



## SAN BENITO COUNTY AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL FORM

Dom Zanger  
District No. 1

Kollin Kosmicki  
District No. 2

Mindy Sotelo  
District No. 3  
Chair

Angela Curro  
District No. 4  
Vice-Chair

Bea Gonzales  
District No. 5

**Item Number: 2.3**

**MEETING DATE:** 02/07/2023

**DEPARTMENT:** BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**AGENDA ITEM PREPARER:** Gracie Rodriguez

**DEPT HEAD/DIRECTOR:** Ray Espinosa

**SUBJECT:**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Consider and Approve contract with San Benito Resource Conservation District (SBRCD), a special district under Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code, for \$20,000.00 for the fiscal year 2022/23 and delegate authority to the County Administrative Officer to execute the contract. If the Board desires, receive a presentation from SBRCD and/or provide staff direction on, but not limited to, future allocations.

SBC FILE NUMBER:156

**AGENDA SECTION:**

REGULAR AGENDA

**BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:**

The San Benito Resource Conservation District ([SBRCD](#)) is a special district organized under division 9 of the California Public Resources Code to provide outreach, education, technical, and financial assistance to address soil and water quality, climate resilience, and ecosystem health on private and public lands. SBRCD provides non-regulatory, confidential, free assistance to landowners and land managers in San Benito County.

There are 98 RCDs throughout California. SBRCD is part of the Central Coast Region of the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts.

The SBRCD, in its current form, was established in 1961. The Board of Directors is comprised of five volunteer directors who oversee conservation programs that promote erosion, water conservation, invasive species removal, stream cleanup, flood control, watershed restoration, pollinator and wildlife habitat enhancement, and more. The SBRCD works closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other partners to help landowners and land managers implement

voluntary conservation practices on their properties.

In July 2022, the district hired a new Executive Director who began to partner with other Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) and organizations to apply for state funding to support conservation efforts in San Benito County. Below are pending grants and recently awarded.

### **How Funded**

Many RCDs in California receive a portion of the County property tax base to fund their operations; others receive an annual allocation from County general funds; some RCDs rely solely on grants to fund conservation programs. RCDs do not automatically receive state or federal funds but must apply for grants from state and federal agencies or private foundations to fund their programs.

Since at least 2017, the SBRCD has received approximately \$15,000 per year from the County of San Benito as “base funding.” This annual allocation is crucial for the basic operations of the SBRCD and was not included in COSB’s FY23 budget. This may have been due to the resignation of the previous SBRCD District Manager in April 2022 and a vacancy that was not filled until July 2022.

### **Past Programs & Services**

In the past, SBRCD has implemented the following programs in San Benito County:

- SWEEP -- State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program. SBRCD provided free irrigation evaluations to numerous growers in the county
- Irrigation Efficiency Workshops – SBRCD partnered with San Benito County Water District to host informative workshops for agricultural producers
- Annual Waterwise Garden Tour – an annual garden tour in Hollister to highlight attractive, water-efficient landscapes'
- Livestock & Land Program – erosion control & nutrient management for small livestock facilities
- San Benito County Fair – the SBRCD Booth provided information to County residents about soil and water conservation, pollinator habitat improvement, watershed health, and more

### **Current and Future Programs & Services**

Under new leadership, since July 2022, the SBRCD is in a capacity-building phase to strengthen governance and increase grant revenues to provide technical and financial assistance for programs in the following areas:

- Conservation assistance for agricultural producers
- Conservation assistance for schools, parks, community gardens, and county residents
- Wildfire and climate resiliency (flood, drought, excessive heat) for ag producers and residents

In October 2022, the SBRCD co-hosted a landowner meeting in Hollister with speakers on mountain lion research, streambank restoration, federal drought relief programs for producers, and other conservation topics relevant to the concerns of local farmers and ranchers. More than 40 people attended the meeting.

In February 2023, the SBRCD will partner with UC Cooperative Extension and the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association to sponsor a Pile Burning Workshop in-person on a local ranch as part of a new SBRCD program focused on Wildfire Resiliency and Forest Health.

In light of recent (and recurring) flood events, the SBRCD is preparing to enter into discussions with the San Benito County Farm Bureau, COSB RMA staff, and other partners to address the need for stream channel maintenance on Pacheco Creek and other flood-prone stream channels.

Since July 2022, the SBRCD has collaborated with regional partners to apply for funding through state block grants as follows. (The amounts shown represent grant revenues allocated for SBRCD):

- CA Association of Resource Conservation Districts Pollinator & Wildlife Habitat Block Grant \$153K/4yrs -- (Awarded 1/13/23)

- California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) Conservation Agriculture Planning Grant \$86K/2yrs
- UCCE Forest and Fire Capacity Block Grant \$121K/2yrs

The total amount of pending SBRCD grant revenue is \$360K.

For Board consideration and approval is a contract with SBRCD for \$20,000 paid out of the general fund for the fiscal year 2022/23 and delegate authority to the County Administrative Officer to execute the contract. The board may provide direction on future allocation or other if desired.

**RESOLUTION OR ORDINANCE NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:**

No

**CONTRACT NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:**

Yes

**CONTRACT AND RFP HISTORY:**

Historically SBRCD has received approximately \$15,000 per year from the County of San Benito as "base funding."

**LAST CONTRACT AMOUNT OR N/A:**

15,000

**STATE IF THIS IS A NEW CONTRACT/ HOW MANY PAST AMENDED CONTRACTS/ OR N/A:**

New Contract

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 1. Operational Development & Excellence**

Yes

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 2. Planning And Sustainable Growth**

No

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 3. Technology**

No

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 4. Community Engagement**

Yes

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 5. Health & Safe Community**

Yes

**BUDGETED:**

No

**BUDGET ADJUSTMENT NEEDED:**

N/A

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

General Fund

**UNFUNDED MANDATE:**

N/A

**SBC BUDGET LINE ITEM NUMBER:**

N/A

**CURRENT FY COST:**

N/A

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Consider and approve contract with San Benito Resource Conservation District (SBRCD), a special district under Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code, for \$20,000 for the fiscal year 2022/23 and delegate authority to the County Administrative Officer to execute the contract; receive a presentation from SBRCD and/or provide staff direction on, but not limited to, future allocations, if desired by the board.

**BOARD ACTION RESULTS:**

Approved contract, per staff recommendation. (5/0 Vote)

**ATTACHMENTS:**

[DIVISION 9.pdf](#)

[SBCRCD Contract FY22-23](#)

[SBRCD presentation BoS 2.7.23](#)