	Joseph Morabito
Bob Magee	

\*Arrived after the meeting was called to order.

### **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member Lock Dawson.

### **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 (Morabito/Wallace) to approve the following Consent Calendar items.**

### **6A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 5 WORKSHOP AND OCTOBER 6, 2025**

**6B. WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN FEE COLLECTION REPORT FOR AUGUST 2025**

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 August 2025.

**6C. WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN FEE COLLECTION REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2025**

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 September 2025.

**6D. 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 October 31, 2025.

**6E. ACQUISITIONS STATUS REPORT**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the acquisition status report as of September 30, 2025.

**6F. MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT FOR AUGUST 2025**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Monthly Investment Report for the month ended August 31, 2025.

**6G. MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2025**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Monthly Investment Report for the month ended September 30, 2025.

**6H. SINGLE SIGNATURE AUTHORITY REPORT**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Single Signature Authority report for the first quarter ended September 30, 2025.

**6I. CONSULTANT REPORTS – FISCAL YEAR 2026 FIRST QUARTER**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the consultant reports for Fiscal Year 2026, First Quarter.

**6J. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Quarterly Financial Statements for the three months ended September 30, 2025.

**6K. DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Development Impact Fee Annual Report for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2025.

**6L. ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2025-015 GRANT AND SUBGRANT AGREEMENTS FOR REAL PROPERTY**

This item is for the Board of Directors to adopt Resolution No. 2025-015, *“Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Approving Amendments to Grant and Subgrant Agreements with the Wildlife Conservation Board for the Bundy Canyon Replacement Property, Assessor’s Parcel Number 366-320-053 totaling 20.25 acres in the County of Riverside.”*

**6M. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2025-014 TO AMEND BYLAWS WITH REGARD TO BOARD SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- 1) Following the completion of the four-week noticing period required in Article XIII(B) of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) Bylaws, approve the proposed amendment to the RCA Bylaws; and
- 2) Adopt Resolution No. 2025-014, *“Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Amending Its Bylaws with Regard to Board Selection and Approval of Executive Committee Members”*.

**6N. PROPOSED 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE**

This item is for the Board of Directors to adopt its 2026 Board of Directors/Executive Committee Meeting Schedule.

**7. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Tyler Madary, Legislative Affairs Manager, provided a presentation on the 2026 Legislative Platform and state and federal legislative actions. The RCA annually updates and adopts a legislative platform that serves as the guide for policy positions the Board of Directors will take on various pieces of legislation, regulations, and administrative policies. This platform allows staff and legislative advocates to quickly and effectively act on the Board’s priorities in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

At this time, Board Member Yow arrived.

The recommended changes to the 2026 State and Federal Legislative Platform include:

1. New introductory section on key issues;
2. Simplified, consolidated, and reordered language; and
3. Removing old or addressed policies.

The intention of the introductory section is to set the table with practical examples of how the proposed platform would most likely be applied in the next year by RCA staff and legislative advocates. While not exhaustive, it outlines the issues staff anticipate will be discussed in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. and are ready to engage in, in the next year. Work at the state level includes ensuring propositions for climate and natural resources bond funds that RCA would compete for; seeking land acquisition funding from the state legislature raised by the Cap-and-Invest program; and pursuing any other policies and programs that would advance the land acquisition goals of the MSHCP.

At the federal level, RCA's engagement and advocacy include advocating for more funding for the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Land Acquisition Program, also known as section 6, and showcasing the habitat conservation and the infrastructure project permit streamlining benefits of the MSHCP.

Moving on the state update, on November 17, Senator Monique Limon of Santa Barbara was sworn in as the new President Pro Tempore of the California State Senate. Changes to the Senate Committee Chair and members' assignments have not been announced yet, but staff will continue to monitor them. The Legislature is set to reconvene on January 5, and the Governor's budget proposal must be unveiled by January 10.

On the federal side, staff recently met with Representative Ken Calvert and Young Kim to discuss the Board's FY 2026 federal spending priorities. This is part of RCA's on-going effort to maximize federal investment in land acquisition for plans like the MSHCP. Staff are seeking meetings with the remaining members of our congressional delegation and house and senate appropriations committee staff to share the Board's priorities. Staff will also continue to explore rescheduling the Washington, D.C. trip in the new year.

The Federal Government shutdown ended on November 12, with the passage of a continuing resolution through January 30. Congress now must pass full-year appropriations funding or another continuing resolution prior to January 31, to avoid another shut down.

**M/S/C (Ruiz/Wallace) to:**

- 1) **Adopt the Board's 2026 State and Federal Legislative Platform; and**
- 2) **Receive and file a state and federal legislative update.**

## **8. FISCAL YEAR 2025 AUDITED BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Jennifer Fuller, Deputy Director of Finance, presented the Fiscal Year 2025 RCA Financial and Single Audits. The auditor has issued an unmodified or clean opinion with this year's audit. RCA's net position increased by approximately \$74 million during FY 2025, to \$769 million. This increase primarily relates to higher capital grants and contributions during the year, which includes higher than anticipated Local Development Mitigation Fund (LDMF) fees. The capital assets net of depreciation increased by \$57 million due to the addition of over 3,200 acres, of which 730 acres were added to Additional Reserve Lands (ARL). The other acres added were already in the ARL due to MOUs, but the final donation was not completed until FY 2025. The total combined fund balance on June 30, 2025, was \$112 million. This was an increase of nearly \$17 million from the prior year due to higher than anticipated mitigation fees and earnings.

Lindsey Zimmerman, Brown Armstrong Accountancy Corporation, provided a presentation on the Audit Results for June 30, 2025, Year-End Financial Statements. Brown Armstrong was engaged to perform an audit over RCA's financials in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States and in accordance with Government Auditing Standards Board (GASB), issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Brown Armstrong also issues the SAS 114, which is required communication to the Board, a report on internal control over financial reporting, and audited the compliance of the major programs as issued by the uniform guidance.

The audit produced an unmodified or clean opinion on the financials as a whole. There was no non-compliance with laws and regulations. There are no material weaknesses, no significant deficiencies, or any internal control issues. When looking at the new accounting standards GASB 102 Certain Risk Disclosures and GASB 103 Financial Reporting Model Improvements, there were no adjustments that needed to be made. Estimates, donations, lease liability, lease revenue, receivables, and deferred resources were also reviewed to make sure all the inputs are correct. There were no disagreements with management and no difficulties, fraud, or abuse.

This was a boring or easy audit because everything was able to go so smoothly.

**1) Receive and file the following reports:**

- a. Basic Financial Statements with Independent Auditors' Report for the year ended June 30, 2025; and**
- b. SAS 114 Report – *The Auditors' Communication with Those Charged with Governance.***

## **9. ELECTION OF RCA OFFICERS**

Board Member Ruiz, seconded by Board Member Daddario nominated Chair Kevin Bash and Vice Chair Karen Spiegel to continue to serve as the chair and vice chair, respectively, for 2026.

No other nominations were received.

The nominations and elections of Chair and Vice Chair were approved by a unanimous vote.

## **10. PRESENTATION – RESERVE OF THE MONTH**

Carol Thompson, Senior Management Analyst Reserve Management and Monitoring, provided a presentation on the Reserve of the Month, The Tenaja Corridor. The Tenaja Corridor, an assemblage of reserve lands, is a habitat linkage located in the Southern Santa Ana Mountains in unincorporated Riverside County, within the southwestern region of the Plan Area, west of the city of Murrieta. Over 860 acres of reserve land have been assembled in the corridor, comprising of forty-three properties. These Additional Reserve Lands (ARL) properties help fill in the gaps between the Public-Quasi-Public (PQP) land. These acquisitions have been funded through a variety of sources, including MSHCP Local Development Mitigation Fees (LDMF), Federal Section 6 grants, donations, and contributions from The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

The corridor features gently rolling hills and supports a variety of habitats, including grassland, chaparral, and oak woodland. De Luz Creek runs along the eastern portion of the corridor, creating areas of riparian scrub, woodland, and forest habitat.

Comprising Proposed Linkage 9, the Tenaja Corridor functions as a habitat linkage spanning over three miles in length. It provides essential live-in and movement habitat for several Planning Species. The corridor also facilitates wildlife movement, particularly for wide-ranging species like mountain lions and bobcats. It connects the Southern Santa Ana Mountains with two Core Areas, the Santa Rosa Plateau, known as Existing Core F, to the east and the Cleveland National Forest, known as Existing Core B, to the west.

The Tenaja Corridor provides important connectivity for mountain lions, which require large, contiguous habitat blocks to support their movements and genetic exchange. This corridor is considered vital to the long-term viability of the Santa Ana Mountains population, which faces extinction from genetic isolation if connectivity is not maintained. Expanding agriculture and rural residential development within the corridor threatens to sever this essential linkage, which would further isolate populations.

Several MSHCP Covered Species have been documented at the Tenaja Corridor, including the Engelmann oak, Grasshopper sparrow, the ocellated Humboldt lily, and the bobcat, as well as others. The Tenaja Corridor also supports the Rainbow Manzanita and the Coast Range Newt.

The Rainbow Manzanita is a rare shrub found only in a small part of Southern Riverside and Northern San Diego counties. It grows on rocky slopes in chaparral, where it thrives in compact shallow soils. Like many California natives, it is adapted to wildfire, resprouting from its base or sprouting from seeds after a burn. Its pink, bell-shaped flowers bloom in winter and attract native bees, while birds and small mammals help spread their seeds by dispersing fruit. Unfortunately, habitat loss and changes to natural fire cycles, such as frequency and intensity,

are putting pressure on this unique and beautiful plant. Through the MSHCP, over 37,000 acres of suitable habitat are described to be conserved for this species.

The Coast Range newt is a medium sized salamander found along the coastal ranges of California from Mendocino County down to San Diego. It spends most of the year hidden in moist upland habitats like oak woodlands and chaparral, but heads to ponds, streams, and slow-moving creeks in winter and early spring to breed. These newts have rough, brownish skin on top and bright orange undersides, a warning for predators that they produce a potent neurotoxin. Despite their toxicity, some predators like garter snakes have developed a resistance. A California Species of Special Concern, populations are threatened by habitat fragmentation, road mortality during migrations, and invasive species like crayfish and other fish. Through implementation of the MSHCP, over 8,000 acres of suitable breeding habitat and over 76,000 acres of upland habitat will be conserved to support this important species.

Vice Chair Spiegel asked that the next time there is a presentation, staff should also present where some of the species' names come from.

Carol Thompson stated that it is typically the botanist that identified the species. The Rainbow manzanita was named after the community of Rainbow, California. The origin of the species' names will be included in the next presentation.

Aaron Hake, Executive Director, added that RCA has spent a lot of resources focusing on this corridor, and it has been the target of several grant applications as this is a competitive area to submit for. The other reason staff focuses on this is because a lot of properties in the area are small single-family residential parcels, and therefore susceptible to being fragmented.

## **11. BOARD OF DIRECTORS / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Aaron Hake congratulated Chair Bash and Vice Chair Speigel for their election to another term. This has been a wonderful year of accomplishments for RCA. All the work that went into the workshop this year had many years of build-up. There is still a lot to do with the Strategic Improvement Assessment and Action Plan (SIAAP) in 2026. RCA has acquired some great properties this year, and the Annual Report will show that next year. RCA staff are grateful to work for the Board and help carry out this mission for the region. Congratulations were also given to the Finance Department on a clean, boring audit.

Chair Bash thanked everyone for the vote of confidence, it was really appreciated. The city of Norco will be holding a memorial event for Pearl Harbor; this is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The reason it is held in Norco is because there was a naval hospital there and the first patients that arrived there were from Pearl Harbor. This year, Capital Caldwell, who was the overriding commander of the Naval Base, is the keynote speaker.

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**12. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business for consideration by the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors, Chair Bash adjourned the meeting at 12:57 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled to be held on **Monday, January 5, 2026**.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Mobley  
Administrative Services Director/  
Clerk of the Board