BOARD OF DIRECTORS

828 7th Street, Eureka CA 95501

MINUTES

SPECIAL JOINT BOARD MEETING WITH RUTH LAKE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

Friday, September 25, 2026, 1:00 p.m. • 591 Van Duzen Road, Mad River, CA 95552

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Roll Call

President Fuller jointly called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Roll call was conducted. HBMWD Directors Fuller, Stevens, Wheeler, and Woo were present, along with General Manager Michiko Mares and Board Secretary Contessa Dickson. Ruth Lake Community Services District Board Members Jordan Emery, Ed Johnson, Debra Sellman, and Ben Boak were present, along with General Manager Caitlin Canale and Board Secretary Cynthia Lofthouse.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

President Fuller led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Accept Agenda

ACTION: Motion #26-058 to accept the Agenda
Maker: Director Woo
Second: Director Wheeler
Vote: 4-0 to approve

RLCSD separately accepted the agenda.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

3. PARTNER UPDATES

3.1 Trinity County – 5th District Supervisor – Julia Brownfield

Non-Action Item

Supervisor Julia Brownfield reported that Trinity County continues to focus on the County budget and comprehensive General Plan update. She also recognized recent work by the Transportation Department on roads in the area.

3.2 Trinity County Planning – Drew Plebani

Non-Action Item

Drew Plebani thanked HBMWD and RLCSD staff for the recent tour of District properties and Ruth Lake lease lots. He reported that Trinity County is working through its comprehensive General Plan update and anticipates beginning a comprehensive zoning code update in 2027.

3.3 Trinity County OES – Arina Erwin/Sonni Demello

Non-Action Item

Trinity County OES thanked the District for the collaborative Emergency Action Plan discussion and noted that the work complements the County's Emergency Operations Plan update. OES encouraged community

members to register with Ready Trinity and discussed the County's expanded emergency alert capabilities, including alerts to individuals located within an affected area.

3.4 Southern Trinity Area Rescue (STAR) – Brooke Entsminger

Non-Action Item

Brooke Entsminger reported that Southern Trinity Area Rescue has separated from Southern Trinity Health Services Corporation and is nearing completion of its first year as an independent nonprofit. STAR continues to provide ambulance service to the Ruth Lake area and will need continued community support.

3.5 Southern Trinity Volunteer Fire Department – Melony Shortt

Non-Action Item

Melony Shortt thanked the District for the collaborative EAP meeting format. She reported a relatively quiet fire season, with the Bailey incident near Ruth Lake being the most significant local fire. The department continues to support fuel-reduction efforts and is making improvements to its facility, including installation of metal siding. She also expressed appreciation for improved communication following discussion of the March 2026 dam incident.

3.6 U.S. Forest Service – Kristen Lark

Non-Action Item

Kristen Lark reported a relatively quiet fire season on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and noted that fire restrictions may soon be lifted as fuel conditions improve. She discussed National Public Lands Day at Ruth Lake, ongoing upper Mad River watershed stewardship, the South Fork Mountain vegetation project, fuel-reduction work, and upcoming work in the Kettenpom/Zenia area. The Forest Service continues to coordinate with HBMWD and RLCSD on recreation, watershed protection, and invasive mussel prevention.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Shared History, Founding Partnerships, and Renewed Commitment to Collaborate at Ruth Lake

Non-Action Item

General Manager Mares introduced the item and reviewed the historic agreements among HBMWD, Trinity County, and RLCSD associated with development of Ruth Lake, surrounding roads, recreation facilities, and formation of RLCSD. She emphasized the value of understanding the shared history as the agencies continue strengthening their working relationship.

Caitlin Canale discussed the community's long history with the reservoir and noted that HBMWD and RLCSD are often viewed collectively by the public even though they have different responsibilities. She emphasized continued collaboration to support Ruth Lake and the surrounding community. The Boards discussed the historical materials and the importance of recognizing both the regional water-supply purpose of Ruth Lake and its importance to the local community and recreation.

4.2. Status Update on Current Grant-Funded Projects at Ruth Lake

Non-Action Item

Caitlin Canale reported on the completed grant-funded restoration of power and access at the Old Ruth boat launch gate. The project totaled approximately $56,000 and restored an important alternative launch location that helps reduce congestion at Ruth Rec and the marina.

Ms. Canale also reported on the Ruth Lake decontamination station. The project received a $100,000 grant with additional HBMWD support. The hydro blaster was delivered and installed in August and has been winterized for use next season. The station will provide ballast-tank boaters an alternative to the 30-day

quarantine process, with decontamination anticipated to be available by appointment for a fee. Director Woo noted that the project is a positive example of collaboration between the two districts.

4.3. Watershed Resilience Implementation Program – Proposition 4 Grant Opportunity

Non-Action Item

General Manager Mares presented the upcoming Department of Water Resources Watershed Resilience Implementation Program funded through Proposition 4. The anticipated planning opportunity would support a watershed-wide collaborative process from the headwaters through the communities served by the water supply. The effort would identify data gaps, needed studies, and a prioritized portfolio of future resilience projects. HBMWD has received $15,000 toward facilitation and is contributing an additional $15,000, with other wholesale customers also considering contributions. Discussion included watershed stewardship, sediment entering Ruth Lake, wildfire and forest resilience, infrastructure, fisheries, recreation, sea-level-rise vulnerability, and the importance of positioning the region for future implementation funding. Nick Goulette of the Watershed Research and Training Center expressed support for the collaborative planning effort and the opportunity to bring additional public investment into the watershed.

4.4. Trinity County Update to the Ruth Lake Specific Unit Development (SUD) Guidelines

Non-Action Item

Caitlin Canale provided background on the Ruth Lake Specific Unit Development (SUD) issue. Trinity County Planning raised the issue in May 2024 after determining that the SUD zoning had been established but the associated development guidelines were never completed. This has created uncertainty for building permits and post-fire rebuilding on the lease lots.

Drew Plebani explained that zoning standards establish allowable uses, density, setbacks, and other development requirements. Because the Ruth Lake lease lots are uniquely configured within larger assessor parcels and do not have County-recognized surveyed boundaries, development review is particularly complex. He discussed the need to establish clear guidelines that address current State and County requirements, including fire-safe access, defensible space, structure standards, water and wastewater, and the intended future uses of the lease lots.

The Boards discussed existing RLCSD policies, current and future fire requirements, property-owner responsibilities, liability, recreational uses, and whether different development categories may be appropriate for different lease-lot areas. Participants identified an inventory of the lease lots, existing improvements, lot sizes, and current uses as a useful starting point. Leaseholder Eric Smith encouraged a measured approach that protects recreation and existing uses while adapting to changing requirements. Staff will continue coordinating with Trinity County and the two districts to develop a path forward.

4.5. Humboldt Trinity Recreation Alliance (HTRA) Request to Donate a Portion of APN 020-330-005 for the Trinity Resilience Center

Non-Action Item

General Manager Mares reviewed HTRA's request for donation of a portion of HBMWD-owned property for the proposed Trinity Resilience Center. Based on staff's site visit and legal review, the originally proposed location appeared unsuitable for the proposed development due to site constraints. She stated that a site suitability review would be needed before proceeding with the legal considerations associated with a potential property transfer.

Patsy of HTRA reported that HTRA is now evaluating an alternate location near Ruth-Zenia Road and the transfer station and has provided an updated concept plan. HTRA has received a $15,000 North Coast Resource Partnership grant for technical assistance and is pursuing additional funding to continue feasibility and site evaluation work.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.
Attest:

Sheri Woo, Board Vice-President

Contessa Dickson, Board Secretary