

## **MINUTES**

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

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, AT 2:00 PM  
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS  
675 TEXAS STREET  
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Jim Waters  
Kent Hansen  
Mike Lewis

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steven Chappell, SRCD  
Kevin Clark, DWR  
Kelli Perez, SRCD  
Melissa Riley, DFW  
Orlando Rocha, DFW  
Jamel Stewart, DWR  
John Takekawa, SRCD  
Jeff Taylor, SRCD  
John Telfer, SRCD Assoc. Director  
Dick Vanderkous, SRCD Assoc. Director

**1. Call to Order** ~ Mr. Waters called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:02 PM. Mr. Waters noted the passing of 20-year SRCD Board Member Terry Connolly on December 15, 2024, and asked for a moment of silence in remembrance.

**2. Public Comments** ~ There were no public comments.

**3. Open Session** ~ Mr. Waters opened the January 10, 2024, Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Waters asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the December 13, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Waters asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 13, 2023 Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Hansen; all were in favor and the motion carried.

**4. Financial Reports** ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for December 2023 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the December 2023 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$189,900.80. The payroll amounts on all three vendor claim summaries are larger than normal, because the month of December has 3 payroll periods. The General Fund claims were normal SRCD operational expenses with the exception of claim #65, #67, and #68, which were reimbursable grant expenses totaling \$97,230.83. Mr. Chappell reported the December 2023 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$7,558.42. All expenses were normal LJI operational and salary expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the December 2023 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$33,879.95. All expenses were normal Water Managers operational and salary expenses. Mr. Lewis moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Hansen seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

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

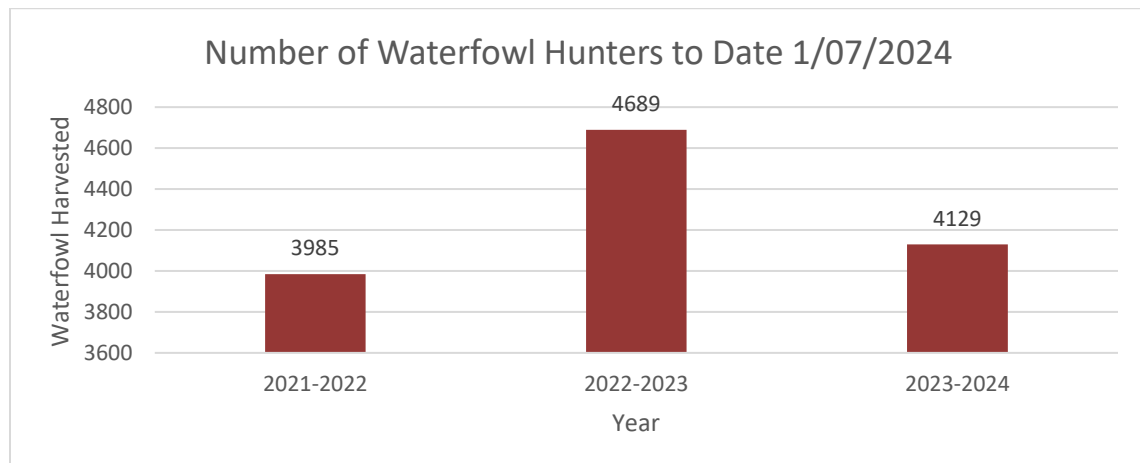
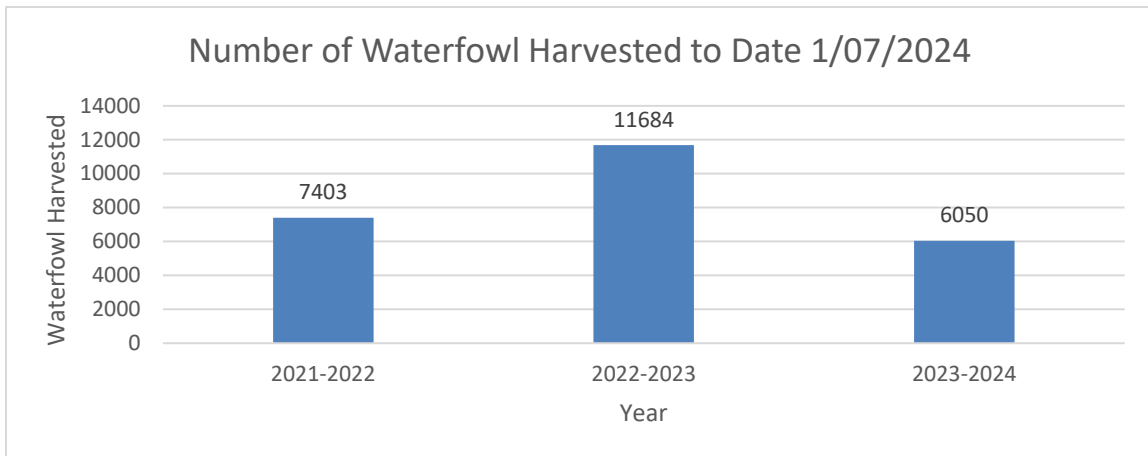
**Joice Island Wild Pig Hunt:** The Joice Island Wild Pig Hunt will be available for online applications by the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month with the deadline to apply on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Pig hunts will take place on Saturdays through Sundays beginning March 2<sup>nd</sup> and ending on the weekend of May 25<sup>th</sup>. The first weekend will be reserved for junior hunters only. With 13 weekends of hunting, 52 hunters will have an opportunity to hunt pigs on Joice Island. In 2023 only 11 pigs were harvested, so we're hoping hunters will see more success this year.

**Joice Island:** Contractors are continuing to work on the Joice Island bridge repair. Fortunately, it remains open to foot traffic so hunters who drew reservations for Joice Island will still have the opportunity to hunt there. So far, the contractors are on schedule to complete the repair, fairly close to the original construction schedule.

**Grizzly Island:** Our work on raising the Montezuma levee last year has been successful, and we haven't experienced any overtopping through the recent high tides.

**Year to Year Waterfowl Harvest Comparison: Top 5 ducks**

	2022-2023	2023-2024
1	4376 NSHO	1975 NSHO
2	3050 AMWI	1449 AGWT
3	1587 AGWT	977 AMWI
4	537 MALL	616 MALL
5	461 BUFF	330 NOPI



**6. Department of Water Resources Report** ~ Jamel Stewart and Kevin Clark presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of December, salinity standards were 15.5 mS/cm in the east and the west. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 7.3 to 15.4 mS/cm. At the end of December, net Delta outflow was 8,521 cfs. As of January 8th, salinities ranged from 2.2 to 12.0 mS/cm with Delta outflow of 16,309 cfs and a salinity standard of 12.5 mS/cm at the eastern and western stations. S-97 and S-42 remain offline. No drought response fund triggers were exceeded. Hunter Cut and Volanti Water Quality Station repair work was completed on November 28<sup>th</sup> with final construction approval pending an expected in January. DWR will install the permanent water quality equipment once the stations are approved. Discussion ensued.

The Roaring River Distribution System water levels continue to be monitored following high tides. Environmental staff began preparing RGP3 applications for 2024 maintenance activities. For the Morrow Island Distribution System, DWR continues working with Union Pacific Railroad on the Morrow Lane Road maintenance, and Union Pacific reported that the drainage at the crossing had been repaired. Environmental staff began preparing a 2024 RGP3 application for MIDS and for a California Ridgway's rail survey. Environmental staff also began preparing a RGP3 application and California Ridgway's rail survey for Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO). Mr. Clark reported that geotechnical analyses will be done with drilling at GYSO. At the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates, Gate 1 and 3 remain in tidal mode in response to high salinity at S-35, and Gate 2 is out for refurbishment. There was no update for the Montezuma Day Use Area. Russian Thistle remains prevalent at several sites in the Marsh, and a vegetation monitoring work plan is in early stages of development including invasive species. Discussion ensued.

California reservoir capacity in November ranged from 47-67% of average in the northern Sierra and 39-90% in the southern Sierra. For the new water year, precipitation year to date was 59% of average in the northern Sierra and 41% in the southern Sierra. Discussion ensued.

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

- a) 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement: Mr. Chappell reported that the SMPA agreement programs continue to be administered. Monthly calls continue with DWR Management including updates on monthly payment of SRCO contract expenses. The SMPA 5-year review has been completed, and BOR was compiling recommendations, and there was no support for immediately amending the agreement. February 8<sup>th</sup>, a SMPA 5 year review meeting is scheduled to discuss recommendations and possible future action. Discussion ensued.

- b) 2023 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the PAI Program cost share program. A summary of past years program expenditures was presented to the Board. The programs remaining balances were presented to the Board to determine how we will proceed next year. The estimate included completed projects for the 2023 season and estimated costs for 2023 projects that have not been billed. Annual program implementation costs have ranged from \$300-500K per year. The remaining Fund balance exceeds \$734,000. This level of funding is sufficient for the 2024 PAI 75:25 and 50:50 programs to be conducted without placing restrictions on 2024 proposals. The number of projects submitted has decreased annually over the past 8 years. Discussions included considering a full 2024 solicitation or delaying a year into 2025. There has been very little decrease in funds available for Joint Use Fund projects when the cost-of-living adjustment is applied. Discussion ensued. The Board members supported continuing the implementation of a full PAI 75:25 and 50:50 program in 2024.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. Regular monthly meetings for the SMP Principals continues. The next Principal's meeting is scheduled for January 11th.
- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continued to administer the RGP 3 permit. The 2023 RGP 3 annual permit reports were submitted before the end of the calendar year. The Letter of Permission dredging reports were also submitted before the end of the calendar year. SRCD has begun drafting the renewal application for the LOP Dredging Permit. Submittal of the renewal package should be in the spring of 2024. Ms. Riley from DFW is providing support for the needed special Ridgway's Rail surveys for two properties this spring.
- e) Potrero Hills Landfill – Phase II Expansion Update ~Mr. Chappell provided an update on the Potrero Hills Landfill expansion. Mr. Chappell informed the landfill that their proposed calculation and technical report for tipping fee allocation was acceptable to SRCD. The proposed fee allocation is based upon a monthly estimate, annual landfill will verify the estimates through a physical survey of the placement cell. A SRCD special revenue account has been set up in the Solano County Treasury as a SRCD restricted fund for these tipping fees revenues. Mr. Chappell anticipates scheduling a study session at a future Board meeting to discuss the restrictions on these funds and what they can be used for to support future conservation actions and projects in the Suisun Marsh. Discussion ensued.
- f) Water Manager (WM) Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa presented the Water Manager Program update. The Water Managers completed end-of-year reports through the month for the RGP3 maintenance permit for the clubs who conducted 2023 work. Mr. Taylor completed drafts of the annual reports for the USACE,

Regional Water Quality Control Board, USFWS, NMFS, and State Lands and EPA as well as the DFW Incidental Take Permit report. The Water Managers obtained final reports for dredging projects under the Letter of Permission and provided reports on dredging to the USACE, BCDC, RWQCB, USFWS, NMFS, State Lands, Cal EPA and CDFW.

Mr. Taylor also completed the seasonal water quality monitoring report for the RWQCB, and conducted a gate monitoring survey on January 8<sup>th</sup>, and a compliance report was submitted on January 9<sup>th</sup>. The Water Managers mailed letters on diversion reporting, rail restrictions, and the spring salmon closure, and began drafting notification letters for 2024 RGP3 applications and spring burning. Mr. Taylor worked on troubleshooting repairs for the navigation boat and arranged for installation of a new water pump. Mr. Edmunds wrote a newsletter article and helped to prepare the newsletter for final mailing. He hosted a meeting with biologist Cathy Blazy from Solano County Agriculture to discuss our support of landowners for their herbicide applications. He downloaded water logger data for water levels on clubs participating in our Delta Conservancy grant, and he developed transects for the survey drone to obtain flooded images of a club in the western Marsh.

Ms. Collins collated the Water Managers 2023 infrastructure project summary for updating to BCDC and entry into GeoMarsh. Ms. Collins worked on GeoMarsh and IMP update drafts and updated the GeoMarsh dredging layer with 2023 projects. She worked on a map of AED's locations in Suisun Marsh. On December 15<sup>th</sup>, she worked with staff at the San Francisco Estuary Institute on habitat mapping. On December 15<sup>th</sup> and January 4<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with the Bird Returns project to finalize grant funding for landowners to manage water for shorebirds and waterfowl in the spring and the summer.

On December 20<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a meeting for the Lower Joice Island blue carbon study. Ms. Brandon and Mr. Takekawa met with Steve Andrews of RMA to coordinate our methods write-up. On January 6<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Brandon and Mr. Takekawa met with UC Davis investigators on eDNA genetics samples and analysis for small mammal analyses in San Francisco Bay. Also on January 6<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa met and coordinated with 2 other speakers who will provide a keynote presentation at the upcoming Western Section of the Wildlife Society workshop on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Finally, all fulltime and hourly staff worked on updating their state-required biennial sexual harassment certification, and staff who regularly operated motorboats completed their California boating card training.

g) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued maintaining the facilities and habitat on the island. He obtained a load of propane on January 8<sup>th</sup> and disposed of contents from the septic

holding tank on January 9th. He graded the Suisun Slough levee top by the barge slip. He adjusted water levels and circulation for forecast rainfall. He repaired the hot water heater in the caretaker house.

Hunting continued from December 13<sup>th</sup> to January 6<sup>th</sup> for the Lower Joice Island Gun Club. The total harvest was 157 birds taken during 47 hunter days or 3.3 birds/hunter. The species composition included 113 teal comprising 72% of the bag, 27 spoonbills comprising 17.2%, 8 pintail, 7 wigeon, and 2 mallards. This result compared with 2.3 birds/hunter day the month before and 3.9 birds/hunter day the year before when more spoonbills (83 or 57.6%) were taken compared with teal (44 or 30.6%).

- h) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update. He met the new director for the Solano County Mosquito Abatement District, Miguel Cardenas as former director Rich Snyder has retired. Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a meeting today for the County Wildlife Task Force and ALUC Subcommittee about wildlife attraction and mitigation in Solano County. 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 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the 2022-2023 audit was initiated by Ms. Perez with Fechner Accountancy, Inc. and a field visit on January 18<sup>th</sup>. We have two contracts (DFW, DWR) currently expiring in June 2024. The agencies are working on renewals, but under current state budget shortfalls any new contracts will be heavily scrutinized. Discussion ensued.
- e) Associate Director's Committee ~ No report.

- 9. **Meeting Adjournment** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by M. Lewis and seconded by K. Hansen, all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 PM.