

## **MINUTES**

### **SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING**

HELD REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020 AT 2:00 PM  
Zoom Video Teleconference Meeting

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Tony Vaccarella  
Terry Connolly  
Arnold Lenk  
Mike Lewis  
Jim Waters

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW  
Steven Chappell, SRCD  
Tim Edmunds, SRCD  
Edwin Limanto, DWR  
Kelli Perez, SRCD  
Melissa Riley, DFW  
Orlando Rocha, DFW  
John Takekawa, SRCD  
Jeff Taylor, SRCD  
Larry Wyckoff, DFW

**1. Call to Order** ~ Mr. Vaccarella called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:02 PM.

**2. Public Comments** ~ None.

**3. Open Session** ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the December 9, 2020 Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the November 12, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2020 Board meeting was made by Mr. Lenk and seconded by Mr. Waters; all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote.

**4. Financial Reports** ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for November 2020 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the November 2020 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$100,356.67 including claims 55-57 are reimbursements for landowners PAI grants and claim 58, 63, and 65 are expenses for grant reimbursements and claim 61 for additional legal fees drafting the letter to DWR's Director. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the claim, Mr. Lenk seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote. Mr. Chappell reported the November 2020 Lower Joice Island vendor claims for \$8,167.65. All claims are normal operational expenses for the island, including a claim for pontoon boat servicing. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the claim, Mr. Lenk seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote. Mr. Chappell reported the November 2020 Water Managers vendor claims total of \$42,162.71. These are normal program operational expenses, including claim #35, which is a reimbursable expense for San Jose State University studies. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the claim, Mr. Lenk seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote.

**5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report** ~ The DFW GIWA report was presented by Mr. Orlando Rocha.

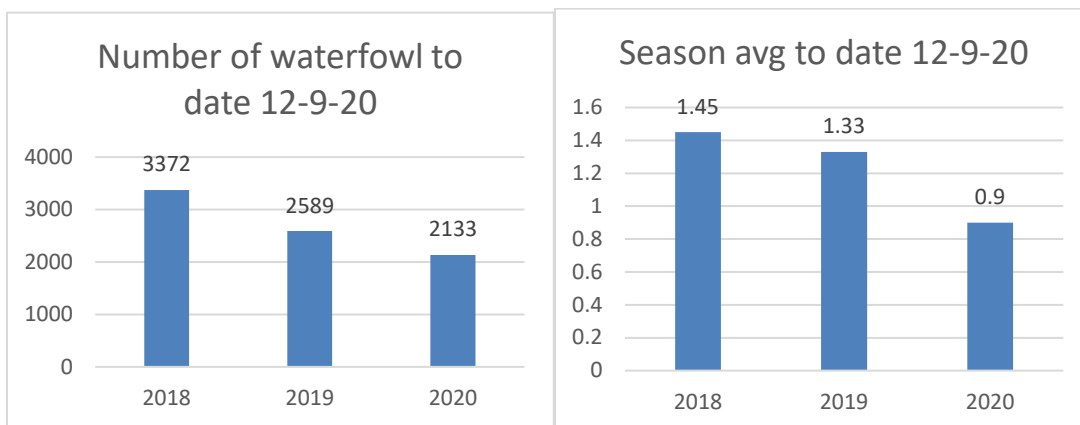
**Waterfowl Harvest and Hunter Numbers:** for the same period over the past three years.

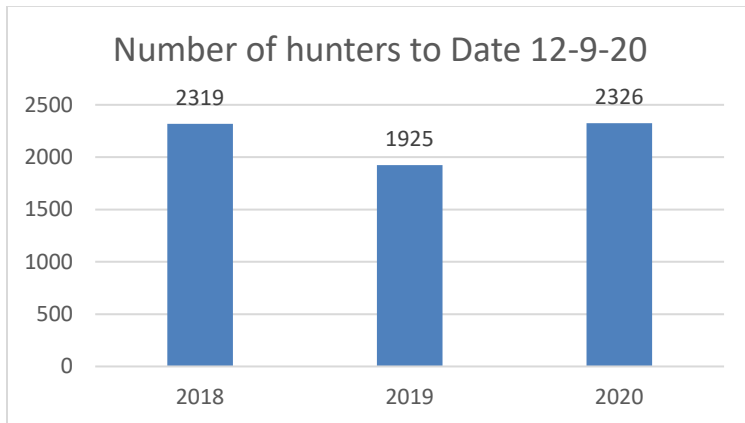
Date	# OF HUNTERS	# OF DUCKS	# OF GEESE	# OF WATERFOWL	AVERAGE DUCK	AVERAGE GEESE	#1 Species	#2 Species
12/2/2020	86	50	3	53	0.58	0.03	GWTE	MALL
12/5/2020	127	96	3	99	0.76	0.02	MALL	GWTE
12/6/2020	83	67	0	67	0.81	0.00	LESC	MALL
Stats to	2326	2105	28	2133	0.90	0.01		

Date								
12/4/2019	58	122	4	126	2.10	0.07	AMWI	NSHO
12/7/2019	93	242	0	242	2.60	0.00	AMWI	GOLD
12/8/2019	80	95	1	96	1.19	0.01	AMWI	GOLD
Stats to Date	1925	2552	37	2589	1.33	0.02		
12/5/2018	95	207	0	207	2.18	0.00	AMWI	MALL
12/8/2018	281	281	0	281	1.00	0.00	AGWT	AMWI
12/9/2018	132	132	7	139	1.00	0.05	MALL	NSHO
Stats to Date	2,319	3351	21	3372	1.45	0.01		

	2018	2019	2020
Top 5 Birds:	1. 880 NSHO 2. 784 MALL 3. 741 AGWT 4. 175 NOPI 5. 136 GADW	1. 950 NSHO 2. 569 MALL 3. 329 AGWT 4. 231 GOLD 5. 188 AMWI	1. 606 NSHO 2. 422 MALL 3. 395 AGWT 4. 200 AMWI 5. 99 GOLD

Orlando reminded anyone with a Junior hunter that on December 30<sup>th</sup> all DFW's assigned blinds on the Wildlife Area are closed to regular hunters and open to juniors and their chaperones. Blinds will be available on a first come first serve basis.





**Joice Island Opening Day:** Joice Island opened this past Sunday, we had 33 hunters that shot 93 ducks for a 2.8 bird per hunter average with MALL and NSHO being the top two birds. Last year 23 hunters shot 83 ducks for an average of 3.6 birds per hunter with MALL and NSHO being the top two birds.

**Pheasants:** Like most Wildlife Areas in the state, wild bird harvest continues to be poor. To date, Grizzly Island hunters have harvested 26 wild birds and 53 planted birds. Last year at this same time, we had 56 wild birds and 96 planted birds harvested. We were able to successfully have two planted bird pheasant hunts on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, juniors only in the morning and a family hunt in the afternoon. Both hunts were safe and fun for our participants with a few birds taken. DFW is currently working on submitting grant applications for funding for two major projects in our upland nesting fields. The focus will be to create larger blocks of habitat (essentially removing travel corridors for predators) and replanting with both native (long term perennial plants) and shorter-lived cover and food crops like triticale, oats, and vetch. This work will help both waterfowl and pheasant nesting.

**Wildlife Area:** This time of year, most of our staff time is spent operating the hunter check station, the remaining time is spent checking water, picking up trash and reposting areas with signs.

**6. Department of Water Resources Report** ~ Mr. Edwin Limanto provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. Reporting on the month of November, the salinity standard was 15.5 mS/cm. Salinities at water quality compliance stations in the Marsh ranged from 9.8 to 13.94 mS/cm and are below the standard. At the end of November, net Delta outflow was 5,085 cfs. The salinity standard for December was 15.5 mS/cm. Salinity values on December 7<sup>th</sup> were 9.6 to 13.27 mS/cm at compliance stations, while Delta outflow was 4,899 cfs. Reservoir capacity ranged from 32-68% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 21-94%. Precipitation year to date was 30% of normal

in the northern Sierra and 21% in the southern Sierra.

Staff continued to coordinate with Delta Field Division (DFD) on routine Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) levee maintenance from late November to mid-December. Planning continued for ditch clearing and dredging at the embayment, intake, and Roaring River Hammond Pond in 2021 or 2022. Levees are being monitored after extreme high tides. Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) routine maintenance has been completed. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) planning continues to fix the sheet piles around the inlet, to allow debris removal in the summer of 2021. Debris is removed as needed at the inlet, and routine maintenance is complete with monitoring after extreme high tides. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG) have tidal operations still in effect. DFD is refurbishing Gate 3 with reinstallation May to November 2021. Discussion ensued.

## **7. Suisun Resource Conservation District Reports ~**

- a) 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement (SMPA) Update and 2020 PAI Grant Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the SMPA agreement and grant program continued to be administered. Mr. Chappell and Mr. Waters have continued weekly calls with Mr. Dean Messer (Division Branch Chief) at DWR to request support for projects and payment of SRCD delinquent invoices. The PAI program includes 3 outstanding invoices, and we are awaiting 1 invoice from a landowner to complete the 2020 program. SMPA contract reimbursements are now being submitted monthly, and we are slowly catching up on outstanding reimbursement payments. Mr. Chappell has requested a 2021 PAI program meeting to discuss 2020 deferred projects and budgeting of required funding for a 2021 program. DWR is suggesting 2021 Program funding may be limited or unavailable. If this is the case, the 2021 program may have to consider modifying previous year's program and only funding the most beneficial projects. December 10<sup>th</sup> is a meeting on the 5-year SMPA review team, and that includes a summary of the history of the agreement and what has been achieved over the past 5 years of implementing the Agreement. Discussion ensued.
- b) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. On December 8<sup>th</sup>, the quarterly ECAT meeting was held, and December 10<sup>th</sup> is the scheduled monthly Principal's meeting. The Adaptive Management Advisory Team meeting was held on Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss early results of the Tule Red Restoration project in the first year of monitoring.
- c) USACE Permits -- RGP3 & LOP Permit Update ~ The 2020 work season is ending, and actual work completed information is being collected from the landowners and

compiled for the year-end report. The 2021 RGP 3 applications will be sent out in January 2021.

- d) Status report on Duck Club Management Plan Updates and future SRCD Local Protection Plan (LPP) Element Amendment Process ~ Mr. Chappell reported on the Duck Club Management Plan update need and ongoing effort. Staff anticipated this effort initiating in February or March of 2021- for the Board to consider the update process including a “Public Hearing” and SRCD Board Resolution to approve the proposed updates. SRCD LPP includes four elements. Staff is only proposing to amend the individual ownership management plan section of the LPP. Since the Plan was originally approved in 1980, there are changes in regulations, management techniques, ownership of private and public lands, and some properties have been purchased for tidal restoration or have breached exterior levees and will no longer need management plans. Discussion ensued.
- e) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa reported on the Water Manager Program. Mr. Taylor is working on year-end reporting for USACE, dredging, and the incidental take permit to deliver by the end of the month. Water quality monitoring has been regularly sampled and will be completed next week. The Water Managers are continuing to work on winterizing and repairing equipment including trailers. The oil filter crusher arrived on November 13th, and the water managers have been working on installing it in the garage to complete annual pump maintenance.

Ms. Collins and the water managers continued work on final Management Plan drafts. Nearly all drafts have been completed: 18 drafts were sent to landowners, 16 are in final revision, and 11 are complete. The DWR levee repair at Mein’s Landing was completed in mid-November. Also, in mid-November, water levels unexpectedly fell along Roaring River, and Mr. Chappell and Mr. McKinney worked with Mr. Edwin Limanto at DWR to resolve the problem. Mr. Limanto reported that issues were linked to a change in calculation of the approach velocities. He worked to resolve those issues, and water levels had recovered by late November. Ms. Collins continued work with DWR on the study relating managed wetland drain outflows and benefits to fish. She met with partners a few times during the week of November 16<sup>th</sup> to work on analyses.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, the SRCD triannual staff review was conducted on Zoom with Director Mike Lewis attending. Ms. Collins finished RTK GPS elevation surveys and analyses. She collected data at the Belden’s Landing salinity station on November 20<sup>th</sup> after the water managers trimmed tree branches around the benchmark site. She submitted a final report on the Belden’s Landing benchmark to DWR on December 1<sup>st</sup>, and on November 24<sup>th</sup>, she sent the final Collinsville report to DWR. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, she provided a draft report and new animation model to Sprig

Farm #803 and St. Germain #804. She met with the Sprig Farms landowner on December 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss the results, and following that meeting, a plan was made to re-survey the staff gauges to verify the results and modeling.

On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, Mr. Takekawa initiated discussions with university partners on a Delta Stewardship Council proposal to develop a regional Phragmites Control Plan for Suisun Marsh. He also worked with USGS scientists on a Wildlife Conservation Board proposal to examine optimizing Suisun Marsh brood water ponds and wintering sanctuaries. Both proposals have initial pre-applications due in mid-December. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, the pilot project at #634 for the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Essential Fish Screen grant was completed with final installation of a butterfly valve gate. On December 8<sup>th</sup>, we met with Mr. Brett Williams from DU to finalize the information collected for assessing the remaining 13 fish screens for proposing their renovation in the next grant round. Also, we scheduled a field visit with an electrician for December 10<sup>th</sup> to estimate work needed to upgrade fish screen solar sites, under this grant.

For the Belden's Landing NFWF project, SRCD assisted the County in the installation of two kayak launches on the bridge side of the main dock on November 16<sup>th</sup>. The Water Trail was put on the agenda for the Solano County Supervisors meeting on December 15<sup>th</sup>. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, we were informed that we had been awarded a competitive grant for Phase 2 of the range-wide small mammal survey to be conducted in the summer and fall of 2021. Mr. McKinney drafted the quarterly newsletter for release next week.

- e) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued to work on winterizing equipment and working on clean-up and organization. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, he brought the LJI boat to the office for a mechanic to conduct a 300-hour tune-up. Mr. Mouton also spent a few hours scraping barnacles off the bottom before returning to Lower Joice Island. On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, we received a leased propane tank from Suburban propane who filled all 3 tanks that Mr. Mouton transferred to the island to fill the storage tanks.

The waterfowl hunting season at Lower Joice Island has slowed considerably. The club bagged 30 ducks during 21 hunter days for an average of 1.43 birds per hunter-day, compared to the opener of 4.2 birds per hunter-day and nearly half of the first month average of 2.62 birds per hunter-day. The bag remained similar including 3 mallards (10%), 1 sprig (3%), 4 gadwall (13.3%), 9 teal (30%), and 13 spoonbills (43%).

- f) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~  
Mr. Chappell indicated we have met all meeting obligations while maintaining Covid-19 measures. All the meetings have moved to online meetings. 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.
- e) Associate Directors Committee ~ No report.

- 9. Adjourn** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Lenk; all were in favor by roll call and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.