

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

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11th, 2024 AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Kent Hansen
Mike Lewis
Dick Vanderkous
Jim Waters

OTHERS PRESENT: Dennis Becker, SRCD Assoc. Dir.
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Kevin Clark, DWR
Gina Darin, DWR
Marina Guzman, SRCD
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
Dajanae Stitts, DFW
John Takekawa, SRCD
Jeff Taylor, SRCD
John Telfer, SRCD Assoc. Dir.

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Waters called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:01 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Waters opened the December 11, 2024, Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Waters asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the November 13, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Waters asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2024, Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Vanderkous to approve; all were in favor and the motion carried.

4. Financial Reports ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for November 2024 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the November 2024 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$1,157,552.97. All expenses are regular general fund operations, salaries, or grant contract construction expenses with a reimbursement to Marsh Rat Tractor of \$45,000 for DWR road repairs at Tule Red tidal restoration site, to Ducks Unlimited for \$712,156.37 and \$195,163.43 for the completion of clubs 425 and 506 fish screen renovations, and \$108,404.99 for landowner reimbursement of approved PAI projects. All three of the SRCD program expense summaries include payment of three payroll periods during the month of November 2024. Mr. Chappell reported the November 2024 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$10,755.80. All expenses were normal LJI operational and salary expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the November 2024 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$38,882.78. All expenses were normal Water Managers operational and salary expenses. Mr. Hansen moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Vanderkous seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

b) Fiscal Year 2024/2025 ~ 1st Quarter SRCD Budget Summary Review ~ Mr. Chappell presented the SRCD fiscal year 2024/2025 1st quarter budget review. The Lower Joice Island fund was presented, we are currently at 20% for salaries 24% of services and supplies at 25% of the year fiscal. For the Water Managers department, we are currently at 19% salaries and 18% of services and supplies. Fish screen maintenance has a small negative balance, landowner will be billed for some of these program expenses. The NFWF mouse grant had mostly salaries and benefits expenses at 20% of budgeted amount. The Pest Weed Program had a negative balance for 2024 Phragmites spray program, but landowners have been invoiced for their expenses and payments will be coming in to cover this amount. The DWR Support and PAI funds show no current

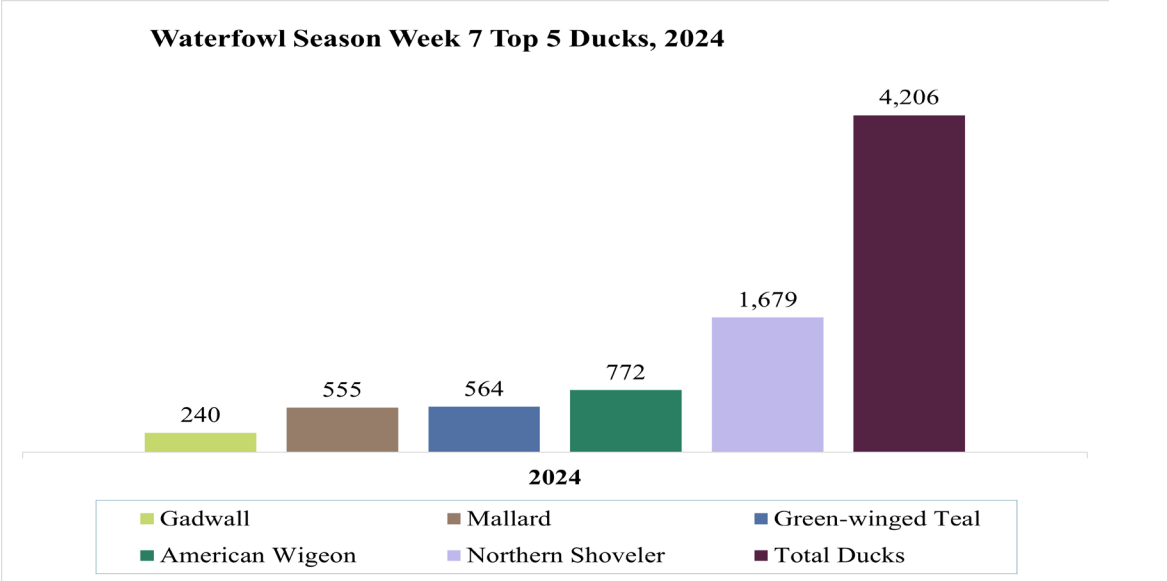
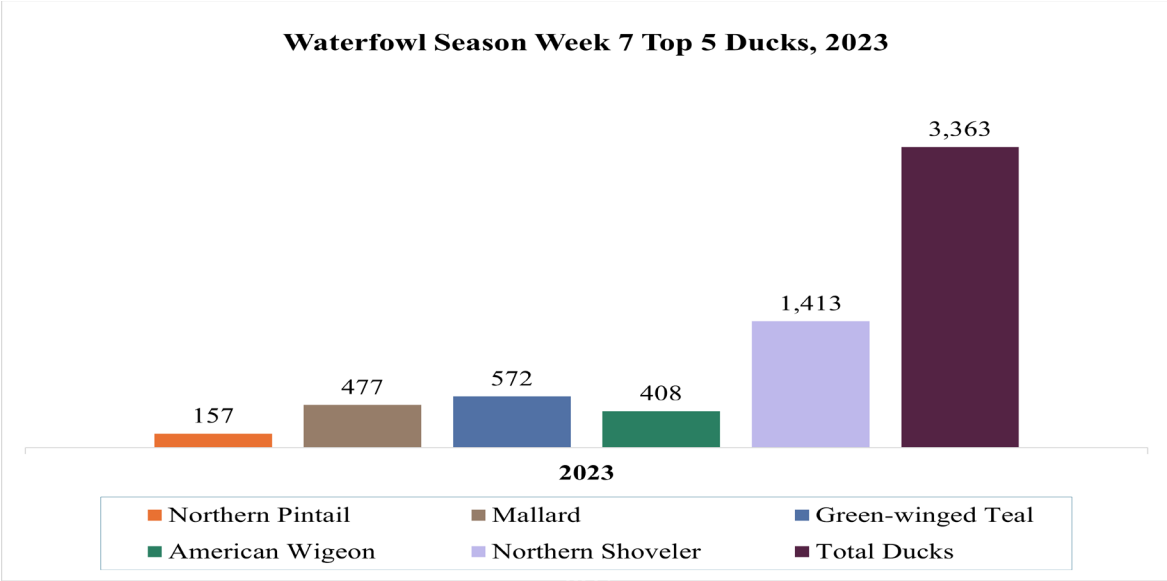
financial activity. The Delta Conservancy grant included pipe installations by CWA and that amount is reimbursable under the grant. The Mein's Landing support grant includes the caretaker salary, which is 18% of the budgeted amount. The fish screen retrofit grant shows \$307,235 in expense, which has been billed and is a reimbursable expense under the grant. The DWR Fish Restoration Program contract includes 1st quarter expenses that will be reimbursed when billed quarterly. The SRCD general fund is at for salaries 25%, and 22% for services and supplies. Landowner pump usage included costs that will be offset by landowner pumping bills payments. Discussion ensued.

- c) Board Consideration of purchase of a new SRCD Fixed Asset: 15' gate monitoring boat and trailer funded with Potrero Hills Landfill SRCD Government Fees ~ Mr. Chappell presented the memorandum to the board to obtain a new gate monitoring boat and trailer. He proposed to obtain this at an estimated cost of ~\$13,500, with the use of the SRCD Potrero Hills landfill government fees. Mr. Chappell stated that the existing 25 Hp. outboard motor would be transferred to this new boat. Discussion ensued. Mr. Vanderkous moved to approve the boat purchase as presented, Mr. Hansen seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

- d) Board Consideration for Disposal SRCD Fixed Asset: 2003-15' Klamath Aluminum boat (Hull #KLOGO18K203) & 2002 Karavan boat trailer (VIN #5KTBS17152FR042293) ~ Mr. Chappell presented the disposal of the current gate monitoring boat and trailer. Mr. Lewis moved to approve the boat purchase as presented, Mr. Hansen seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~ Mr. Orlando Rocha provided the DFW report.

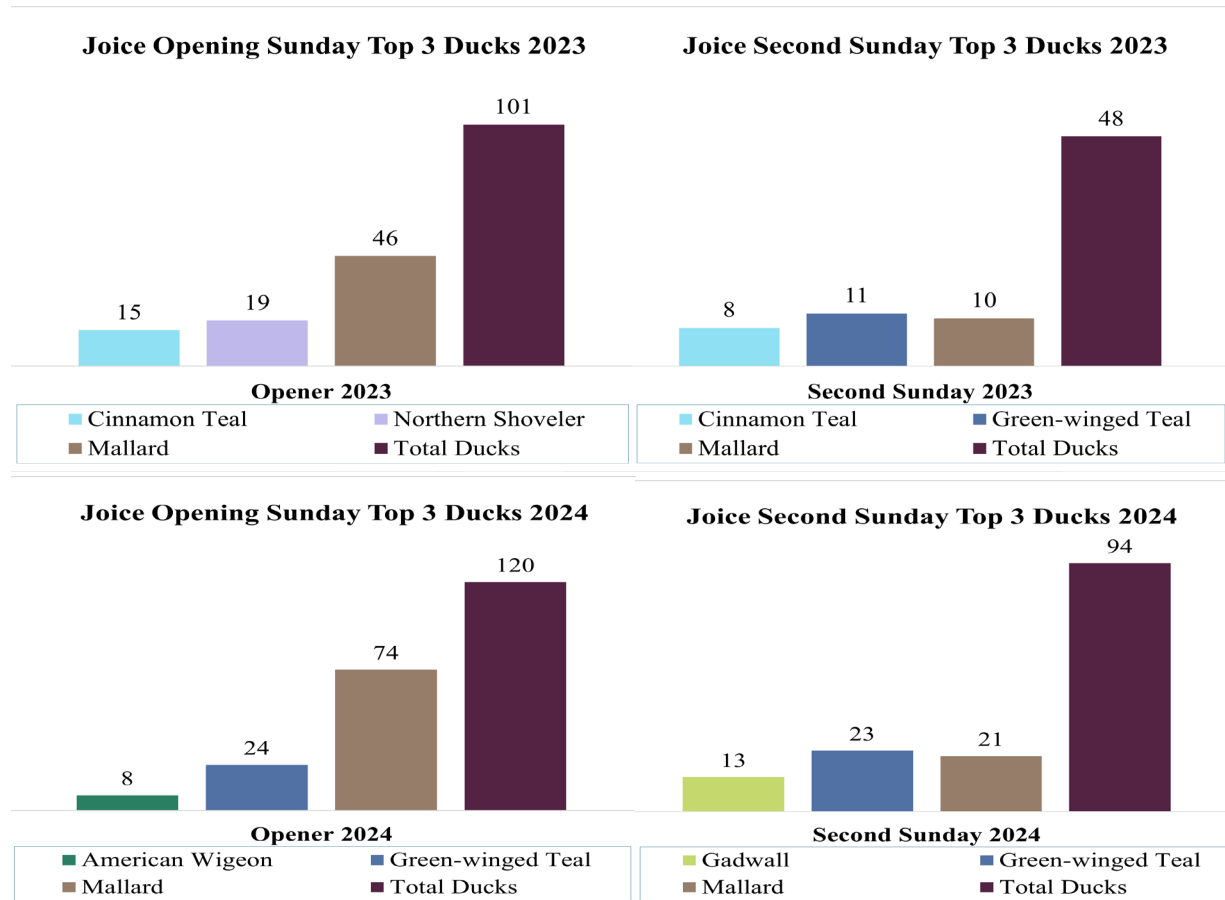
Waterfowl Season: As of last weekend, we've had 2,359 hunters harvest 4,206 ducks and 45 geese for a 1.80 waterfowl average. Last year at this time, we had 2,371 hunters harvest 3,297 ducks and 36 geese resulting in a 1.41 waterfowl average. Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, and Gadwall were the top 5 birds for opening weekend and have continued to be our most harvested species. See the graphs below for a comparison of top 5 birds between this year and last.



Description: Bar graphs showing the top 5 harvested birds for 2023's and 2024's waterfowl seasons summarized through week 7.

Joice Island: Opening Sunday saw 120 ducks harvested for 22 hunters. The top duck was Mallard, followed by Green-winged Teal and American Wigeon. The average was 5.45 ducks per hunter, which is higher than last year's opening Sunday average of 4.39. On Sunday the 8th, 94 ducks were harvested among 27 hunters. The average was 3.48 which is higher than the previous year's average of 2.29. The top duck was Green-

winged Teal, followed by Mallard and Gadwall. Graphs below compare Joice Island's harvest results between this year and last for the first two Sundays of the season.



Top 3 birds for Joice Island's opening and second Sundays in 2023 and 2024.

Pheasants: Wild bird harvest is higher this year than previous years. To date, 38 wild pheasant have been harvested, which is 18 more than the previous year and 24 more than 2022. Last year DFW seeded the 13 and 14 upland fields with native plants with the goal of improving food availability and upland nesting cover. We hope that pheasant numbers will continue to increase for the remainder of this season.

On November 13th, we held two planted bird pheasant hunts. Our junior hunt was held in the morning and a family hunt was held in the afternoon. For the junior hunt, 11 out of the 30 junior hunters drawn attended, and for the family hunt 38 out of the 40 hunters drawn attended. We planted 140 pheasant between the two hunts. A total of 24 pheasants were taken between the 49 hunters for an average of 0.49. Hunters reported having a great time.

Wildlife Area: At this time of year, most of our staff are kept busy working at the check station. The remaining time is spent continuing regular maintenance work, including checking water, picking up trash, and reposting signage.

Projects: Pond 15 flooding hit a snag because of a separated coupler on the pipe. We are currently waiting on repair and will proceed with flooding once it's fixed. We've completed USACE end of the year reporting for projects and are beginning to plan for next season. Discussion ensued.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Jamel Stewart presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. Suisun Marsh November salinity standards were 15.5 mS/cm for the eastern stations and 16.5 for the western stations. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 6.9-16.5 mS/cm. At the end of November, net Delta outflow was 14,267 cfs. As of December 8th, salinities in the Marsh ranged from 0.7-6.5 mS/cm, and Delta outflow had dropped to 6,357 cfs. December salinity standards are 15.5 mS/cm for the eastern and western stations.

The Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) end of year reporting was in progress, and DFD conducted fish screen cleanings. Environmental staff submitted quantities for the 2024 RGP3 maintenance activities. Environmental staff submitted quantities for the 2024 RGP3 maintenance activities at the Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) and worked on end of year reporting. Environmental staff worked on end of year reporting and submitted quantities for the 2024 RGP3 maintenance activities at Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) facilities. At the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG), gates are now in tidal mode due to high salinity conditions, and Gate 2 in-water work has concluded.

California reservoir capacity in November ranged from 48-71% of average in the northern Sierra and 40-98% in the southern Sierra. For the new water year, precipitation year to date was 128% of average for the northern Sierra and 59% of average for the southern Sierra. Discussion ensued.

A presentation on the Treatment of Aquatic Plant Invasion in Tidal Restoration Sites in the Suisun Marsh was provided by Ms. Gina Darin. Discussion ensued.

7. Suisun Resource Conservation District Reports ~

- a) 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement ~ Mr. Chappell reported that there have been no changes in the 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement. The Contract continues to fund the SRCD Water Managers Program and 2024 PAI cost share program. Mr. Chappell expects DWR to submit a formal request to relocate water quality monitoring compliance station S-97 Ibis to S-33 Cygnus. This proposed

change will require a formal amendment to the 2015 SMPA Agreement. Mr. Chappell attended the Dec. 10th ECAT compliance team meeting.

- b) 2024 PAI Program Update ~ The 2024 PAI cost share program construction year has ended, and we are awaiting submittal of final project invoices. SRCD will be processing any completed projects for reimbursement. Mr. Chappell will provide program implementation and expenditure summary at the January Board meeting, in preparation for the 2025 season.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. Mr. Chappell reported he participated in the Nov. 14th Principal's meeting and the next Principals meeting is scheduled for December 12th.
- d) RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continues to administer the RGP 3 and Letter of Permission Dredging permits. The 2024 in-water work window was completed at the end of November. SRCD continued closing out the 2024 work season reports and preparing year end annual compliance reports. The 10-year dredging permit renewal public notice was released November 27th and will be open until Dec. 31st, 2024. SRCD hope to get the LOP Dredging permit reissued in January or February of 2025, but there will be significant increased dredging fees from the RWQCB. Discussion ensued.
- e) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa presented the Water Manager Program update. The Water Managers focused on completing end of year reporting for the actual work conducted during the 2024 field season. Mr. Edmunds finished maintenance needs on several fish screens including gate actuator repairs for 625, 2112, and DFW, and he installed new batteries at the DFW screen. He completed taking a series of required online continuing education classes for his applicator's license with the Department of Pesticide Regulation. He helped work on organizing and cleaning the garage as well as winterizing water pumps, and he drove the boat for the gate monitoring inspections today.

Mr. Taylor pulled out the water quality sondes for the season on the week of November 22nd and drafted the 2024 Water Quality Report. He participated in the inspection of the Wings Landing Tidal Restoration levee on November 25th, and he conducted gate monitoring on November 26th. He filed drought response paperwork for 2 clubs, and he completed an article on dredging for the SRCD newsletter. He worked to compile the USACE Actual Work Report, Letter of Permission and BCDC Dredging Reports, and Incidental Take Permit Reports. He assisted with the pump winterization and repairs, and he continued to schedule trailer repairs.

Ms. Guzman continued working on Gray Goose and Grey Island water management and installed a staff gauge at Gray Goose and Concord Farms. She assisted with

the maintenance and storage of the pumps, reinstallation of water loggers at Mein's Landing, and led the garage reorganization. She downloaded water logger data at Rich Island, Wheeler Island, and Dead Duck clubs and prepared the data for review as part of the Delta Conservancy project. She posted the previous newsletter on the website and worked on drafting articles for the next edition.

Ms. Collins completed the draft manuscript on the methods to examine the effects of managed wetland drainages on fish biomass in Suisun Marsh and distributed it to coauthors for comment. She helped outline the final report for our Phragmites social ecological study and helped lead the team discussion on preparing the final report. She worked on updating the software on the RTK GPS and prepared to shift the programs from an older desktop to her laptop. She and Mr. Takekawa reviewed the website with our webmaster, Mr. Charles Fox and we made all needed repairs to keep it running smoothly. Ms. Brandon continued work on the occupancy models for the salt marsh harvest mouse. She completed levee surveys and reports at Tule Red and Wings Landing. She conducted analysis of Phragmites distribution from 2024 imagery, and she developed an operating procedure guide to monitor water levels with a camera trap.

On November 15th, Mr. Takekawa met with UC Davis students Kyle Phillips and Alice Tung to demonstrate and discuss our pond drainage model for potential use in their research. On December 6th, Mr. Chappell and all of the Water Managers attended the meeting with the Delta Watermaster's office, and Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa hosted a field trip to see the Marsh areas and discuss diversions.

- f) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued to maintain the facilities and habitats on the island. He repaired a leak in the clubhouse roof by adding new shingles, where the roof was storm damaged. He continued to work on improving the yard and added straw and grass seed to reduce mud. He finished siding and painting the back of the caretaker house, and he repaired pipe leaks and installed a new hot water heater. He changed the oil in the generator, and we arranged for a service company to come out next week for a full tune-up and installation of an auto-on switch. He updated the battery compartment parts on the excavator following the recommendation of the mechanic who repaired problems with the electrical system. He also wired new boat lights on his boat. He returned empty water jugs to Cullinan, and he obtained propane and re-leveld the 2 large propane tanks in the yard.

For the past month, the Lower Joice Club had a take of 82 ducks including 25 shovelers, 17 teal, 17 mallards, 11 sprig, 7 wigeon, and 2 gadwall in 47 hunter days for a 1.7 bird per hunter average. In comparison, the bag was 76 birds in 2023 average for a 2.3 birds/hunter day average with more teal (39) and fewer mallards (4) taken.

g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell attended the Central Valley Joint Venture waterfowl meeting, and a group will be set up to focus on Suisun Marsh where modeling wetland production of food will be reassessed. Mr. Chappell attended a local 6th grade school field trip to the Suisun Marsh at Rush Ranch. This education program is run by Solano RC with the support of many partners including SRCD. After the field trip, Valero made a directed donation of \$10,000 to the Suisun Conservation Fund to support the 2025 Suisun Marsh Watershed Explores program, next year. Discussion ensued.

8. Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports ~

a) Agency Committee ~ No report.

b) Legal Committee ~ No report.

c) Personnel Committee ~ Mr. Chappell presented the proposal to update the SRCD existing Water Manager Position pay scales to be consistent with the CalHR listing for Environmental Scientist and Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor Series. This update is consistent with Article IX. of the 2015 SMPA Agreement. These existing Water Manager Position pay scales were last updated in 2021. Mr. Lewis moved to approve the new Water Managers pay scales, as presented, in the 015 SMPA Water Managers Program Position Pay Scales, Guidelines and Standards document. Mr. Hansen seconded the motion; all were in favor, and the motion carried.

d) Finance Committee ~ No report.

e) Associate Director's Committee ~ No report.

9. Closed Session ~ Conference with Labor Negotiators pursuant to Gov. Code section 54957.6: Agency designated representatives: Directors Tony Vaccarella, H. Kent Hansen, Jim Waters, Mike Lewis, and Dick Vanderkous. Unrepresented employees: Executive Director, Operations Manager, Office Supervisor, Office Assistant, Biologist, Biologist Analyst, Water Managers, and Lower Joice Island Resident Manager. Mr. Waters closed the Open Session, and the Board convened in Closed Session.

10. Reconvene ~ At 3:12 PM the meeting was reconvened, Mr. Lewis reported that the SRCD Board had accepted the Chair of the Personnel Committee recommendations for the 2024 SRCD Staff Salary Considerations, effective Pay Period #1. Mr. Hansen moved to approve the Chair of the Personnel Committee recommendations for the 2024 SRCD Staff Salary Considerations as presented, Mr. Vanderkous seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

11. Adjourn ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Vanderkous, seconded by Mr. Hansen; all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 PM.