



**Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD)**  
**Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Groundwater Sustainability Agency (EPCGSA)**

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 19, 2026**

Windfall Farms Conference Room, 4710 Flying Paster Lane, Paso Robles

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 2:0 PM by Hilary Graves

Directors Roll Call:

Hilary Graves – present

Lee Nesbitt - present

Ryan Scott – absent

Merkel – present

Eric Pooler – absent

Others present:

Alan Doud

Guests (in person and by teleconference)

**ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comments were received:

Murray Powell commented on PRAGA matters.

**ITEM 3: APPROVE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 10, 2026 MEETING**

MOTION TO APPROVES THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 10, 2026 MEETING made by Lee Nesbitt, seconded by Zach Merkel, voice vote: Motion carried 3-0-0.

**ITEMS 4: SMALL FARM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE (WILL CARRARA/MYTHOS)**

This item was tabled to later in the meeting.

**ITEM 5: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING BOARD VACANCY**

Hilary Graves described the current board seat vacancy created by the resignation of Director Eric Pooler effective August 31, 2026, and appointed an ad hoc committee consisting of Hilary Graves and Zach Merkel to review candidates and bring a recommendation to the Board at the regular October 14, 2026 meeting.

At that time, it is expected that the Board will fill by vacancy by appointment. MOTION TO FILL THE CURRENT VACANCY BY APPOINTMENT made by Zack Merkel, seconded by Lee Nesbitt, roll call vote:

Hilary Graves – yes

Zack Merkel – yes

Lee Nesbitt – yes

Ryan Scott – absent

Eric Pooler – absent

Motion carried 3-0-0.

**ITEM 6: UPDATE ON ACREAGE CHANGES TO DATE**

Staff made a brief presentation summarizing the approximate changes to irrigated acreage in the District over various timeframes. Murray Powell asked if assessment income would be collected; the current year budget anticipated and included estimated changes to allow for this. Richard Lauchland suggested requesting a return of the acreage update forms even with no changes to encourage and establish participation.

**ITEM 7: STATE WATER PROJECT SURVEY DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION TO STAFF ON COMPLETION**

The State Water Project Water Supply Opportunities survey offers the opportunity for non-State Water contractors to express interest in future supply projects. The Board discussed the various questions and directed staff to complete and return the survey which would establish that the District is interested in supply opportunities.

**ITEM 4: SMALL FARM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE (WILL CARRARA/MYTHOS) (tabled earlier in meeting)**

The Small Farm Assistance Program is part of the Fallowed Land Registry and provides an opportunity to irrigators of between two and 20 acres to enroll fallowed land and receive a cash benefit as long as the land is fallowed until 2039 and a deed restriction against irrigating that acreage is created and in force. There are under 10 enrollments at this time. The benefits are funds that were part of the County's Cash for Grass program and have been reallocated. There are approximately 300 eligible properties in the Basin. The program could be opened up to larger acreage maximums if there are not enough participants.

**ITEM 8: UPDATE ON WRAC MEETING AUGUST 5, 2026**

Lee Nesbitt reported that the special meeting was scheduled in order to compose a letter to the Board of Supervisors updating them on the desalination project progress. The project is currently looking at potential location. It is not expected to come to fruition until possibly 2042-2045.

**ITEM 9: TREASURER'S REPORT JUNE AND JULY 2026**

Staff presented the report and no questions from the Board were asked.

**ITEM 10: NEW BUSINESS**

Hilary Graves suggested asking for training on how to enter and exit the Fallowed Land Program and asked about how transfers in ownership are handled.

**ITEM 11: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – SEPTEMBER 9, 2026**

**ITEM 13: ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2.56 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Gage, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:

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Hilary Graves, President

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Date

DRAFT