

Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

5905 Capistrano Ave, Suite F, Atascadero, CA 93422 | 805.460.7272 | www.us-ltrcd.org

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

4:00 pm May 28, 2026

Atascadero Library O'Grady Conference Room
6555 Capistrano Ave, Atascadero, CA

I. Call to Order, 4:02pm by Tom Mora

Attendance:

Board Directors: Tom Mora, President; Steve Carter, Treasurer; Chris Smith; Eric Michielssen

Staff: Drew Loganbill, Executive Director/Board Secretary; Hailey Morello, Spencer Gordon, Project Managers

Associates: Hilary Phillips, NRCS; Geoff Cromwell, USGS

II. Additions/Changes to the Agenda (Gov. Code §54954.2(b))

- a. Move NRCS report up to go after Guest Presentation.

III. Public Comment- No comments.

IV. Guest Presentation

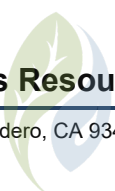
USGS Adelaida groundwater study [Presenter: Geoff Cromwell, Research Geologist, USGS] – Project started in 2020 with the RCD helped interface between USGS and the County of San Luis Obispo to characterize hydrology in Adelaida region, in northwest part of the county. The project aimed to collect data from various wells in the region, quantify that data, and refine understanding and influence in groundwater pumping in the region. RCD's role was introduction to the community and to site. Most irrigated land in Monterey Shale. 60 wells were continuously monitored from 2022-2024, including 2 wells at Willow Creek Conservancy. USGS expects to publish study next year.

NRCS Report – Conservation Innovation Grants were announced recently. \$65 million towards innovation and development of new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies to further natural resource conservation.

NRCS Chief Bettencourt stepped down and new Chief Colton Buckley was appointed in her place.

V. RCD Reports

- a. Board Updates (limited to 2 minutes per person, NTE 10 minutes total) - None
- b. Executive Director Report –
 - Upcoming events:
 1. Rural Ranch Roads Workshop – Stenner Creek – CSL RCD – June 9.
 2. Profitability Essentials WS for rancher – June 3-4, ~\$200. Noble Research Institute. At Camp SLO.
 - Strategic plan update – Current plan is for 2026. Will need to look into options for moderator to assist with new plan
 - Form 700 – reminder to submit
 - Audit update – Submitted all requested items to MLH. Waiting for completion of audit.
 - Royce Larson retirement – presentation at June meeting
 - LWG –Planning underway for meeting in second week of July. Will be a few presentations and a resource fair with partners present to table the event. Looking for meeting space. J Lohr and Atascadero Grange were recommended.
 - Invasive species Grant – Discussions occurring to apply for grant to target Arundo, phragmites, and/or yellow star thistle (YST). EM mentioned need to address YST as it is vigorously spreading throughout county.



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- Wine industry update by PRWA and Vineyard Team – 2.7% decline globally, 6th consecutive year of decline. Estimate 35% decrease in vineyard acreage in production in last 5 years. Earliest season in 20 years, possibly on record. 1 month early.
- c. Project Updates
 - DOE project was approved to enter into budget period 2. This project was on hold for almost a year and staff will be engaging with partners to pick up where they left off.
 - New Project for PBA – Watershed Research Training Center - \$40K for training, support of PBA strategic plan
 - FHG invited to submit full proposal. Will be presenting resolution next meeting.
 - Salinas River Arundo and Phragmites control funding through Community Project Funding through Zoe Lofgren's office.
- d. Staff Presentation – Wildlife habitat and pollinator projects – Hailey Morello- presentation on successful wildlife habitat and pollinator projects throughout the district. Identified funders and benefits of these projects.

VI. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of regular meeting minutes for April – EM motion to approve, SC seconds, all present approve.
- b. Approval of May Treasurer's Report – Financial report not up to date due to attention on audit and April financials not fully closed out. More full report to occur at June meeting. EM motion to approve, CS seconds, all present approve.

VII. Other Agency, Director, and Association Reports

- a. WRAC – SC – report on desalination in the county. Consultant looked at several sites. Environmental groups vocalized opposition. Long term project that is several years out.
- b. ALAB – No meeting

VIII. Board Discussion and/or Action Items

- a. Cal Trans Toro Creek Mitigation Co-Op Agreement – Looking to get approval, but other agencies included in agreement have submitted edits and don't have final agreement yet. Unable to receive legal review from County Counsel yet. Board advises reaching out to County Counsel one more time and if unable to review, then seek private legal review. Table approval to next meeting.
- b. Land Conservancy of SLO Forbearance Agreement. – 20 year agreement to be third party verification. SC motion to approve, EM seconds, all present approve.
- c. Firesafe Council Proposal for Fuels Reduction Project – Proposal for fuels treatment from Firesafe Council for treatment to start mid-June in Cambria private property. EM motion to approve, SC seconds. All present approve.
- d. FY 2026-27 Draft Budget – Review of FY2026-27 Budget. Expecting slight changes to project expenses and increase in revenue as new grants/agreements are approved.

IX. Agenda Setting

- a. Next board meeting location and date - June 25, 2026

X. Adjournment - SC motion to adjourn, EM second, all present approve. – 6:14 pm