MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTOR’S MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2019 AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR’S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Terry Connolly
Mike Lewis
Tony Vaccarella

OTHERS PRESENT: Dennis Becker, SRCD
Josh Black, DWR
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Kent Hansen, Goodyear Land Co
Michael Koohafkan, DWR
Shawn Overton, CDFW
Kelli Perez, SRCD
Steve Roerden, SRCD
John Takekawa, SRCD
Larry Wyckoff, DFW
1. **Call to Order** ~ The Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

2. **Public Comments** ~ None.

3. **Open Session** ~
   a) **Approval of the May 8, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes** ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2019 Board meeting was made by Mr. Connolly and seconded by Mr. Lewis; all were in favor and the motion carried.

4. **Financial Reports** ~
   a) **Approval of Vendor Claims for May 2019** ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the May 2019 General Fund vendor claims totaled $50,312.29. Most expenses are normal operational expenses but included a replacement telephone system for an unexpected failure of the main office system. Mr. Connolly made a motion to approve the May General Fund vendor claims for $50,312.29, and Mr. Lewis seconded the motion. Mr. Chappell reported the May 2019 Lower Joice Island vendor claims for $10,237.13 of normal expenses. Mr. Connolly made a motion to approve the May 2019 Lower Joice Island vendor claims for $10,237.13, and Mr. Lewis seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried. Mr. Chappell reported the May 2019 Special Revenue vendor claims total as $39,344.51 with claims including pest weed control program. Mr. Connolly made a motion to approve the May 2019 Special Revenue vendor claims total for $39,344.51, and Mr. Lewis seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

   b) **Approval of Revised General Fund Vendor Summary April 2019** ~ Mr. Chappell requested the approval of the revised April 2019 General Fund vendor claim summary in the amount of $54,429.01. The correction was the removal of sales tax on the previous month’s in the amount of $65.80. Mr. Connolly made a motion to approve and Mr. Lewis seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

   c) **Presentation of the FY 2019/2020 Suisun RCD Draft Budgets** ~ Mr. Chappell presented the general fund summary budget. He summarized the General Fund operating budget revenues including the dredging permit fees, Preservation Agreement administration fee, fish screen maintenance, low dissolved oxygen study, and 2 Department of Food and Agriculture Noxious Weed grants. He noted that the DWR Support Grant renewal has been delayed, so there is currently no estimated revenue in the current draft budget. There are several SMPA special studies biological monitoring activities proposed for next year that included SRCD’s administrative costs. Thus, the projected budget should be in the black. The Water Manager’s Program budget was balanced and includes the replacement of one field vehicle. Lastly, the Lower Joice Island budget included the end of the FEMA grant support, renovation of the solar system, and replacement of the old rotary mower. The budget approval will be considered at the July Board meeting.
d) CalPERS Retirement Unfunded Liability – Additional Discretionary Payment for Consideration ~ Mr. Chappell started by explaining that SRCD employees are under two CalPERS Plans. Three of SRCD’s newer employee benefits are under a separate CalPERS contract and benefit structure; four employees are under the original Plan. Mr. Chappell presented information on SRCD’s current unfunded retirement liability, which is currently 81.8% funded. Mr. Chappell would like the Board to consider paying down some of this unfunded retirement liability in the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Connolly noted that CalPERS charges SRCD a 7% “discount rate” on this unfunded liability amount annually. Currently SRCD funds in the County treasure earn approximately 2%. Paying down the unfunded liability could earn an additional 7% (CalPERS estimate) – 2% (bank interest) = 5% in funds. This item will be considered at the next Board meeting. Discussion ensued.

5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~ Mr. Overton read the DFW report. The results for the 2019 big game draw should be released soon. Notifications should be provided this week or early next to successful elk tag recipients. Staff is busy conducting maintenance, preparing equipment, and mowing access levees. In cooperation with California Waterfowl and the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Grizzly Island Wildlife Area (GIWA) received a grant to conduct a large-scale Phragmites removal project that will span 3 years. It will include burning, mowing, and spraying by air and ground. Goats have been out at Hill Slough for about a month, and they did a good job with the vegetation removal. The next stage will be road construction; however, a new source of material must be located because the source originally selected did not meet Water Board imported soil testing requirements. USGS staff continued nest searching on GIWA, and 531 nests were found as of June 7th with 183 active and including 264 mallards, 237 gadwall, 11 cinnamon teal, 1 northern shoveler, 5 pheasants, 1 short-eared owl, 4 American bittern, 1 white-tailed kite, and 6 northern harriers. This total is nearly double last year, as mowing may have been helpful for breeding birds. The banding crews have begun scouting and baiting sites for capture and marking waterfowl. Discussion ensued.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Michael Koohafkan distributed the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of May, the salinity standard was 11.0 mS/cm. Salinities are currently very low in the Marsh from 0.16 to 1.86, so the standard was met at all the compliance stations. At the end of May, net delta outflow was 49,700 cfs. Salinity values for June 10th were low with 1.4 mS/cm measured the highest at the Ibis station. All Marsh salinities are within the standards. Roaring River Distribution System drain gates for the east drain are closed and west drain ½-open for circulation, and levee repairs have started. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates have been left open since January 23rd, and the water year has officially been called a wet year, so there will not be experimental operations with flashboard removed May 7th. Mr. Chappell noted that operating the gates during the summer has gained interest for
improving Delta Smelt resiliency. Morrow Island Distribution System gates are closed, and mowing will take place in the next few weeks with regular maintenance. Goodyear Slough Outfall intakes were cleaned monthly, mowing and gravel additions were completed.

The reservoir storage reported values were at or above historical averages. Cumulative precipitation for the current water year starting in November was reported for the Northern Sierra at 68.4”, while the Southern Sierra was at 49.7”. Discussion ensued.

7. Suisun Resource Conservation District Reports ~
   a) 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement Update and PAI Grant Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the SMPA agreement and grant program continued to be administered. There have been no changes with focus on Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. Discussion ensued.

   b) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ Mr. Chappell reported that on June 11th, the quarterly Environmental Compliance Advisory Team met. There is a recent shift in agency focus to the monitoring and communicating science. This will include scientists making presentations to agencies work groups – moving from planning activities to implementation. The Applicants Compliance Team met and discussed the need to revise compliance reporting to provide the information more clearly for the Agencies. For example, cubic yards are reported to the Corp for maintenance activities, but USFWS would like to see that information converted to acres for their reports. Discussion ensued.

   c) USACE Permits -- RGP3 & LOP Permit Update ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the 2019 RGP3 April has not been approved. The May package was submitted on June 1st. The Corp said they will be combined into one authorization package and are working on them this week. We currently have 6 applicants for 2019 dredging totaling 13,000 cubic yards. Discussion ensued.

   d) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa reported on the Water Manager Program. Several pumps were deployed at the request of clubs throughout the month. On May 8th, the water managers met with Deputy Chief Alfred Abruzzi of the Suisun Fire Protection District to discuss improving response times and access to Suisun Marsh properties. Mr. Taylor developed a Google Earth map that indicated major access routes by club number and is working with them on implementing the map. In mid-May 2019 PAI program draft agreements were submitted to the applicants for signature after approval by the technical committee and the agencies, and we will have a review in the next 2-3 weeks for any later applications. On May 13th, Mr. Takekawa and USGS finalized a report on a new digital elevation model for Suisun Marsh developed from a September LiDAR image coordinated by DWR. A meeting will be scheduled to report findings to agency partners in mid-July. On May
14th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with the Mein’s Landing management team to discuss upcoming work.

On May 22nd, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended the Delta Conservancy Board meeting where proposals were selected for funding. The SRCD infrastructure proposal was not recommended for funded despite an appeal and support from Supervisor Thomson. We also submitted a pre-proposal to the Wildlife Conservation Board to upgrade the Montezuma Slough fish screens, but it was not forwarded for consideration. In both cases, SRCD will continue to look for funding to complete these projects.

On May 29th, Mr. Takekawa met with CWA, DFW, and GIWA to discuss the recently funded GIWA Habitat Improvement Project and coordinate monitoring and assessment with Karin Kettenring (Utah State). On May 30th, Mr. Takekawa met with Solano County Ranger Diana Samuel and Professor Sandra Diehl at the Solano Community College Horticulture Department to discuss student assistance to raise native plants for improving habitat at Belden’s Landing. A SRCD booth was set up and manned at the Suisun Marsh Field Day on Saturday June 2nd with assistance of staff and Associate Director Steve Roerden. SRCD continues to work on boom truck repairs.

On June 5th, Mr. Takekawa and Mr. Chappell met with DWR staff to discuss Phragmites control efforts including their recently funded work to test control methods at the Blacklock tidal restoration site. In early June, we commented on a DWR draft protocol to engage SRCD Water Manager support for operating the Roaring River control gates with improved responsiveness. Mr. McKinney worked on the June newsletter which will be edited and distributed late next week. The staff will attend a First Aid and CPR training on June 12th, and we worked on scheduling our annual staff review with Mike Lewis from 19-23 July. Lastly, we sent email reminders to landowners that diversion reporting is due at the end of the month, and the Delta Watermaster sent announcements that fines may be assessed for those who do not report timely fashion.

e) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton put out traps to reduce rodents in the clubhouse. From mid-May through this week, he finished dressing the levee splash cap with the bulldozer for the FEMA flood repairs. In late May, mechanic Eric Wylie came out and completed servicing the equipment including a tune-up on the Massey-Ferguson tractor.

On May 20th, we conducted the first test of a spray-drone on Lepidium patches in the north unit. We worked with Leading Edge Technologies (Bill Reynolds), a company that developed a spray-drone with a 20-foot spray boom and 3.5-gallon...
chemical tank. We applied Telar XP on drained areas with surgical precision just a few feet above the plant tops with very little overspray. We directed chemical treatments manually or with aerial images. We conducted a second test on large patches of Phragmites in the south unit on May 25th and successfully treated several acres. To our knowledge, this is the first use of a spray-drone for invasive plant control in a managed wetland, and it has great promise. Development will continue over the next 2 years partially supported by a grant from the Department of Food and Agriculture Noxious Weed Program. A week after the test, we irrigated the north and south units with a leach cycle, and the south unit will stay flooded this summer to encourage new plant growth while regular mowing and disking maintenance will occur in the north unit.

f) **Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations** ~ Mr. Chappell met with Solano County environmental management staff to discuss restoration projects in the County at the end of May. Mr. Chappell made a presentation to the Water Education Foundation Delta and SF Bay tour group. He will meet with the lower Cordelia Slough flooding assessment group next week and go to San Francisco for the BDCD administration hearing for the Pacific Flyway Center Secondary Marsh Development permit. Discussion ensued.

8. **Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports** ~

a) **Agency Committee** ~ No report.

b) **Legal Committee** ~ No report.

c) **Personnel Committee** ~ No report.

d) **Finance Committee** ~ No report. Mr. Chappell noted that the audit field work for the previous year’s fiscal year will start on Friday.

e) **Associate Directors Committee** ~ No report.

9. **Adjourn** ~ 3:19 PM