

**CONEJO OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING**

**September 17, 2025
Civic Arts Plaza Board Room
2100 East Thousand Oaks Boulevard**

SUMMARY MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE:

Chair Huffer called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and led the Flag Salute.

2. ROLL CALL:

Director Engler, Director Nickles, Vice Chair Newman, and Chair Huffer were present. Director Sullivan was absent.

Also present were: Assistant Attorney Brick, CRPD Park Superintendent Belavic, COSCA Administrator Stark, COSCA Analyst Huber, Senior Recording Secretary Goor, and via Zoom was Records Management Specialist Preston.

3. PRESENTATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR:

A. Approval of Minutes of May 14, 2025 Meeting.

Director Nickles requested the vote on Item 5.A. be changed from 4-1 to 4-0 to reflect the abstention.

Motion by Director Engler to approve the Minutes of the May 14, 2025 meeting as modified, and carried 4 – 0 by the following vote: Ayes – Directors Engler, Newman, Nickles, and Chair Huffer; Noes – None; Abstain – None; Absent – Sullivan.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Grant of Utility Easement to Southern California Edison (SCE) – Arroyo Conejo Open Space

- i. Find that this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to California Code of Regulations Title 14, sections 15061, 15301 (Class 1), and 15304.

- ii. Approve the granting of a utility infrastructure easement to SCE for the installation and maintenance of underground electrical transmission equipment on a portion of the Conejo Canyons Open Space by adopting Resolution 2025-03, and authorize COSCA's co-Administrative Officer to execute all documents necessary to grant the easement in a form approved by the COSCA attorney.

COSCA Administrator Stark presented the report noting SCE currently supplies electricity to Calleguas Municipal Water District (Calleguas) Pressure Regulating Station No. 9, adjacent to COSCA open space via overhead powerlines. SCE and Calleguas propose undergrounding these lines to improve reliability and fire safety. The portion of COSCA's Conejo Canyons open space needed for the underground facilities is approximately 230 square feet. By connecting Calleguas' pressure regulating station to a source of underground power, SCE will be able to de-energize approximately 8,850 linear feet of overhead powerlines running through COSCA open space, thus reducing the risk of wildfire ignition from overhead lines and providing a more resilient water delivery system.

COSCA Administrator Stark responded to Director questions regarding the linear feet calculations, customers served by the station, lines and poles to be removed in about one year with minimal impacts, the unlikelihood of the project affecting PSPS outages, and the current lack of vegetation at the site.

Speaker/Written Statement Cards: None.

Motion by Director Nickles to approve staff recommendation (to find that this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] pursuant to California Code of Regulations Title 14, sections 15061, 15301 (Class 1), and 15304, and approve the granting of a utility infrastructure easement to Southern California Edison for the installation and maintenance of underground electrical transmission equipment on a portion of the Conejo Canyons Open Space by adopting Resolution 2025-03, and authorize COSCA's co-Administrative Officer to execute all documents necessary to grant the easement in a form approved by the COSCA attorney); carried 4 – 0 by the following vote: Ayes – Directors Engler, Newman, Nickles, and Chair Huffer; Noes – None; Absent – Sullivan.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS:

- A. Arroyo Conejo Trash Removal Update (verbal report)
 - i. Find that this action is not a project as defined under the California Environmental Quality Act.
 - ii. Receive verbal report.

The verbal report was presented by COSCA Administrator Stark who noted COSCA's contract with Woods Maintenance Services, Inc. for trash removal as part of Phase II of the Arroyo Conejo Trash Removal Project encompassed an area 75 feet from each stream bank along a 4,300 linear foot section of Arroyo Conejo Creek. He reviewed the details and results of the trash removal. While the area of Phase II was larger than for Phase I, the trash volume (16.6 tons in 2025) was somewhat similar to Phase I (13.4 tons in 2024 plus 3.5 tons from a volunteer workday). The cost for Phase II was \$268,796 of which COSCA paid \$33,600 and the City's Public Works Dept paid \$235,196. The cost for Phase I was \$87,400 of which COSCA paid \$62,400 and the City's Public Works Dept. paid \$25,000. With enhanced attention to unhoused individuals' encampments in the Arroyo, there has been a modest decline in the volume of trash that is associated with the stream. With a decade's worth of trash accumulation cleanup complete, we now begin regular maintenance with volunteer efforts and periodic contractor cleanups at a much lower cost.

COSCA Administrator Stark responded to Director questions regarding the City's invasive species removal grant, noting that the grant is for palm removal in a nearby area. COSCA is still seeking grant funds for palm removal on COSCA property. He also responded to questions regarding capturing upstream trash. He noted Ventura County Watershed Protection District's installation of a trash rack on the drain that goes under the Freeway related to the upstream south branch of the Arroyo Conejo which carries runoff from Newbury Park.

B. COSCA Volunteer Corps Activity

- i. Find that this action is not a project as defined under the California Environmental Quality Act.
- ii. Receive and file COSCA Volunteer Corps Activity report.

The written report was received and filed and indicates that from May through August, Trail Watch had 86 reports and 126 hours donated; Adopt-A-Trail had 181 reports and 288 hours donated. The Trail Work Program helped Rangers with a clean-up project at the Conejo Canyons trailhead as well as additional clean-up in Arroyo Conejo in May; workdays in June through August were cancelled due to heat.

C. Ranger Operations and Maintenance Activities (verbal report)

- i. Find that this action is not a project as defined under the California Environmental Quality Act.
- ii. Receive verbal report.

The verbal report was received with CRPD Park Superintendent Belavic presenting a PowerPoint. He stated Rangers have been busy performing weed abatement and brushing. They hired Ranger 1 Will Haver, leaving one pending Ranger hire, which will hopefully be filled soon. He highlighted Eagle Scout and Girl Scout projects including construction and installation of owl nest boxes in the Olsen Channel and Hill Canyon, signage in Wildwood, amenity repairs in Dos Vientos, and sign updates in Hill Canyon. He reported a loaded, chambered gun was discovered inside a hot dog sleeve in a trash can by a CRPD groundskeeper at Newbury Gateway Park, who just happened to notice how heavy the bag was. Three bridge re-builds were completed in the Hill Canyon area. Tule reed cleanup was done at Lake Eleanor Dam. Large tree branches that over-hung trails were removed. Rattlesnake trainings were completed. They will be working on fine-tuning areas that will be included in the weed abatement contract for the upcoming year.

CRPD Park Superintendent Belavic responded to Directors' questions about e-bike issues, noting the Thousand Oaks Police Department put together a task force which has helped, but he still receives calls about unsafe riding in unapproved areas on a weekly basis. TOPD and the Rangers have a policy not to give chase due to liability. Signs are up in the parks and open space, and they will keep working toward gaining compliance. Director Nickles commented that he has also observed youth riding e-motorcycles irresponsibly in his neighborhood. Director Newman commented about the different classes of e-bikes. Chair Huffer noted even Class 1 e-bikes are not allowed on turf, and he referred to Conejo Creek South.

COSCA Administrator also responded to questions noting the biggest problem for COSCA are the out-of-class, essentially electric motorcycles, capable of speeds much greater than Class 1 e-bikes, which are capped at 20 mph. The assist provided to riders of class 1 e-bikes does get more people on bikes longer, so they are a valuable recreational outlet. COSCA holds trailhead outreach events to educate trail users, including mountain bikers, that trail courtesy is the key. Current issues relate to out-of-class bikes and the speed at which they're operated.

8. COSCA UPDATES (CRPD General Manager and/or City Manager):

A. Follow-up items, announcements, and upcoming issues: None.

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9. **BOARDMEMBER COMMENTS:**

In response to Chair Huffer's inquiry, COSCA Analyst Huber noted Trail Workdays will resume this month and Rangers are planning activities that will coincide with National Public Lands Day on September 27.

10. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m. to the next Regular Meeting on November 19, 2025. That meeting will likely be rescheduled to December; however, a new date has not been selected.



Chuck Huffer, Chairperson

Minutes Approved: December 10, 2025

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