



# CACHUMA CONSERVATION RELEASE BOARD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

**Montecito Water District  
Board Conference Room  
583 San Ysidro Road  
Montecito, CA 93108**

City of Santa Barbara (Kristen Sneddon, Pres.)

Goleta Water District (Lauren Hanson, Dir.)

Montecito Water District (Tobe Plough, V. Pres.)

**May 8, 2026  
2:00 PM**

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Members of the Cachuma Conservation Release Board (CCRB) Board of Directors (Board) intend to attend this meeting in person, absent an exception allowed under the Brown Act. It is the practice of CCRB to also present its meetings using Zoom videoconferencing as an accommodation to staff and members of the public. Members of the public may attend the meeting in person or participate by Zoom. CCRB cannot guarantee that Zoom will function or that all discussions of the Board can be heard on Zoom. Therefore, members of the public are advised to attend in person if they wish to ensure they can observe the meeting. The remote conferencing link for Zoom is as follows:

**Join by videoconference:**

<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1614398292?pwd=MPcLp89h4yobYqnWtNen6rxbdW9AZd.1>

**Join by conference call:**

Dial 1.669.900.6833

Enter mtg. ID: 161 439 8292

Passcode: 186593

### **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Any member of the public may address the Board on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Board. The President of the Board will determine the total time for public comments. The Board is not responsible for the content or accuracy of statements made by members of the public, and no action will be taken by the Board on any Public Comment item. Those observing the meeting by video may comment during the designated public comment period using the “raise hand” feature of the video software. Commenters will be required to unmute their microphone when commenting. Those participating by telephone may comment during the designated public comment period by pressing \*9 on the keypad to indicate such interest. Commenters will be prompted to press \*6 to unmute their telephone when called upon to speak. CCRB will use best efforts to swiftly resolve requests for reasonable modifications or accommodations for individuals with disabilities, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and will resolve any doubt whatsoever in favor of accessibility.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Matters listed here comprise a consent agenda that may be acted upon by a single roll call vote of the Board.

### **CA-1) Meeting Minutes**

Approval of minutes of the Board of Directors' April 10, 2026 meeting.

### **CA-2) Unaudited Interim Financial Report for the Period Ending March 31, 2026**

Receive and file an unaudited interim financial report for the period ending March 31, 2026.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **RA-1) Designation of Board Member to Negotiate with Unrepresented Employee**

Designate a CCRB board member as the agency's representative for labor negotiations with CCRB's executive director pursuant to Government Code section 54957.6(a).

### **RA-2) Fiscal Year 2026/2027 (FY27) Draft Budget (second hearing)**

Consider and potentially approve a draft proposed FY27 budget for CCRB. Provide direction for modifications, if any, and for the timely circulation of the Board-approved proposed budget to Member Agencies for their approval. (Est. time: 15 minutes)

### **RA-3) Executive Director's Report**

This item is reserved for the executive director to update and potentially seek informal feedback from the Board and general public regarding issues within his/her authority. This is for informational items only. No decisions will be made; no Board action will be taken. (Est. time: 5 min.)

## **CLOSED SESSION AGENDA**

### **Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing and Anticipated Litigation**

- Government Code section 54956.9(d)(1) (Existing case: City of Solvang Petition to Change Water Rights Permit 15878 before the State Water Resources Control Board Administrative Hearing Office)
- Government Code section 54956.9(d)(4) (Anticipated litigation: two potential cases).

**Reconvene in open session and report on any actions taken in closed session pursuant to Government Code Sec. 54957.1.**

### **RA-4) Directors' Requests for Agenda Items for Future Board Meetings**

### **RA-5) Set the Next CCRB Meeting for 2:00 pm Thursday, June 4, 2026, location TBD; and Adjourn**

## **NOTICE TO PUBLIC**

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Cachuma Conservation Release Board representative ([pcantle@ccrb-board.org](mailto:pcantle@ccrb-board.org)) at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to enable the Board to make reasonable arrangements.

[This Agenda was posted to the CCRB website and delivered in accordance with Sections 54954.1 and 54956 of the Government Code.]

**MINUTES OF A MEETING**  
**of the**  
**CACHUMA CONSERVATION RELEASE BOARD**  
**Held at the Goleta Water District Board Conference Room**

**April 10, 2026, 2:00 pm**

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**CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 pm by President Kristen Sneddon. Those attending the meeting were:

**Directors Present:**

Kristen Sneddon	City of Santa Barbara
Tobe Plough	Montecito Water District
Lauren Hanson	Goleta Water District

**Also Present:**

Ryan Drake	Dakota Corey
Peter Cantle	Scott Shapiro
Joel Mulder	Brian Van Lienden

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

One member of the general public attended; no one from the general public sought to comment.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Executive Director Cantle stated that he expects CCRB to get through the fiscal year without calling for fourth-quarter contributions from Member Agencies. Director Plough moved, and Director Hanson seconded approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion passed 3-0 by roll call vote.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**RA-1, State Water Board and Consultation Update.** Director Cantle advised the board that CCRB representatives continue to work with Reclamation, COMB and the downstream interests to complete the Biological Assessment so that Reclamation may submit it and initiate formal consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service under the federal Endangered Species Act.

**RA-2, Proposed Budget, 2026/2027.** Cantle presented a proposed budget for FY2026/2027 of \$1,239,000, which is \$216,000 less than the current approved budget. Director Hanson questioned the size of the proposed Contingency line item, which Cantle explained was attributable to more potential in the coming year for unanticipated but potentially necessary costs. He noted that Conting-

ency funds would only be expended with board authorization. Discussion of additional budget line items and associated tasks was deferred to Closed Session.

**RA-3, Executive Director's Report.** There was no report.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The board went into closed session at 2:11 pm. The board came out of closed session at 3:49 pm with no reportable actions

**REGULAR AGENDA – CONT.**

**RA-2, Proposed Budget, FY2026/2027 – cont.** The board agreed to revisit consideration of the proposed FY2026/2027 budget at the next scheduled CCRB meeting of May 7, 2026.

**RA-4, Items for Future Board Meetings.** No additional discussion occurred.

**RA-5, Confirm Next Meeting(s) and Adjourn.** The next meeting of the CCRB board was set for 3 pm Thursday, May 7, 2026 at the Montecito Water District.

President Sneddon then adjourned the meeting at 3:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alicia Carter", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Secretary to the Board



Cachuma Conservation  
Release Board  
**Board of Directors**

City of Santa Barbara  
Goleta Water District  
Montecito Water District

**For Agenda Of:** May 8, 2026  
**Estimated Time:** (Consent)  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**

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**TO:** Board Members  
**FROM:** Peter Cantle, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** CA-2: Unaudited Interim Financial Report for Period Ending March 31, 2026

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**Legal Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions**

Receive and file an unaudited interim Financial Report for the period ending March 31, 2026.

**Discussion**

The Board of Directors approves the CCRB budget each fiscal year. Upon subsequent approval by each Member Agency's governing body, it becomes CCRB's operating budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. Through the fiscal year, the Board receives monthly unaudited financial reports to compare fiscal performance against the adopted budget. This report addresses the period ending March 31, 2026.

**Fiscal Analysis**

CCRB's approved FY25/26 budget is \$1,455,000.00. CCRB Member Agencies are billed quarterly for their pro-rata contributions to the approved budget. Total income through March 31, 2026 was \$1,091,250.00, reflecting receipt of first-, second-, and third-quarter payments from each Member Agency. Total expenditures of \$381,850.07 through March 31, 2026 reflect costs incurred for legal, technical, management and administrative services. Given current cash on hand and projected expenditures through the end of the fiscal year, fourth-quarter contributions from Member Agencies are not anticipated.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1: Unaudited Interim Financial Report for the period ending March 31, 2026

**Authored by**

Peter Cantle, Executive Director

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**UNAUDITED INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE  
PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 2026**

**Cachuma Conservation Release Board**  
**Statement of Revenue and Expense- Budget vs. Actual**  
**July 2025 through March 2026**

	<u>Jul '25 - Mar 26</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>				
Income				
<b>4200 · Income</b>	1,091,250.00	1,455,000.00	-363,750.00	75.0%
<b>Total Income</b>	1,091,250.00	1,455,000.00	-363,750.00	75.0%
Expense				
<b>5050 · Office Lease</b>	4,174.50	5,000.00	-825.50	83.5%
<b>5100 · Audit</b>	14,000.00	15,000.00	-1,000.00	93.3%
<b>5200 · Liability Insurance</b>	1,850.38	7,000.00	-5,149.62	26.4%
<b>5301 · Managers Salary</b>				
5301.01 · Managers Gross Wages	150,000.00			
5301.02 · Employer Tax Expense	10,942.17			
5301 · Managers Salary - Other	0.00	210,000.00	-210,000.00	0.0%
<b>Total 5301 · Managers Salary</b>	160,942.17	210,000.00	-49,057.83	76.6%
<b>5304 · Administrative Support</b>	5,102.93	16,000.00	-10,897.07	31.9%
<b>5312 · Misc Admin Expense</b>	2,511.44	4,000.00	-1,488.56	62.8%
<b>5313 · Communications/Computer</b>	6,560.95	8,000.00	-1,439.05	82.0%
<b>5316 · Admin Fixed Assets</b>	0.00	4,000.00	-4,000.00	0.0%
<b>5330 · Admin Travel Expense</b>	0.00	4,000.00	-4,000.00	0.0%
<b>5331 · Travel Federal &amp; State Meetings</b>	0.00	12,000.00	-12,000.00	0.0%
<b>5332 · Transportation</b>	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00	0.0%
<b>6500 · Contingency</b>	0.00	51,000.00	-51,000.00	0.0%
<b>7000 · Legal</b>	10,692.50	75,000.00	-64,307.50	14.3%
<b>7001 · BO Reconsultation Legal Support</b>	91,826.25	447,000.00	-355,173.75	20.5%
<b>7002 · SWRCB Water Rights</b>	84,188.95	501,000.00	-416,811.05	16.8%
<b>7100 · SWRCB Support</b>				
7200 · SWRCB Proceedings Support	0.00	44,000.00	-44,000.00	0.0%
<b>Total 7100 · SWRCB Support</b>	0.00	44,000.00	-44,000.00	0.0%
<b>7500 · Hydrologic Technical Support</b>	0.00	51,000.00	-51,000.00	0.0%
<b>Total Expense</b>	381,850.07	1,455,000.00	-1,073,149.93	26.2%
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	709,399.93	0.00	709,399.93	100.0%
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>709,399.93</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>709,399.93</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

1:29 PM

04/02/26

**Cachuma Conservation Release Board**  
**Reconciliation Summary**  
1020 · CWB - Chkg #7204, Period Ending 03/31/2026

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	<u>Mar 31, 26</u>
Beginning Balance	788,977.46
Cleared Transactions	
Checks and Payments - 12 items	<u>-71,460.16</u>
Total Cleared Transactions	<u>-71,460.16</u>
Cleared Balance	<u><u>717,517.30</u></u>
Uncleared Transactions	
Checks and Payments - 5 items	<u>-10,414.91</u>
Total Uncleared Transactions	<u>-10,414.91</u>
Register Balance as of 03/31/2026	<u><u>707,102.39</u></u>
Ending Balance	707,102.39



OK  
Apr 6, 2026

**Cachuma Conservation Release Board  
Reconciliation Detail  
1020 · CWB - Chkg #7204, Period Ending 03/31/2026**

Type	Date	Num	Name	Clr	Amount	Balance
<b>Beginning Balance</b>						788,977.46
<b>Cleared Transactions</b>						
<b>Checks and Payments - 12 items</b>						
Bill Pmt -Check	03/02/2026		Downey Brand Attor...	X	-42,347.50	-42,347.50
Bill Pmt -Check	03/02/2026		Streamline Software,...	X	-3,528.00	-45,875.50
Bill Pmt -Check	03/02/2026		AccountabilityPlus, Inc	X	-753.61	-46,629.11
Bill Pmt -Check	03/02/2026		Downey Brand Attor...	X	-520.00	-47,149.11
Bill Pmt -Check	03/02/2026		Peter Cattle	X	-287.58	-47,436.69
Bill Pmt -Check	03/02/2026		CIO Solutions LP	X	-25.00	-47,461.69
General Journal	03/04/2026			X	-7,232.61	-54,694.30
Check	03/04/2026		CalPERS 457 Plan	X	-942.31	-55,636.61
General Journal	03/18/2026			X	-7,232.61	-62,869.22
Check	03/19/2026		CalPERS 457 Plan	X	-942.31	-63,811.53
Bill Pmt -Check	03/23/2026		Peter Cattle	X	-291.02	-64,102.55
General Journal	03/30/2026			X	-7,357.61	-71,460.16
Total Checks and Payments					-71,460.16	-71,460.16
Total Cleared Transactions					-71,460.16	-71,460.16
Cleared Balance					-71,460.16	717,517.30
<b>Uncleared Transactions</b>						
<b>Checks and Payments - 5 items</b>						
Bill Pmt -Check	03/23/2026		Downey Brand Attor...		-8,167.50	-8,167.50
Bill Pmt -Check	03/23/2026		Rauch Communicati...		-661.50	-8,829.00
Bill Pmt -Check	03/23/2026		AccountabilityPlus, Inc		-618.60	-9,447.60
Bill Pmt -Check	03/23/2026		CIO Solutions LP		-25.00	-9,472.60
Check	03/31/2026		CalPERS 457 Plan		-942.31	-10,414.91
Total Checks and Payments					-10,414.91	-10,414.91
Total Uncleared Transactions					-10,414.91	-10,414.91
Register Balance as of 03/31/2026					-81,875.07	707,102.39
<b>Ending Balance</b>					<b>-81,875.07</b>	<b>707,102.39</b>

  
 OK  
 Apr 6, 2026



Cachuma Conservation  
Release Board

**Board of Directors**

City of Santa Barbara

Goleta Water District

Montecito Water District

**For Agenda Of:** May 8, 2026

**Estimated Time:** 5 minutes

**Continued Item:** No

**If Yes, date from:**

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**TO:** Board Members

**FROM:** Peter Cantle, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Item RA-1: Designation of Board Member to Negotiate with Unrepresented Employee

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**Legal Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions**

Designate a CCRB board member as the agency's representative for labor negotiations with CCRB's executive director, pursuant to Government Code section 54957.6(a).

**Discussion**

The executive director is the sole employee of CCRB, is unrepresented by any labor organization, and provides services pursuant to a two-year employment agreement that began July 1, 2024. The employment agreement expires July 1, 2026. Designation of a board representative will allow negotiations, including compensation, with the executive director regarding a new employment agreement before the existing agreement lapses.

**Fiscal Analysis**

Not applicable

**Attachments**

None

**Report authored by:**

Peter Cantle, Executive Director



Cachuma Conservation  
Release Board  
Agenda Letter

**Board of Directors**

City of Santa Barbara  
Goleta Water District  
Montecito Water District

**For Agenda Of:** May 8, 2026  
**Estimated Time:** 60 minutes  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**

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**TO:** Board Members

**FROM:** Peter Cante, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Item RA-2: Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2026/2027

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**Legal Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions**

Consider and potentially approve a draft proposed FY 2026/2027 (FY27) budget for CCRB. Provide direction to the Executive Director for budget modifications, if any, and for the timely circulation of the Board-approved proposed budget to Member Agencies for their approval.

**Discussion**

Per the terms of the Joint Powers Agreement by which CCRB is formed, the CCRB Board of Directors approves a draft operating budget prior to the July 1 start of each fiscal year. Not less than 60 days prior to July 1, the CCRB-approved operating budget is to be submitted to each Member Agency's governing body for consideration and approval. When all Member Agencies have approved it, the budget is final. This document initiates the process of approving CCRB's FY27 operating budget.

Table 1 (Attachment 1) presents a draft proposed FY27 budget. Many of the Account Code line items in Table 1 that comprise the CCRB budget are straightforward. For example, there are reasonably predictable auditing, accounting, storage, information technology and management costs that can be anticipated, calculated and budgeted. Other line item costs are not as easily derived, and reasoned estimates of anticipated workload and associated costs are used to inform these proposed line items.

CCRB's Strategic Plan (Attachment 2) describes the organization's deep involvement in important state and federal regulatory processes relating to the Cachuma Project. These processes require considerable professional expertise and support from legal and technical consultants. Because CCRB may become in-

involved in litigation in connection with these processes, it is important that CCRB maintain the confidentiality of attorney work products relating to these state and federal regulatory processes, including but not limited to work undertaken by technical and regulatory consultants pursuant to the attorney work product privilege. The importance to CCRB of achieving acceptable outcomes in these state and federal processes, and the somewhat unpredictable but significant consulting workload that is associated with achieving such outcomes, makes budgeting these categories a “best estimate” effort. Ultimately, the intent of the budget is to allow CCRB to perform the key role identified in its Strategic Plan, which is to represent and protect its Member Agencies’ water rights and water supply interests while also protecting endangered species in the lower Santa Ynez River watershed.

Recognizing this unpredictability, the consulting costs in Table 1 incorporate several assumptions that focus on achieving the desired outcomes identified in the Strategic Plan. The assumptions themselves are derived from discussions with CCRB’s legal and technical representatives regarding likely or potential scenarios that could result from decisions made or actions taken by the state and federal agencies that ultimately control the regulatory processes in which CCRB is involved. As it has in the past, the board in its discretion may choose to adjust any of these line item recommendations, according to its consideration and weighting of priorities and importance.

### **Fiscal Analysis**

As shown in Attachment 1, Table 1, the draft proposed CCRB budget for FY27 is \$1,239,000, which is \$216,000 less than the \$1,455,000 approved current year budget. The annual and quarterly cost allocations of the proposed budget to CCRB Member Agencies are based on established allocation percentages and are shown in Table 2. The account code amounts that make up the proposed budget, the assumptions on which they are based, and the Strategic Plan goal(s) which they support are presented below.

**Code 5050 – Storage Space.** Currently, CCRB pays a local storage facility for space that accommodates multiple four-drawer file cabinets and banker’s boxes of hard-copy files that range in date from 1980’s to 2025. The \$5,000 budgeted cost is unchanged from the current year. (*Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently.*)

**Code 5100 – Audit.** The auditing of CCRB’s accounts is current through FY25; an audit of FY26 will get underway shortly after June 30, 2026. The FY27 budgeted amount of \$15,000 assumes a single year audit will be performed with little or no additional staff assistance required. (*Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently; perform financial audits timely and with no serious issues.*)

**Code 5200 – Insurance.** CCRB’s board members and certain liabilities are insured through the Special Districts Risk Management Association (SDRMA). To access coverage through SDRMA, CCRB must be a member of and pay dues to the California Special Districts Association (CSDA). As in FY25, \$7,000 is expected to cover CSDA dues and SDRMA insurance premiums for FY27. (*Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently.*)

**Code 5301 – Executive Director Compensation.** The proposed FY27 amount of \$220,000 is increased \$10,000 from the current year budget and addresses compensation and administrative costs (e.g., payroll taxes) associated with CCRB’s sole employee. The budgeted amount also accommodates the potential for the board to consider an increase to the Executive Director’s compensation, as allowed by the terms of the contract between the Executive Director and CCRB. *(Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently.)*

**Code 5304 – Accounting and Payroll Support.** Accountability Plus and its franchisee Payroll Vault provide bookkeeping, invoicing, accounting and payroll services to CCRB through this code. The proposed budget amount of \$16,000 is unchanged from the current year and anticipates an average of \$1,350/month for these services. *(Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently.)*

**Code 5312 – Miscellaneous Administrative Expenses.** This code serves as a contingency for any unanticipated overages in administrative service codes. The \$4,000 budgeted amount is unchanged from the current fiscal year. *(Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently.)*

**Code 5313 – Communications/Computer.** This code provides funds for CCRB email and website hosting, and other related information technology costs. As in the current fiscal year, the proposed budget amount of \$8,000 accounts for these costs. *(Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently.)*

**Code 5316 – Admin Fixed Assets.** This code provides for job-related hardware and material purchases, should such be necessary. The proposed amount of \$4,000 is unchanged from the current year budget. *(Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently.)*

**Code 5330 – Admin Travel.** This code covers Executive Director travel-related costs for attendance at professional conferences and symposia representing CCRB. The proposed budget amount of \$4,000 is unchanged from the current fiscal year. *(Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently; foster respectful, professional relationships with agencies with interests in the watershed.)*

**Code 5331 – Travel Expenses Federal and State Meetings.** This code covers Executive Director travel-related costs for attending meetings in Fresno, Long Beach, Sacramento, Washington DC and possibly elsewhere regarding the state and federal regulatory processes that are underway. If travel to such meetings is necessary in the upcoming fiscal year, \$12,000 is proposed, which is unchanged from the current year. *(Goal 1: Protect vital water supply by achieving issuance of a BiOp that avoids unacceptable supply impacts; Goal 2: Support Reclamation implementation of Water Rights Order 2019-0148 to enhance reliable water supply while protecting important environmental resources.)*

**Code 5332 – Transportation.** This code covers minor transportation travel costs that may be incurred during the upcoming fiscal year. The budget amount (\$1,000) is unchanged from the current fiscal year. *(Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently.)*

**Code 7000 – General Legal and Regulatory Activities.** This code, projected at \$75,000 as in the current year budget, provides for general counsel services through the year, including attendance at board meetings, review of board agenda materials, preparation of resolutions, employment matters and contract review. The code also covers certain general legal costs representing work that is (i) being undertaken in anticipation of litigation; and (ii) protected from disclosure under the attorney work product privilege and related statutory and common law privileges. (These privileged matters will be more fully addressed in closed session.) (*Goal 5: Administer CCRB’s operations effectively and transparently. Goal 4: Monitor other activities potentially affecting Cachuma water supply.*)

**Code 7001 – Federal Consultation Support Activities.** This code includes estimated legal costs of \$351,000 related to the Consultation and Biological Opinion process underway with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) pursuant to Sec. 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act. Additionally, the code covers certain estimated biological and hydrological consultant costs representing work that is (i) being undertaken in anticipation of litigation; and (ii) protected from disclosure under the attorney work product privilege and related statutory and common law privileges. (These privileged matters will be more fully addressed in closed session.) (*Goal 1: Protect vital water supply by achieving issuance of a BiOp that avoids unacceptable supply impacts.*)

**Code 7002 – SWRCB Water Rights Activities.** This code includes consultants’ and legal costs of \$373,000 associated with the State Water Resources Control Board’s (SWRCB) ongoing water rights proceeding relating to the Santa Ynez River. The estimate incorporates consideration of requirements imposed by Order 2019-0148, issued September 17, 2019 and any anticipated support that will be required in FY27. The code covers certain estimated biological and hydrological consultant costs representing work that is (i) designed to improve the agency’s understanding of the hydrology and hydraulics of the Santa Ynez River including its relationship with the groundwater basin; and/or (ii) work that is protected from disclosure under the attorney work product privilege and related statutory and common law privileges. (These privileged matters will be more fully addressed in closed session.) (*Goal 2: Support Reclamation implementation of Water Rights Order 2019-0148 to enhance reliable water supply while protecting important environmental resources.*)

**Code 7200 – SWRCB Biological Technical Support.** The SWRCB’s September 17, 2019 Order requires that USBR develop and submit for SWRCB review and approval multiple plans that address the effects of the Order’s water flow regime on the Lower Santa Ynez River. Prior to submittal, each plan must be reviewed by NMFS and California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, and USBR must address each agencies’ comments as part of each plan that is submitted for SWRCB consideration. USBR has requested CCRB’s assistance in developing many of these plans, and the CCRB board has approved this assistance. Much of this assistance is biologically based. The proposed \$15,000 in this code covers the CCRB biological consultant’s (ICF’s) estimated costs for draft plan development, responding to agency review, and coordination with USBR and SWRCB in helping to produce the various plans required by the Order. (*Goal 2: Support Reclamation implementation of Water Rights Order 2019-0148 to enhance reliable water supply while protecting important environmental resources.*)

**Code 7500 – SWRCB Hydrologic Technical Support.** Similar to the previous code addressing costs associated with CCRB’s biological support to USBR for the SWRCB Order, Account Code 7500 is projected at \$49,000 to cover estimated costs for CCRB’s hydrologic technical consultant, Woodard & Curran, for their assistance in developing, responding to agency review, and coordination with USBR and SWRCB in producing Order-required plans in the coming fiscal year. (*Goal 2: Support Reclamation implementation of Water Rights Order 2019-0148 to enhance reliable water supply while protecting important environmental resources.*)

**Code 6500 – Contingency.** The \$80,000 contingency is a calculated buffer representing 10% of the sum of Codes 7000, 7001 and 7002. It is \$29,000 more than the current year’s contingency budget, and reflects potential unanticipated costs that may arise in the regulatory processes in which CCRB is engaged. Contingency funds would only be expended upon recommendation of the Executive Director and/or legal counsel and authorization by the board.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1: Draft Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget (Tables 1 and 2)

Attachment 2: CCRB 2023 Strategic Plan

**Authored by**

Peter Cantle, Executive Director

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**CCRB**

**DRAFT FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 BUDGET**

## TABLE 1

### Cachuma Conservation Release Board PROPOSED FY26-27 Budget

<i>Account Code</i>	<i>Account Name</i>	<i>Approved FY26</i>	<i>Proposed FY27</i>
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE</b>			
<b>5050</b>	Storage Space	5,000	5,000
<b>5100</b>	Audit	15,000	15,000
<b>5200</b>	Liability Insurance	7,000	7,000
<b>5301</b>	Employee Compensation & Payroll Taxes	210,000	220,000
<b>5304</b>	Accounting & Payroll Support	16,000	16,000
<b>5312</b>	Misc. Admin. Expenses	4,000	4,000
<b>5313</b>	Communications/Computer	8,000	8,000
<b>5316</b>	Admin. Fixed Assets	4,000	4,000
<b>5330</b>	Admin. Travel	4,000	4,000
<b>5331</b>	Travel Exp. Federal & State Meetings	12,000	12,000
<b>5332</b>	Transportation	1,000	1,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$286,000</b>	<b>\$296,000</b>
<b>LEGAL</b>			
<b>7000</b>	General Legal & Regulatory Activities	75,000	75,000
<b>7001</b>	Federal Consultation Support Activities	447,000	351,000
<b>7002</b>	SWRCB Water Rights Activities	501,000	373,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$1,023,000</b>	<b>\$799,000</b>
<b>CCRB CONSULTANT ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>6001</b>	Federal Consultation Support	*	*
<b>7200</b>	SWRCB Biological Technical Support	44,000	15,000
<b>7400</b>	Legislative & Regulatory Support	*	*
<b>7500</b>	SWRCB Hydrologic Technical Support	51,000	49,000
<b>6500</b>	Contingency	51,000	80,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>146,000</b>	<b>\$144,000</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>		<b>\$1,455,000</b>	<b>\$1,239,000</b>

Table Footnotes:

\* Costs for biological, hydrological and legislative/regulatory support are included under LEGAL account codes. These support services are being provided pursuant to separate agreements between CCRB's legal counsel and the subject firms. This work is being undertaken in anticipation of litigation and is protected from disclosure under the attorney work product privilege and related statutory and common law privileges.

**TABLE 2**  
**Cachuma Conservation Release Board**  
**FY26/27 Member Agency Cost Allocation and Quarterly Assessment**

<b>MEMBER UNIT</b>	<b>Pro Rata</b>	<b>FY27 Approved Budget</b>	<b>Annual</b>
Goleta Water District	0.4603	1,239,000	570,312
City of Santa Barbara	0.4088	1,239,000	506,503
Montecito Water District	0.1309	1,239,000	162,185
<b><i>TOTAL ANNUAL</i></b>		100.00%	<b>\$1,239,000</b>
<b><i>Quarterly Assessment *</i></b>			<b>Amount</b>
Goleta Water District			142,578
City of Santa Barbara			126,626
Montecito Water District			40,546
<b><i>TOTAL QUARTERLY</i></b>			<b>\$309,750</b>

Footnotes:

\* Assessments may be invoiced at reduced amounts based on actual and projected workload.

**ATTACHMENT**

**CCRB 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **CCRB 2023 Five-Year Strategic Plan**

### **CCRB'S PURPOSE**

The Cachuma Conservation Release Board (CCRB) is a Joint Powers Agency comprised of the Goleta Water District, the City of Santa Barbara and the Montecito Water District. CCRB's purpose, as stated in its 1973 Joint Powers Agreement, is to represent its Member Agencies in promoting their common objective of maximizing the amounts of water they can obtain from the Cachuma Project or other sources which may be available to them.

### **THE REGULATORY SETTING**

The Congressionally approved Cachuma Project is operated by the US Bureau of Reclamation. Reclamation allocates project water annually to CCRB's Member Agencies, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District Improvement District No. 1 and the Carpinteria Valley Water District through a Master Contract with the Santa Barbara County Water Agency ("Water Agency").

Reclamation is subject to state and federal laws governing reservoir operations, including how such operations affect both downstream water rights and protected species, notably southern California steelhead (steelhead). The limitations and conditions that apply to Reclamation's Cachuma operations as they affect water rights and steelhead are enforced through permit requirements of the State Water Board's 2019 Water Rights Order (WRO 2019-0148) and a 2000 Biological Opinion (the 2000 BiOp) issued by the federal National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act's Sec. 7 consultation process, Reclamation will submit a new biological assessment to NMFS that evaluates how it proposes to comply with the WRO 2019-0148 water regime and its effect on steelhead. The biological assessment is intended to describe the proposed action and its effects on listed species. NMFS will use the biological assessment in its issuance of a new BiOp that will govern project operations.

The California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is currently evaluating steelhead as a candidate for listing as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The agency expects to provide its candidacy recommendation to the California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC) late in 2023. Listing of the species as Endangered under California law could result in additional limitations and mitigation requirements on Cachuma Project operations, with potential water supply and fiscal impacts to CCRB Member Agencies and their customers.

### **CCRB'S ACTIVITIES AND ROLE**

Both before and since the issuance of the 2000 BiOp, CCRB has played a key role in shaping, mitigating and facilitating the state and federal regulatory processes that have applied, and will continue to apply, to Reclamation's operation of the Cachuma Project.

CCRB was also instrumental in negotiating a 2002 Settlement Agreement on behalf of its Member Agencies with downstream water rights holders that resolved multiple long-standing disputes, and which continues to govern important water rights considerations today.

## CCRB 2023 Five-Year Strategic Plan – cont.

To the benefit of its Member Agencies, CCRB has continuously assisted Reclamation in addressing regulatory requirements imposed by state and federal oversight of the Cachuma Project, importantly, including avoidance of a 2016 draft BiOp that would have imposed significant cuts to Members' water supplies.

CCRB provided strong and sustained technical and legal assistance in shaping the State Water Rights Order that eventually issued in September 2019, so as to minimize water supply impacts to Member Agencies while still protecting steelhead and other public trust resources. In a process that is still underway, plans required of Reclamation by the 2019 Order have been drafted by CCRB to protect Member Agencies' interests while also assisting Reclamation in meeting the Order's requirements.

As noted previously, CCRB has also continued its engagement with Reclamation in its ongoing federal Consultation with NMFS to craft a new BiOp governing Cachuma operations. The focus of that effort remains on avoiding unsupportable flow regimes while protecting endangered species and ensuring sustainable water supply.

While these regulatory processes unquestionably move slowly, and are detailed and potentially labor-intensive, failure to participate in them means that Member Agencies' interests are unrepresented and thus unprotected.

In sum, CCRB's role has been, and is, to represent and protect its Member Agencies' water rights and water supply interests while also protecting endangered species in the lower Santa Ynez River watershed.

### **NEAR-TERM GOALS AND ACTIONS**

Because CCRB has little control over the timing of ongoing federal and state regulatory processes in which it is involved, its activities are directed toward positively influencing these processes to achieve favorable outcomes for its Member Agencies. In the five year planning horizon of this document, it is reasonable to project that the result of the Federal Consultation could be determined, and the State Water Board Order's permit terms would likely be implemented.

Over the next five years, CCRB's Goals and Actions to meet its stated purpose, as well as Performance-evaluation Measures by which success may be gauged, are as follows.

*Goal 1: Protect vital water supply for CCRB Member Agencies and the region by achieving issuance of a BiOp that avoids unacceptable supply impacts.*

#### Actions:

- Support Reclamation to achieve acceptable draft and final BiOp in the Federal Sec. 7 Consultation process. That process is underway and may continue into 2025 and beyond, according to outcome. In addition to legal and regulatory advisory assistance, ca. 900 hr. of technical consulting support is budgeted in the current year.
  - Assist Reclamation in developing a new Biological Assessment (BA) based on the 2019 Water Board Order flow regime as its final proposed action.

## CCRB 2023 Five-Year Strategic Plan – cont.

- Evaluate the water supply impacts of Reclamation’s final proposed action, including any “buffers” Reclamation may impose to achieve compliance.
- Support Reclamation in the BA submittal and review process with NMFS. Submittal is anticipated late 2023.
- Provide technical support to Reclamation in negotiations with NMFS (and CDFW) with the goal of attaining a Non-Jeopardy Biological Opinion with acceptable Reasonable and Prudent Measures.
- Lay groundwork for political outreach at state and federal levels, according to NMFS’s expected direction.
- Engage the community where possible in the Consultation process to enhance transparency and gain support in protecting both vital water supply and listed species.
- Stave off unworkable provisions of the Federal Sec. 7 Consultation process.
  - Work with Reclamation to address any NMFS proposed requirements that are infeasible and identify workable alternatives.
  - If a Non-Jeopardy BiOp is issued, consider supporting Reclamation’s proposed operations via legal action (if BiOp is challenged by outside parties) and implementing political outreach.
  - If a Jeopardy BiOp is issued by NMFS, in coordination with Reclamation, consider legal and political options to avoid onerous Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives.
  - Build suitably strong administrative record that supports a Non-Jeopardy BiOp.
  - Provide ongoing technical, legal, and outreach guidance and support in litigation, as applicable (Jeopardy or Non Jeopardy). Engage the community to gain support in protecting both vital water supply and listed species.

### Performance-evaluation Measures

- What type of BiOp--Jeopardy or Non-jeopardy--has been issued?
- Does it have acceptable water supply impacts?
- If a Jeopardy Opinion, has CCRB successfully supported Reclamation's efforts to avoid onerous Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives within the Opinion and to protect vital water supply?
- In either result, has CCRB built a strong administrative record to support further action, and have Member Agencies’ constituents had the opportunity to engage in the process and understand the regulatory outcomes?

*Goal 2: Support Reclamation’s implementation of the State Water Board Order to enhance reliable water supply while protecting the steelhead population and other important environmental resources.*

#### Actions:

- Synchronize implementation of the conditions and plan requirements of 2019 State Water Board Order.
  - Provide technical consulting assistance (currently budgeted ca. 600 hr) to Reclamation to develop suitable plans that meet fisheries needs and protect water supply (e.g., Terms 19, 20, 24 of Order).

CCRB 2023 Five-Year Strategic Plan – cont.

- Provide fisheries, hydrology, legal and political assistance in responding to oversight agencies' input, gaining Water Board approval and implementation of plans.
- Address recently identified water accounting considerations with Downstream Agencies to mutual benefit.
- In coordination with Reclamation, engage and strengthen relationships with State Water Board members and Water Rights staff as plans are submitted to represent subject matter expertise.

Performance-evaluation Measures

- Have draft plans pursuant to Terms 19, 20, 24 and others been provided to Reclamation after board review and approval, for Reclamation's use in complying with Order?
- Has technical support been provided, allowing Reclamation to successfully address evaluations from oversight agencies?
- Have recently identified water accounting issues ultimately been addressed satisfactorily?

*Goal 3: Minimize adverse effects of southern California steelhead candidacy and listing under California Endangered Species Act.*

Actions:

- Monitor CDFW status of candidacy analysis and Fish and Game Commission actions.
- Provide analysis of legal options to CCRB board, depending on record and process.
- Strive to develop a strong relationship with CDFW.

Performance-evaluation Measures

- Have requirements arising from the Fish and Game Commission affirming steelhead candidacy been mitigated as to their impacts on Cachuma operations and Member Agencies' water rights and water supply?

*Goal 4: Monitor Other Activities Potentially Affecting Cachuma Supply*

CCRB monitors water-extractive activities in the Santa Ynez River as they relate to stream flow and access to Member Agencies' water rights since downstream actions and Cachuma Project releases are interconnected.

Actions:

- Continue monthly monitoring of actions in the Santa Ynez River basin that may directly or indirectly affect CCRB Member Agencies' water supplies.
- Report issues of potential concern to CCRB board for consideration, information and possible action.

Performance-evaluation Measures

- Have matters potentially affecting the watershed below Bradbury Dam been brought to the board in a timely manner for consideration?

CCRB 2023 Five-Year Strategic Plan – cont.

- As directed by the board, has staff successfully minimized or obviated proposed actions that could impact Member Agencies' water supply? (The Solvang water right permit matter currently before the Water Board's Administrative Hearing Officer is an example.)

*Goal 5: Administer CCRB's operations effectively and transparently. Foster respectful, professional relationships with local, state and federal agencies with interests in the watershed.*

Actions:

- Perform CCRB administrative activities in a timely, efficient, accountable way, within budget, to enact Board direction.
- Maximize effectiveness of CCRB's staff and consultants while minimizing costs to Member Agencies; process constructive returns promptly at fiscal year end.
- Engage Member Agency staff routinely for information sharing and course guidance.
- Represent CCRB's interests in the region professionally and collegially based on Board direction and guidance.
- Strive for transparency and accountability in CCRB's operations at all times; maintain confidentiality where necessary to protect Member Agencies' interests.

Performance-evaluation Measures

- Has CCRB come in on or under budget annually?
- Are consultant budgets adhered to unless increases are pre-approved by the board?
- Are constructive returns processed promptly at close of each fiscal year?
- Are financial audits performed in a timely manner, revealing no serious issues?
- Are meetings held monthly by the CCRBR executive director (more frequently as needed) with Member Agency senior staff to enhance communication?
- Have concerns brought up by CCRB board members been satisfactorily addressed, in a timely and respectful way?