WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 3, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by Chair Kevin Bash at 12:30 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		**Board of Directors Absent**
Karen Spiegel	Bob Magee	Jose Medina
Chuck Washington	Dan Temple	V. Manuel Perez
Colleen Wallace	Ron Holliday	Yxstian Gutierrez
Jeff Cervantez	Kevin Bash	Julio Martinez
Dale Welty	David Starr Rabb	Veronica Sanchez
Tony Daddario	Patricia Lock Dawson	Ulises Cabrera
Mike McMinn	Jessica Alexander	Crystal Ruiz
Connie Howard-Clark	Joseph Morabito	

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Bash.

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 (Eastvale/Murrieta) to approve the following Consent Calendar items.

6A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 1, 2026

6B. WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN FEE COLLECTION REPORT FOR APRIL 2026

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 April 2026.

6C. WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN FEE COLLECTION REPORT FOR MAY 2026

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 May 2026.

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 June 30, 2026.

6E. ACQUISITIONS STATUS REPORT

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the acquisition status report as of May 31, 2026.

6F. MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT FOR APRIL 2026

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Monthly Investment Report for the month ended April 30, 2026.

6G. MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT FOR MAY 2026

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Monthly Investment Report for the month ended May 31, 2026.

6H. SINGLE SIGNATURE AUTHORITY REPORT

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Single Signature Authority report for the fourth quarter ended June 30, 2026.

6I. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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

7. PRESENTATION – RESERVE OF THE MONTH

Cody Bear Sutton, Reserve Management and Monitoring Manager, provided a presentation on the Reserve of the Month, the Bishop Property. The Bishop Property was acquired in 2009 using a combination of Proposition 12 funding from the 2000 Parks Bond and Federal Section 6 grant funding. The property is just over 40 acres in size and, while relatively small on its own, is part of a larger assemblage of conserved lands in the area. This assemblage includes the Hannon Property (42 acres), La Laguna (122 acres), and the Deetz, Fenster, and Wieler Property (78 acres). In addition, this reserve assemblage is adjacent to thousands of acres of the Cleveland National Forest, greatly expanding the amount of connected habitat available to wildlife. Collectively, these lands form a substantial block of conserved habitat that contributes to broader conservation goals.

The Bishop Property is adjacent to Lake Elsinore and the Santa Ana Mountains. Despite its small size, the Bishop Property supports a variety of habitat types. The upland habitats consist of a mix of chamise chaparral and coastal sage scrub, which are dominated by species such as chamise and California buckwheat. This vegetation is well adapted to dry conditions and periodic wildfire, forming dense shrub cover across the hillsides.

In contrast, the Bishop Property also contains coast live oak-dominated riparian woodland. This area includes coast live oak, sycamore, eucalyptus, and other riparian vegetation, creating a cooler, shaded environment compared to the surrounding uplands. Riparian woodlands are especially valuable because they provide water, shade, and concentrated food resources, making them focal areas for wildlife activity.

The Bishop Property contributes to regional habitat connectivity identified in the MSHCP through Proposed Linkage L-1. When fully assembled, Linkage L-1 will connect Existing Core-B, which is made up primarily of Cleveland National Forest Public/Quasi-Public (PQP) lands within the Santa Ana Mountains, to Proposed Core-1 and Existing Core-C, linking the Santa Ana Mountains to the Temescal Creek area and the Gavilan Hills. This linkage also supports broader regional movement north toward the Lake Mathews-Estelle Mountain Reserve. As additional conserved lands are acquired, gaps within the linkage will be filled, improving habitat connectivity and strengthening regional wildlife movement. Together, these linkages support movement for wide-ranging species such as mountain lions, bobcats, and coyotes, while also providing important habitat for a variety of other MSHCP Covered Species.

Several MSHCP Covered Species have been documented within the Bishop Property. These species include the Coast Range Newt, Coulter's Matilija Poppy, the Northern Red-diamond Rattlesnake, and Lincoln's Sparrow, which was named by John James Audubon after his traveling companion, Thomas Lincoln. Together, these species reflect the range of habitats and ecological conditions present within the 40-acre Bishop Property.

Wildfire is a major ecological process throughout Riverside County and has historically shaped many of the region's natural communities. In August 2018, the Holy Fire burned approximately

23,136 acres within the Santa Ana Mountains, including the Bishop Property and surrounding conserved lands.

Images were shown comparing post-fire conditions shortly after the Holy Fire with current conditions on the Bishop Property. The fire significantly altered the vegetation structure, leaving the upland scrub and chaparral habitats reduced to the black ash visible on the hillsides. While the fire remained primarily at the surface level in the riparian areas, it scorched some of the smaller, less fire-adapted trees. Current conditions on the property show that, in the eight years since the fire, the chaparral and scrub habitats, as well as the oak woodland areas, have demonstrated strong natural regeneration. This recovery highlights the resilience of these fire-adapted communities within the landscape.

Coastal live oaks possess adaptations that allow them to recover following surface wildfires that do not reach the crown, including the ability to resprout after damage. However, increasingly frequent or high-severity crown wildfires, particularly in areas with invasive species and altered fire regimes, can reduce regeneration and threaten the long-term persistence of these woodlands. These long-lived trees can survive for centuries and form broad, dense canopies that create cooler, shaded microhabitats. Their acorns provide a critical food resource for a wide range of wildlife, supporting hundreds of species across the landscape. Protecting these oak woodlands helps maintain biodiversity, provides key habitat functions such as shelter and nesting sites, and supports long-term ecological resilience across the reserve network.

These woodland and riparian habitats support a variety of wildlife species, including the Cooper's Hawk, an MSHCP Covered Species commonly associated with these environments. The species was named after William Cooper, a 19th-century American naturalist and collector. Cooper's Hawks are agile, fast-flying raptors that specialize in hunting other birds, using dense vegetation and tree cover to maneuver quickly while pursuing prey. Their relatively short, rounded wings and long tails allow them to navigate through trees with remarkable precision, making them highly adapted to woodland and riparian habitats. Because they rely on these habitats for both nesting and hunting, the conservation of woodland and riparian areas under the MSHCP is important to supporting this species across the landscape.

In contrast to species that rely on woodland and riparian habitats, more open and patchy areas across the Bishop Property support species such as the Belding's Orange-throated Whiptail, an MSHCP Covered Species and California Species of Special Concern associated with coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats. The species is named after Lyman Belding, a 19th-century naturalist who documented wildlife throughout California and Baja California. Whiptails are highly active, diurnal foragers that move continuously across the ground in search of insects and other small invertebrates. The orange coloration of the throat plays an important role in mating and communication and is produced through a combination of diet and genetic factors, becoming more vibrant in males during the breeding season. Due to habitat loss and fragmentation across Southern California, this species relies increasingly on protected lands within the MSHCP to maintain suitable habitat conditions across the landscape.

Board Member Washington asked that the presentation be shared with the Board Members. Cody Bear Sutton confirmed that it would be sent to the Board.

Vice Chair Spiegel asked how Lincoln's Sparrow got its name. Cody Bear Sutton shared that John James Aduubon named it after someone that came on the trip to Labradour where the species was first discovered.

8. BOARD OF DIRECTORS / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Aaron Hake, Executive Director, welcomed the Board back after its last meeting in June. Over the summer, RCA closed on four property transactions, adding 394.8 acres to the MSHCP Reserve. One of the transactions was a property exchange. Altogether, the acquisitions represented a $19.2 million investment funded through a state grant. Congratulations were extended to the Right of Way team for their hard work.

9. CLOSED SESSION

At this time, Steve DeBaun, legal counsel, announced the Board will be going in to Closed Session to discuss the property 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	283-130-007	Megan Baker & Joel Cabotage	RCA
2	470-110-020	Lance T. Lim & Jill M. Yath	RCA
3	392-350-017 & 392-350-018	Barbara Echan & Mary E. Gosner	RCA

9B. REPORT OUT FROM CLOSED SESSION

Mr. DeBaun announced the Board considered and approved the following closed session items:

Item 1: Acquisition of the property was approved for $161,500.
Item 2: Acquisition of the property was approved for $205,000.

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 1:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled to be held on **Monday, October 5, 2026**.

Respectfully submitted,

Melonie Donson

Melonie Donson
Deputy Clerk of the Board