

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard C. Brody
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Steven Rosentsweig
Vice President

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Beth Burnam
Director

Laurie Price
Director

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Clark Stevens

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

EIGHT-HUNDRED FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING

Monday July 22, 2024—6:00 P.M.

Location: RCD District Office, 4505 Las Virgenes Road, Suite 215, Calabasas

The meeting can also be accessed remotely via Zoom. Members of the public are able to watch/listen to the meeting and provide comment at appropriate times by selecting this link:

<https://rcdsmm-org.zoom.us/j/83062285194?pwd=UG5hVlF4Z3NBRjNHR2RyWjNBclY2UT09>.

You may also join the meeting by dialing the following phone number: (669) 900-6833 and entering the meeting ID and passcode: **Meeting ID: 830 6228 5194 Meeting Passcode: 370601**

AGENDA

Information about, and copies of, supporting materials for agenda items are available for public review at the RCDSMM office at (818) 597-8627. A fee may be charged for copies.

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. CLOSED SESSION
 - a. Public Employment: Executive Officer (Government Code Section 54957)
3. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS
4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

This is the time set aside for those wishing to address the Board on matters which fall under the Board's jurisdiction. If the matter you address is not on the agenda, Directors may not discuss or take action on comments made here except to put the matter on the agenda, at their discretion, for a future Board meeting. If the matter you address is already on the agenda, the Board will consider your comments when making their decision. Each commenter will have a time limit of three minutes.
5. USDA/NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE REPORT:
Summary of NRCS programs and activities by District Conservationists.
6. MINUTES: Approval of minutes for meetings on June 24, 2024.
7. FINANCIAL REPORTING: Presentation of expense & other reports, through June 2024 (not included in emailed packet). This item may include a related discussion on budgeting and staff billing rates.

8. REGULAR CALENDAR

A. Report by Personnel Committee on change in Executive Officer position.

B. Approvals

- i. Authorizing the RCD to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans District 7 and initiate the PID process.
- ii. Authorizing the RCD to enter into a grant agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in the amount of \$1,151,67.56. This project creates a comprehensive fire prevention program for the region, focusing on homeowner outreach and education while conserving and restoring plant and wildlife habitat functions by improving homeowner practices and reestablishing native oaks in critical locations.
- iii. Authorizing an ~\$8.1 million contract (fully-funded) with Moffatt & Nichol for ongoing Topanga Lagoon work. The 90% design phase has been awarded by WCB and as the main consultant doing a majority of the roadway, bridge and lagoon excavation design, Moffatt & Nichol will build on the work they have contributed thus far. This portion will cover the Plans, Specifications and Estimate (PS&E Phase 1) in the Caltrans process. They will coordinate relevant subcontractors to complete all required milestones for the 30%, 65% and 90% design steps as well as coordinate plans for utility relocations and Right-of-Way Engineering and appraisals. This work is scheduled to begin in July 2024 for completion by December 2026.

C. Report on Reserve Fund replenishment (*verbal*)

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:

A. Notification of the opening of a new bank account (replaces the existing account) with BMO with Lisa Rand, Clark Stevens and Nancy Helsley (as Treasurer) listed as signers/approvers.

B. Staff Reports for June 2024:

- i. Summary of general fund vs. billed hours
- i. Clark Stevens, Executive Officer/Principal Architect
- ii. Dan Cooper, Deputy Executive Officer/Principal Conservation Biologist
- iii. Rosi Dagit, Principal Conservation Biologist
- iv. Marilyn Brody French, Education & Engagement Director
- v. Shelly Backlar, Community Resilience Coordinator

9. DIRECTORS' COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

10. ADJOURNMENT

Persons with disabilities may contact the Deputy Executive Officer at 818/597-8627 x101 at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting to request receipt of an agenda in an alternative format or to request disability-related accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, in order to participate in the public meeting. Later requests will be accommodated to the extent feasible.

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REGULAR BOARD MEETING

EIGHT-HUNDRED FIFTY-THIRD MEETING

Monday June 24, 2024—6:00 P.M.

DRAFT MINUTES

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** the meeting was called to order by President R.C. Brody at 6:01 p.m. A quorum was established with Directors Beth Burnam, Nancy Helsley, Laurie Price, and Steve Rosentsweig in attendance. Also in attendance were Associate Directors Dennis Washburn and Deborah Klein-Lopez. Executive Officer Clark Stevens and Office Manager/HR Specialist Lisa Rand were also present. Community Resilience Coordinator Shelly Backlar joined via Zoom.
- 2. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Glenn Bailey (former Director) joined virtually, and Mishra Devendra joined as a guest of Dennis Washburn. We were also joined by Cindy Solovei (virtually) and Rich Wilson of Agility, a financial consulting firm. Valerie Phillips (Bob Murray & Associates) attended virtually.

Mr. Bailey suggested the RCDSMM connect with the Sustainability Alliance of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council, which meets the 2nd Sunday of each month (www.ncsa.la).
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None
- 4. USDA/NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE REPORT:**
No report
- 5. Approval of minutes for Board meeting of May 20, 2024.** The Board reviewed the minutes and voted to approve them as presented. **Ms. Burnam/Ms. Helsley; approved 5-0.**
- 6. FINANCIAL REPORTING:** Presentation of expense & other reports, through May 2024. Mr. Brody requested a specific update on the top five outstanding invoices on the aging list each month going forward. The report was “received and filed” (**Mr. Brody**).

7. REGULAR CALENDAR

- A. Report by Personnel Committee on District Manager (“DM”) position, with discussion. Valerie (Bob Murray) presented a “draft timeline” for hiring, with an offer to be given at the end of August, and a late September start date. She also requested to be sent outreach videos and an org chart of the existing office staff.
- B. Budget discussion relevant to staff compensation was tabled until the next board meeting.
- C. Report on Reserve Fund replenishment. Rich Wilson (Agility) recommended starting to transfer money back to reserves after July 1, but recommended a more substantive discussion at the next meeting.

8. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:

- A. Staff Reports were presented for May 2024.

9. DIRECTORS’ COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Board members requested to see the general fund-to-billable hours bar graph included with prior board packets.

10. **CLOSED SESSION:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 (**Mr. Rosentsweig/Ms. Burnam**) and moved to a Closed Session at 7:45, when the Board met.

11. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

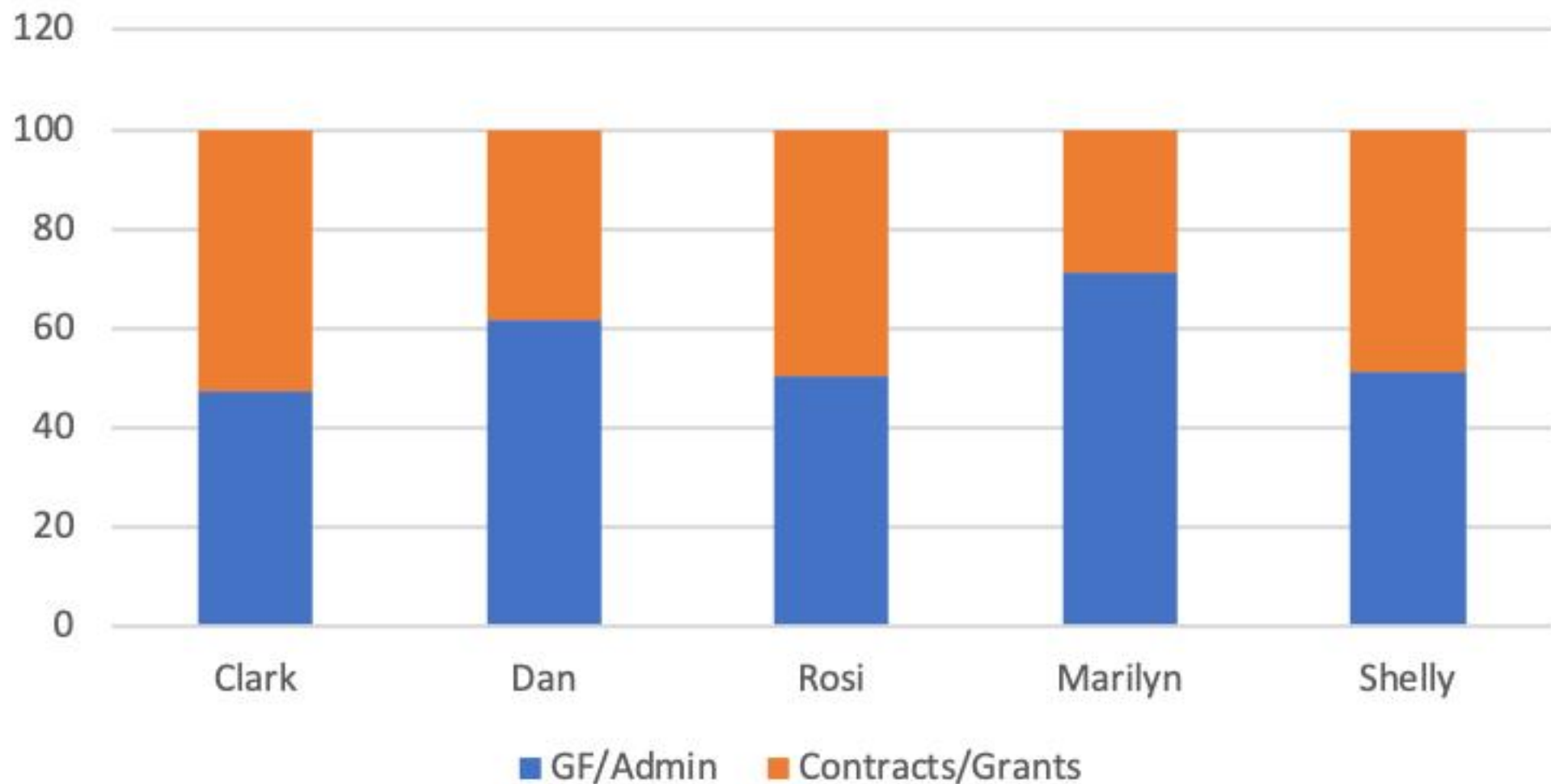
Submitted by: _____
Dan Cooper, Deputy Executive Officer

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
R.C. Brody, President, Board of Directors

Date: _____

June billing ratios





Report of Activities to RCDSMM Board of Directors- June 24, 2024 meeting

Clark Stevens
Executive Officer
Principal Architect/Planner

- June total hours = 160
- 76 hours GF (52%)

Executive Officer tasks

Staff Administrative activities:

- budget development was primary activity
 - review of financials, invoices with acting Controller, bookkeeping staff and or Office Manager 2-3 times per week
 - interaction and correspondence with Board on re-organization and FY 24-25 agreement
 - commentary on DM position advertisement
 - monthly All-Staff coordination meeting
 - bi-weekly Senior Staff meetings (with Senior Conservation Biologists, Education Coordinator, Resilience Coordinator, acting Controller, Office Manager)
 - weekly meetings with deputy exec officer
 - year-end evaluation activities
 - FY 24-25 payroll analysis
- vacation first week of June

Finance Department activities:

- Reviewed timesheets and approved invoices.
- FTC form input based on state controller communication
- Met with FA committee to review draft FY 24-25 budget
- Revised FY 24-25 payroll proposal with HR.

Re-Organization Process

EO transition agreement was delayed for procedural reasons but will be complete this month

New Business Development, Stakeholder Interaction

Manzanita School, Old Topanga Canyon

Background mapping work will begin in August with school workshop in September.

Seminole Springs Dam Spillway and Reservoir Restoration Planning Project ("La Sierra Watershed Sediment Reduction Project")



Received retainer check from HOA. Grant management Meetings with project manager, environmental designer and engineering team to define strategy. Team assembled available baseline mapping. Looking for funding to obtain better baseline topography after the post-woolsey debris flows.

NFWF Woolsey Fire Recovery Grant

agreement approved by funder; before Board tonight for approval. Staff report in packet.

Chatsworth Nature Preserve

Bi-weekly meetings of Chatsworth Nature Preserve “Collaborative” in preparation for Preserve Enhancement and Management Planning proposal, providing service to active community groups and DWP pending their RFP for our proposal for Resource Management Plan for the DWP Chatworth Nature preserve properties. Principal conservation biologist completed initial report (overview, with additional focus on oak woodland and defensible space issues) under contract to Sky Valley Volunteers

Southern LA County Biodiversity and Connectivity Master Plan

Wildlife Conservation Board approved \$1.2M on May 23, contingent upon release of State funds, which was given on June 18.

Funding of \$500,000 approved by Wildlife Conservation Network.

CDFW funding of \$800,000 is still contingent on release of state funds. In communication with CDFW Regional Manager and grant lead for the department. WCB and WCN are aware of the delay and will be flexible on start date- their funding is solid regardless.

Santa Monica Bay Restoration Committee (Vice-Chair/Executive Council)

- represented RCDSMM at Board of Governors Meeting.

LAFCO re-districting project

- no activity this month

SM Mts Fire Safe Alliance (SMMFSA)

- no meeting

City of Malibu Environmental Review Board

- met, reviewed and made recommendations on Westward Beach Road project and proposed alternative to reduce impacts to zuma creek from county road stabilization project

Linkage Implementation Alliance

- no meeting this month

Principal Architect/Planner/Project Manager tasks:

Newhall Pass Wildlife Passage Project- Lead Architect and Planner

- worked with Caltrans and completed MOU that is before the RCDSMM BOD for approval this month
- coordination with Project Manager and consultants in EIR phase
- weekly meetings with RCD project manager; weekly meetings with science team lead, weekly in-house design progress meetings with in-house design team, bi-weekly engineering design meeting



- environmental designer developing digital vegetation for modeling and representations

Topanga Lagoon Restoration Project- Lead Architect and Planner

- multiple meetings with project staff, finance consultant to review and approve invoices
- participated in CEQA team and Outreach team meetings
- finalized representations of "Preferred Alternative"

Headwaters Corners for TreePeople Land Trust and City of Calabasas (landowner)- Architect and Planner

- Met with client staff; overall project on hold but continuing to coordinate bridge engineering work that will continue

LA Fire defensible space demo garden

- Final phase of construction will be reinitiated after contracting for NFWF funding (see above)

Community Resilience Projects

- Weekly meetings with Community Resilience Coordinator and team on existing CalFire HIZ and education grants

NRCS Urban Ag Community Resilience Outreach Grant

- Reviewed GIS staff work on baseline conditions and opportunities for Urban Ag in our expanded service area

Rindge Dam Removal Project- Interpretive, Landscape, and Architectural Design

- developed base drawings and coordinated with consultant. Developed communication strategy Serra Retreat community zoom today to review flood analysis and advise client on resident input following meeting

1 July 2024

From: Daniel S. Cooper

BOARD REPORT June 2024

General Fund (1005; 69 hrs)

As Deputy Executive Officer:

- Attended kick-off event at Lake Balboa for City's "Vision Plan" for Sepulveda Basin (6/17).
- Worked with EO and Lisa Rand to develop agenda for RCD Board meeting (6/22).
- Attended monthly DEI committee meeting (6/11)
- Supervised staff (Bella Isles, Isaac Yelchin, Danielle Picciano).
- Weekly calls with EO regarding administrative issues.
- Responded to misc. calls and emails.

As Principal Conservation Biologist:

- Continued working with Rosi Dagit/Alyssa Morgan on oak seedling paper based on Trippet Ranch restoration.
- Met with Debbie Sharpton to discuss new project advising on Seminole Hot Springs restoration effort.
- Urban Nature Research Center meetings (date). Coordinated by Greg Pauly (Curator, Herpetology).
- Represented RCDSMM at (Santa Monica Mountains) Environmental Review Board ("ERB") meeting for Los Angeles Co. Dept. of Regional Planning (date).

"4000" Projects (individual clients to conduct assessments/comment on resources, biological reports, etc.) (58.5 hrs)

- Statements of Habitat/Biological reports for private residences in the SMM/Sphere of Influence.
- Nesting bird surveys.
- Worked with Manzanita School (Topanga) to develop non-native Arundo removal proposal.
- Developing land bank for eastern Santa Monica Mountains with local residents, focusing on California Walnut Woodland, mountain lion connectivity, and riparian resources.
- Working with Northeast L.A. residents and MRCA to development management plan for Elephant Hill open space.

Misc. (e.g., talks, media)

- (related; not billed): Continued part-time Lecturer position in the Dept. of Biological Sciences at CSULB (teaching Ornithology Fall/Spring), and in the IoES program at UCLA (mentoring senior practicum students, Winter).
- Continued to lead "Los Angeles Raptor Study", funded through Friends of Griffith Park, now in its 8th year.

Sick days: 20 hours
Vacation days: 20 hrs
Holidays: 8 hrs

General Fund vs. Billed Work: 61.5%:38.5%

1 July 2024

From: Rosi Dagit

BOARD REPORT FOR June 2024

1. Topanga Turtle Project Funded by RCD Turtle donations 3064 (8.5 hours)

Annual turtle roundup occurred on 17 June and we found a single hatchling, some new juveniles and an old friend #42. Had volunteer assistance from Turtle Conservancy in Ojai.

2. WSP Mentoring (2 hours GF)

Participated in Luke's WAVE event at Rancho Sierra Vista Satwiwa. Coordinated scheduling.

3. School Programs 5000 (0 Hrs. contract)

No action this month.

4. Topanga Lagoon Restoration Planning 3226 (20 hrs)

Prepared monthly report. Worked on revised schedule and invoicing. Supervised lagoon seining, data entry and coordinated work on new grant proposal with Jamie and Kara.

5. Topanga Lagoon Visitor Serving Planning 3237 (5.25 hrs)

Worked on invoices. Coordinated calls with WJE and geotech.

6. CDFW CEQA Grant 3238 (33.25 hrs)

Prepared monthly report. Multiple coordination meetings with consultants, Caltrans, DBH and project team. Coordinated file and invoice management. Worked on response to comments for FEIR. Worked on figures and coordinating team comments.

7. WCB Topanga Lagoon Grant 3247 (13 hrs)

Prepared monthly report and invoice. Coordinated with MN and Caltrans regarding project report, design, and landowner agreement. Project Team coordination calls. Prepared cost estimate scope. Coordinated tribal engagement event for August. Set up interviews for new permit coordinator/asst project manager.

8. CDPR Malibu Snorkel Survey 3244 (4.5 hrs)

Supervised June survey. No steelhead found. Lots of filmmakers participated. Attended TAC meeting.

10. CDFW Genetic Conservation Plan CDFW (2.5+ hrs)

Prepared monthly report. Calls with CDFW regarding grant scope amendment to use remaining funds to purchase holding tanks for steelhead rescues.

11. WCB Oak Restoration 3248 (Task 1 0 hrs)

No action this month.

12. Topanga Elementary School Oak Violation Contract 3246 (Task 1: 0 hrs; Task 2: 0 hrs; Task 3: 0 hrs, Task 4: 0 hrs)

No action this month. LAUSD finally paid and now we wait to hear back from Regional Planning.

13. 3245 Crayfish CDPR (0.5 hrs)

Reviewed grant proposal and provided letter of support.

14. Topanga Snorkel CDPR (2.75 hrs)

Set up new contract and coordinated snorkeling 24-26 June. Over 900 young of the year and almost 300 juveniles and adults. Highest population count in years and the creek is looking great! No crayfish!

Other projects- (GF time)

- Reviewed overall RCD budget with Rich and Lisa
- Started working with Bio team re permits
- Participated in meetings regarding hiring of new District Manager

Administrative Duties (GF hours)

- Responded to calls and emails.
- Met with leadership team
- Worked with Rich, Lisa, Tom and Erin to straighten out invoice issues.
- RCD staff meetings
- Met with Bio team to coordinate schedules and other grants, projects
- Reviewed biology staff timesheets
- Provided detailed work schedule and directions for bio team

Holiday – 0 hours

Vacation Leave –0 hours

Sick Leave- 6 hours

Total GF hours billed= 48

Total Billable hours = 95

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To: Board of Directors, RCDSMM
From: Marilyn Brody French, Director of Education & Engagement
Re: Education Department Report June 2024
General Fund Hours: 77

Programs Delivered

- 0 Virtual Lessons
- 5 Field Programs
- 0 On Campus

Senior Management Level Responsibilities

- Attend, contribute to, and record minutes for Leadership Mtgs
- Mitigate staff issues through creation and implementation of organizational structure, communication pathways, and transparency
- Contribute to hiring procedures and support newly hired staff

Education & Engagement Department Head Responsibilities

- Mtgs w partners: Audubon, Rio Schools, LAUSD STEM, State Parks, WSP
- Hold weekly department meetings with core staff
- Hire, onboard, train, and support education department staff
- Direct education staff to maintain and implement existing dept programs
- Develop and implement novel education & engagement programs
- Apply for and track funding sources across dept programs
- Create and maintain administrative and financial documents within dept

Trainings

- None in June

Education & Engagement Department Highlights

June finalized the academic year with field programs. We held a meaningful potluck with awards for the education team (and their dogs) on June 10. Preparing for summer programming at Zuma Beach in partnership with the [Children's Lifesaving Foundation](#).

July 22, 2024, Board Report, Community Resilience Department

Shelly Backlar, Community Resilience Director
Newhall Wildlife Crossing Project Manager

2024-2025 Fiscal Year Budget for Projects

- Created budgets for active grants and projects.
 - Home Ignition Zone Evaluations, CalFire funding through 2025
 - Newhall Wildlife Crossing, Wildlife Conservation Board funding through 2026
 - Urban Agriculture Capacity Building, National Resource Conservation Service funding through September 2024
- Created budgets for approved grants not yet under contract.
 - Woolsey Fire Grant, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funding (RCD was previously a subcontractor under Conservation Biology Institute and is now the grantee).
 - South LA County Habitat Connectivity Master Plan
 - Funding from Wildlife Conservation Board (\$1.2m) and Wildlife Conservation Network (\$500k)
 - California Department of Fish and Game grant pending decision (\$786.4k)

Newhall Wildlife Crossing- WCB grant

- I am working with Clark Stevens, Bella Isles and Jelly Kehler on a webpage as part of a communications and media plan to release the Newhall Wildlife Crossing Feasibility Study Report.
- Clark and I are working through the details associated with entering into a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans to initiate the PID. A resolution will be presented at Monday's board meeting.

Community Resilience- Various grants. CR Team is:

- Scheduling HIZ evaluations and coordinating with our evaluators to conduct them.
- Updating our informational materials and supplies for community education and outreach events.
- Worked on the front office design, and painted the canvases that visitors see when walking into the office.
- Arezo Sarwary attended the Governor's Wildlife Taskforce meeting on Friday, July 12. She gleaned information about programs and potential funding for wildfire mitigation plus Goldspotted Oak Borer Beetle monitoring, prevention, and treatment.
- Conducting HIZ evaluations – we have completed 20 evaluations since the last board meeting and 10 more are scheduled for July so far.
- Evaluating homes in Westlake Village, Studio City, Sherman Oaks, Agoura, Cold Creek/Calabasas, Topanga, and Tujunga.
- Conducting a community-scale evaluation of an entire HOA in Westlake Village, over 600 units.
- The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant is approved, and a resolution to enter into a grant agreement will be presented at Monday's board meeting.

Regenerative Agriculture- NRCS Capacity Building grant

- This grant will be finished at the end of September, so we are in the process of finishing GIS work, documenting all our conversations and insights gained, and meeting with partners to determine the next steps.
- We are working with Jamie Quarfeld to identify funding for the next phase – establishing partnerships and working together for mutually beneficial goals and objectives.
- Clark Stevens and I met with 16 experts doing work related to healthy soils in Los Angeles and Marin Counties to explore potential partnerships and funding opportunities.

Urban Wildlife Connectivity Plan for South Los Angeles County- Grant proposal WCB/CDFW/WCN

- We have funding commitments from the Wildlife Conservation Board, \$1.2M, and the Wildlife Conservation Network, \$500K.
- Submitted and under review by CDFW's Watershed Grants, Planning funding (\$879,400).

Project Hours 45
General Fund (Budget and proposals) 80