



**Guadalupe-Coyote  
Resource Conservation District (GCRCD)**  
*An independent special district of the State of California*

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To:            GCRCD Board of Directors

From:        Stephanie Moreno, Executive Director/District Clerk

Subject:     *Item 9.1 Associate Director Appointment*

Date:        May 3, 2023

**Recommendation:**

The Board of Directors approve the following motion:

Appoint Brian Schmidt as District Associate Director for a 4-year term, effective May 4, 2023, and with a waiver of the constituency requirement as the Board of Directors finds it is in the District's best interests to do so.

**Background:**

Brian Schmidt has submitted an application for Associate Director. As indicated in the materials contained within the Board's packet, he is exceptionally qualified, has been an active member of the local natural resources conservation community for many years, and comes highly recommended for the position. I have determined that he currently meets the eligibility requirements for the position in terms of expertise and as an employee of an organization operating within District boundaries. However, because he lives outside of the District, I am recommending that he be appointed with a waiver of the constituency requirement to avoid any future eligibility issues should his employment change. The Board may approve the waiver pursuant to the following clause within its policy:

*If an exceptionally qualified applicant for associate director meets all other qualifications, the Board may waive the constituency requirement if it finds it is in the best interests of the District to do so.*

**Authorities:**

Division 9 of the Public Resources Code provides for associate director service, but is silent on the eligibility requirements. Per the recommendation of the California Department of Conservation, our District has adopted a policy guiding the appointment of its associate directors to provide for transparency and consistency in the appointment process. The policy was last amended on February 3, 2023 and is posted on our [website](#).

**Summary:**

Mr. Schmidt is extremely well qualified for the position of Associate Director and brings a wealth of valuable expertise and experience to the District. I recommend his appointment for a four-year term, effective May 4, 2023.

Brian Schmidt

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

May 1, 2023

Susan Hare and Stephanie Moreno  
Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District

**Re: Associate Director position**

Dear President Hare and Directors:

I would be thrilled to be considered as a potential Associate Director at GCRCD. I've followed the work of your RCD as well as San Mateo RCD and more recently the San Benito RCD with great interest and support over the years. I think RCDs play a fantastic role bridging the occasional gap that exists between environmentalists and landowners, and between government and those landowners. I hope that my 24 years of experience as a local environmental advocate could be useful to GCRCD.

While I am not currently a Santa Clara County resident, I have been one in the past, including as an elected Director and Vice Chair of Valley Water from 2010 to 2014. I also have many years of experience working at Green Foothills with most of that work centered on Santa Clara County. My experience as an environmental lawyer familiar with CEQA and other environmental laws, and familiarity with environmental issues elsewhere in our region might be helpful with the RCD's work. This background could be particularly relevant to land use; public outreach and education; and local government policy and procedures – all of which are areas where according to GCRCD's website are experience sought for in Associate Directors. Please refer to my attached resume for additional information.

I am more than happy to answer any questions, and I look forward to the next steps in this process.

Sincerely,



Brian Schmidt

# Brian Andrew Schmidt

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/schmidtobrian>

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## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Environmental lawyer with 20 years of experience leading nonprofits and governmental agencies on issues related to water, open space, and climate change at the local, state, and federal level. Work includes research, writing, lobbying, campaigning, and building coalitions. Expertise includes oral and written advocacy for environmental protection; working on technical issues and with the general public; involvement in political campaigns; and winning election to county-level office. Extensive experience advocating for action on climate change and other environmental issues through multiple blogs and social media. Proficient in Spanish.

Member of the Bars of California and Oregon. Stanford Law School J.D. “With Distinction”.

## MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Protection of open space** – stopped San Francisco Bay Area sprawl at San Jose, saving the 7400-acre Coyote Valley as a crucial area for wildlife, endangered species, and natural flood protection.
- **Action on climate change** – quadrupled funding for protection against sea level rise and for tidal wetland restoration in South San Francisco Bay. Obtained groundbreaking acknowledgment and quantitative measurement of natural lands protection as part of urban climate planning.
- **Water resource protection** – developed primary short- and long-term plans for Silicon Valley responding successfully to California’s historic drought.
- **Environmental policy development** – initiated and established first climate change/fossil fuel divestment policy for any water agency in the United States.
- **Policy advocacy** – achieved support of a wide range of environmental organizations for a \$500M water agency property tax measure. Prepared and guided analyses of housing projects for endorsement and support. Supported establishment of Community Choice Energy in Santa Clara County and San Jose.
- **Coalition building** – won support from business and environmental organizations for a habitat protection plan providing funding while channeling development to least-harmful areas.
- **Legal analysis** – initiated, briefed, and argued in court for successful legal challenge against lack of environmental analysis on fire issues on federal land in Northern California.
- **Managed large and small environmental teams** – supervised up to five employees as direct reports, some of them with staff reporting to them. As a director for multiple organizations, supervised staffs of up to 700 people with \$300 million annual budgets.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

GREEN FOOTHILLS (formerly “Committee for Green Foothills”)

2020 - 2023

*Non-profit advocating for open space and natural resource protection, including water resource issues, in South San Francisco Bay Area.*

### **Policy and Advocacy Director**

Position sets the policy and advocacy priorities and strategy for Green Foothills and manages advocacy staff as the director of the Advocacy Program. Ensures consistent, well-researched advocacy with a focus on land use project and policy proposals, local/regional programs, budgets, and ballot initiatives. Directs grassroots activities including building and participating in coalitions. Central to this is working in collaboration with the Green Foothills

community (board, staff, advisory board members, donors) and building and maintaining strong relationships with local political leaders, tribes, other nonprofits, community members, government staff, landowners and developers.

**MID-PENINSULA WATER DISTRICT**

2018 - Present

**President and Director**, Board of Directors

Elected in competitive, city-level election to provide clean, safe water at the retail level for over 30,000 people in Belmont California and nearby areas.

- Emphasized water conservation as a value the water district should encourage, including potable reuse and potential use of shallow aquifers for non-potable uses.
- Ended further renewal of membership in California Chamber of Commerce, referencing the Chamber’s opposition to action on climate change. Retained membership in local Chamber of Commerce.
- Supervised the \$12 million annual budget and revised inflation expectations to increase costs while removing unsupported budget items.
- Member of the Finance Committee to review and safeguard annual financial operations.
- Supported new policies protecting low-income homeowners from water shut-off.

**GREENBELT ALLIANCE**

2016 - 2019

**Senior Program Director**

Directed the Advocacy Program and all Program staff at Greenbelt Alliance, working to protect open space from sprawl and redirect infill to compact, walkable neighborhoods near transit throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

- Managed and directed Program Department and staff on general issues of open space protection, infill support, and promotion of housing and public transit.
- Assembled a coalition of environmental supporting establishment of Vehicle Miles Traveled policy in San Jose to limit greenhouse gas emissions, now used by the State of California as a model for other jurisdictions.
- Led Greenbelt Alliance as it pioneered successful ballot measures protecting open space from sprawl in Gilroy, San Jose, Milpitas, Antioch, Windsor, Cotati, Novato, and Sonoma County.
- Supported “growing up, not out” as Greenbelt Alliance endorsed good development projects and advocated for infill housing, particularly affordable housing.
- Supported open space, housing, and transportation funding measures at the city and county level in San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, Napa, and Sonoma Counties.
- Led Greenbelt’s crucial support for legislation enabling the establishment of Solano County’s open space district.
- Managed new policy adoption for internally contentious issues such as rent caps in the CASA Compact for the housing crisis.
- Conducted in-house legal review of environmental issues and of day-to-day issues involving organizational management including contract review, personnel matters, and lease negotiation.

**LAW OFFICE OF BRIAN SCHMIDT**

2015 - 2016

**Lawyer / Consultant**

Provided legal advice and environmental policy consultation to multiple non-profit organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. Work included protection of open space areas surrounding Gilroy and Morgan Hill from sprawl, ongoing work to protect Coyote Valley south of San Jose, and regulations for native plant restoration.

**SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT (now “Valley Water”)**

2010 - 2014

**Vice Chair and Director**, Board of Directors

Elected in competitive, county-level election with 57% of popular vote to represent northern Santa Clara County on issues of environmental restoration, flood protection, and water supply for 1.8 million people.

- Supervised budgets and top-level officials in 700-employee organization and at associated joint powers agencies, including hiring Executive Director for Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency.
- Carried out campaign promises on increased environmental protection, including managing problems related to sea-level rise along San Francisco Bay.

Subject **Recommendation for Brian Schmidt**  
From Alice Kaufman <alice@greenfoothills.org>  
To Stephanie A. Moreno <smoreno@gcrcd.org>  
Date 2023-05-02 02:18 PM



Hi Stephanie,

I'm recommending Brian Schmidt for Associate Director of the Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District.

Brian would be a fantastic addition to GCRCD. Few people in this region are as knowledgeable as Brian is about conservation issues, including water-related issues (where his experience as an elected Director of Valley Water is particularly relevant), land use, ecology, and environmental law. His network of connections throughout the County is another benefit that he brings.

I've worked with Brian as a fellow staff member at Green Foothills, a colleague working for a different nonprofit organization (Greenbelt Alliance), and a member of the Green Foothills board of directors. In every capacity Brian has been very collaborative and easy to work with.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Thanks!



**Alice Kaufman (She/Her)**  
Policy and Advocacy Director

Green Foothills | (650) 968-7243 x313 | mobile (650) 269-2248 | [greenfoothills.org](https://greenfoothills.org)

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Re: Recommendation of Brian Schmidt, JD as Associate Director

Date: 4/5/2023

To: Susan Hare, President and Stephanie Moreno, Executive Director

I am very happy to recommend Brian Schmidt to be appointed as Associate Director at Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District.

I've known Brian for many years, and he has an enormous amount of experience to bring to the RCD. His past work as an elected director at Santa Clara Valley Water District and a former director of the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency brings important exposure and knowledge of these partner agencies. His years of work as an on-staff, environmental advocate at Green Foothills and Greenbelt Alliance gives him substantial knowledge of environmental conditions in Santa Clara County, as well as policies allowing potential important improvements.

As an example, Brian recently facilitated my introduction to a landowner based in the Santa Cruz Mountains who is very interested in elk reintroduction. I believe he can provide similar help to the RCD.

Please contact me with any questions.

Regards,

Richard Lanman MD, President  
650.776.9111

# Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (GCRC D)

## Associate Director Policy

### I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Governance. The Board of Directors (“Board”) for the Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (“District”) consists of five members (“Director”) of the Board. As the governing body of the District, the Board reviews and approves District policies, including the Associate Director policy. The Board has delegated responsibility for policy administration to the District’s Executive Director (“ED”), including but not limited to the development of procedures and internal controls to implement the policies.

Purpose of the Policy. Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code allows resource conservation districts to appoint associate directors (“Associate”). Associates provide value to the District by providing additional expertise to the Board, including but not limited to the areas of: natural resources conservation and management; agricultural and grazing management practices; environmental health; land use; engineering; physical and life sciences; public outreach and education; and local government policy and procedures.

Policy Revisions. The Board reviews District policies annually. Any Director or the ED may make recommendations for changes to a policy at any time, but all policy changes require approval by the Board.

Statement of Non-Discrimination. The District conducts its business on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, political affiliation or beliefs, religion, gender, gender identity or gender expression, age, physical and invisible disability, medical condition, marital status or pregnancy (as those terms are defined by the California Fair Employment and Housing Act – Government Code Section 12900-12996). Additionally, the Board has adopted a District Environmental and Social Justice Policy to ensure diversity and environmental justice are key components of the District’s strategic planning and programmatic work.

### II. TERM AND POSITIONS

Term. Associates are appointed for four-year terms, which may be renewed by the Board of Directors upon request of the Associate. There are no term limits. An Associate may be removed at any time without cause by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

### III. QUALIFICATIONS AND APPOINTMENT

District Constituency. An Associate should be a registered voter, landowner, or employee within District boundaries. If an exceptionally qualified applicant for associate director meets all other qualifications, the Board may waive the constituency requirement if it

finds it is in the best interests of the District to do so. Former GCRC D Directors who request appointment as Associates are exempted from the constituency requirement.

Other Qualifications. Associates must possess expertise in an area of interest to the District, including but not limited to those areas listed under “Purpose of the Policy”. Associates are expected to make sufficient time available to meet the responsibilities of the position, including regular attendance at Board meetings and participation in mandatory trainings.

Recruitment. The District shall maintain a notice on its website for those interested in the position of Associate. Qualified parties interested in an Associate position may apply at any time.

Application. The Associate application shall consist of a letter of interest stating qualifications and background in at least one of the areas of interest to the District, two letters of recommendation by individuals familiar with the applicant’s work or qualifications, and a signed waiver authorizing the District to conduct a background check. Former GCRC D Directors requesting appointment as Associates need only to provide a letter of interest for application.

Selection. The ED shall be responsible for reviewing applications to determine eligibility, performing reference checks, and making formal recommendations to the Board regarding Associate appointments. Ineligible or incomplete applications may be returned to the applicant by the ED. The ED shall submit applications for eligible applicants to the Board for consideration, along with a formal recommendation as to their appointment. However, if the ED believes it is in the best interest of the District to recommend against an appointment, s/he shall attempt to notify the applicant in order to allow him or her to withdraw the application in lieu of having it posted on the formal agenda for the Board of Directors.

Appointment. Consideration of Associate appointments will be discussed in open session. Appointments require a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The Board shall establish the effective date at the time of the appointment.

#### **IV. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Participation in Board Meetings. Associates are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussion of open session items at Board meetings but may not vote. The ability for Associates to participate in closed session items shall be governed by the Ralph M. Brown Act.

Participation in Other Activities. Associates are encouraged to attend and participate in GCRC D-hosted meetings and workshops, and the Board has the discretion to appoint them as voting members of GCRC D committees. Associates may be designated by the Board or the ED to represent the District at specific meetings or events on a case-by-case basis, and may be required to attend mandatory training to comply with laws and regulations applying to their position



Conduct. Associates’ activities are to be conducted in consistency with GCRCD policy, purpose, and direction. Volunteers should perform their duties in an impartial manner, free from bias caused by their own financial interests or the financial interests of persons who have supported them.

Authority. Associates are not authorized to make agreements, contracts, or representations to any party, other organizations, or government agencies on behalf of the District.

Working for the District: The District may enter into agreements with Associates without causing a conflict of interest since Associates do not have any voting or other District authority (see “Authority,” *supra*). However, Associates may not participate in any non-public District Board or committee discussions regarding such an agreement.

If an Associate becomes an employee of the District, either as a direct hire or through a consulting agreement, their resignation as an Associate will automatically take effect on their first day of employment to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Post-employment, they may be reinstated as an Associate without further action of the Board for the remainder of their prior term, provided that the ED has determined they have remained eligible for that position.

**V. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS**

Insurance. Associates are covered by the District’s general liability policy while performing activities authorized by the Board or the ED. At the Board’s discretion, Associates may be added to the District’s policies for workers compensation insurance.

Expense Reimbursement. Associate Directors may be eligible for expense reimbursements, subject to the provisions of the adopted District Financial Policy.

Policy Change Log:

Date	Action
07/13/2015	Board adopted policy.
04/13/2017	Board amended policy.
08/11/2020	Board amended policy.
02/03/2022	Board amended policy.