



Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (GCRCD)

An independent special district of the State of California

DATE: July 7, 2022
TO: GCRCD Board of Directors
FROM: Stephanie Moreno, Executive Director/District Clerk
SUBJECT: Consent Agenda Item 8.2: District Name Change

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Board formally initiates the process to consider a change in the District's legal name. The recommended motion is as follows:

I hereby move to officially initiate the process to change the legal name of the District, subject to subsequent approval of the selected name by resolution of the Board of Directors.

- The Board formally create an ad hoc committee subject to the Brown Act; designate members and staff; delegate responsibilities; and establish an implementation schedule. The recommended motion is as follows:

I hereby move to officially create the Ad Hoc District Naming and Branding Committee; to designate the committee as subject to the Brown Act in order to provide greater transparency and public participation in the process; to officially appoint Vice-President Hare, Director Lanman, and Associate Director Wilson to the committee; to delegate outreach and engagement responsibilities to the committee; and to assign the Executive Director and District Counsel to work with the committee on documents and recommendations for final consideration by the Board of Directors by its October 2022 Board meeting.

BACKGROUND:

The current name of Guadalupe-Coyote RCD was changed from Evergreen RCD by action of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in July 1995. The Evergreen RCD historically represented the eastern Santa Clara Valley and was formed by a merger with the Black Mountain RCD which represented the western Santa Clara Valley. The Board of Directors for Evergreen RCD requested the change because the name is associated with a particular area within the City of San Jose, and the Directors wanted the name to reflect the RCD's broader boundaries. They selected Guadalupe-Coyote for the watersheds that lie within the District.

The possibility of changing GCRCD's name was recently raised by then-President Rick Lanman, M.D. He believes that embracing a new name and rebranding our organization would potentially facilitate more opportunities for collaborations with other public agencies and nonprofit organizations, and reflect to our constituents and stakeholders the more integrated natural resource conservation approach that the Board has taken in the last eight years. This approach emphasizes watershed-scale planning as well as

wildlife landscape connectivity extending from the South Bay to the eastern and western county borders in the Diablo Range and Santa Cruz Mountain range.

Other resource conservation districts also renamed and rebranded over the last several years, but research indicates all continue to maintain a geographical reference, primarily to the County or region they represent. A local trend has been to place the name of the county in which the district is located after "Resource Conservation District" regardless of whether the entire county and its cities are included within the District boundaries; a nearby example is the RCD of San Mateo. However, since Santa Clara County has two resource conservation districts, "RCD of Santa Clara" is not being considered as an option for the new name.

Based on previous Board discussions, there appears to be a consensus among the Directors with renaming and rebranding the District, but the Board has not taken formal action to initiate the process. Directors also have indicated their desire to ensure that the name selection process is inclusive and transparent, and that Directors actively engage with the Board of Supervisors, other public agencies, and receive adequate public comment prior to adopting and submitting a formal request. Although an ad hoc committee was formed with two volunteer Directors, it is not subject to the Brown Act and has not been delegated official duties beyond providing the Board with a recommendation.

Legal Requirements:

Implementing a name change will require approval of a resolution by the Board of Directors, which would then be submitted to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for action. If the BOS approves the change, they would then notify the State Board of Equalization, and the name would become effective upon acknowledgement by the Secretary of State. (Public Resources Code 9621-9627).

Summary:

The Board of Directors has the legal authority to recommend a name change to the Board of Supervisors whenever in their judgement it is for the best interest of a district to do so, and it appears there is good reason to consider such a change. Because a name change is of great import, it is recommended that the consideration process be initiated formally with a set implementation schedule, and that it be inclusive, transparent and open to broad public participation.