

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 10th, 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

OTHERS PRESENT: Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Kevin Clark, DWR
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
Mike Frost, Landowner
Norman Johns, DWR
Fred Riedel, Landowner
Melissa Riley, DFW
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
John Takekawa, SRCD
Jeff Taylor, SRCD
John Telfer, SRCD Assoc. Director
Randy Weinrich, DFW

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Lewis called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

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

a) Approval of the June 12, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Lewis asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2024, Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Vanderkous and seconded by Mr. Hansen; all were in favor and the motion carried.

4. Financial Reports ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for June 2024 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the June 2024 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaling \$157,268.80. All expenses are regular general fund operations including 3 contract reimbursements. Mr. Chappell reported the June 2024 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$15,447.79. All expenses were normal LJI operational and salary expenses with claim #63 and #66 for the new tractor tune-up and tire installation. Mr. Chappell reported the June 2024 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$33,898.17. All expenses were normal Water Managers operational and salary expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the June 2024 Special Revenue Program vendor claims totaled \$13,182.32 for the portable pump program. Mr. Hansen moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Vanderkous seconded the motion, all others were in favor, and the motion carried.

b) Board Consideration Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Suisun RCD Final Budgets ~ Mr. Chappell provided final budgets for 2024-2025. The general fund final budget was from the June draft to add additional permitting costs, new our copier lease, and utility costs were higher. Mr. Chappell reviewed the individual grants' detailed budgets, which shows revenues and expenses to the SRCD general fund. The Water Managers program budget was presented as a balanced budget which is a reimbursable contract with USBR and DWR. The Lower Joice Island final budget was presented. The budget is conservative, but we hope to hold expenses to the final budget amounts. Mr. Hansen made a motion to approve the SRCD Fiscal Year 24/25 final budgets; Mr. Vanderkous seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

c) Board Consideration: Resolution No 2425-1 San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Grant Amount Augmentation ~ Mr. Chappell presented a resolution for a \$100,000 augmentation to the SFBRA grant amount for essential fish screens from \$1,263,319 to \$1,363,319. Mr. Hansen made a motion to approve the resolution, Mr. Vanderkous seconded the motion, and all were in favor. A roll call vote of the individual Board

Members was conducted, all were in favor, and the resolution was adopted.

d) SRCD 3rd Quarter Fiscal Year 2023-2024 ~ Budget Summary Review ~ Mr. Chappell presented the County's Integrated Financial Accounting System report summarizing expense and revenues up through the 3rd quarter of SRCD's fiscal year 2023-2024. Mr. Chappell reviewed the SRCD general fund with salaries and benefits at 76% and 75% for supplies at 75% of the year. Lower Joice Island expenses and revenues were in line with the budget projections. The Water Manager program was at 66% for salaries and 71% for supplies at 75% of the year. The fish screen maintenance Department is over budget, due to the boom truck repair costs, which will be covered through the SRCD general expenses. The NFWF mouse budget was on track and the pest and weed program shows a deficit, due to material inventory, but that will be billed to participating landowners in coming months. SRCD expenses under the DWR support, DWR Fish Restoration Program, DWR Meins' Landing grants, are all reimbursable to SRCD. The Delta Conservancy pipe grant and SFBRA Fish Screen grant provides revenue to SRCD for grant administration, but most of the expenditures are passed through to DU and CWA for project delivery and contractors and materials for constructed projects. Discussion ensued.

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

Elk Season: The deadline for our hunters to pay for their tags is July 15th, still have 4 tags unpaid for, surprisingly. The Wildlife Area will be open until July 28th for public use and will close after that for elk season. The first hunt begins on August 3rd. Our general hunts begin on August 13th and will extend until September 27th.

Grizzly Island: DFW continues to conduct weed control for the native grass planting project in our upland fields. The placeholder cover crop planted last fall did its job and has outcompeted a lot of weeds, so we are just dealing with patches here and there of tumbleweed. Disking those areas to not let the weeds set seed and we are still planning to do our final planting in the fall. Summer field work season continues in the Wildlife Area. The crew has been mowing, but we have been plagued with broken equipment one after another, but we are slowly moving towards having some of the important work done before we begin flood- up season. The brood ponds on the edge of pond 12 and the upland fields are still holding lots of broods, some of which are ready to fly, with others just hatched in the last week. I'm really looking forward to the early part of the season, production seems to be up, and reports from other areas in the state look the same.

USGS: USGS has concluded their nest searching season, I have not received their final numbers for the season but even in their last week of checking they were finding a new Gadwall nest almost every day. USGS will produce a report and will share it at the next meeting.

Joice Island: Joice island is still flooded due to a neighbor's levee issue, we still plan to work on our exterior levees with dredge material, but until the water recedes, we are in

a holding pattern for any interior pond work.

Nutria: The nutria crew are trapping 3 major areas around the Marsh right now, South of Roaring River, Grizzly Ranch/Island Slough area, and Joice Island. They have 150 active traps out and are catching on average 10 animals a week. They keep trapping an area until they stop catching animals and see no new detections on cameras.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Jamel Stewart presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. He introduced Norman Johns who is a new member of their DWR group.

For the month of June, there were no salinity standards for the Marsh. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 2.4-10.0 mS/cm. At the end of June, the net Delta outflow was 10,055 cfs. As of July 7th, salinities ranged from 3.0-11.2 mS/cm, which is very low for this time of year, and Delta outflow was at 8,981 cfs. The Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) levee inspections were conducted by DWR staff and Delta Field Division (DFD) conducted fish screen cleaning. DFD staff continued annual maintenance including mowing, spraying, and grading. For the Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS), DWR conducted levee inspections, and environmental staff conducted a clearance survey for annual maintenance. DFD staff began annual maintenance including mowing, spraying, and laying A/B gravel. Levee inspections also were conducted at Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO), and environmental staff completed clearance for debris removal. DFD conducted debris clearing. At the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG), 60 days of SMSCG operations began on July 1 and continues through August 30. The 100 TAF (thousand acre-feet) block of water will last for 60 days through the end of October and fall X2 (2 ppt from Golden Gate) requires a 30-day average to be ≤ 80 km in September-October. Flashboards will remain installed this summer, and out of water work will begin this month. Gate 2 remains out for refurbishment but will be reinstalled this fall. There will be an update on vegetation management next month.

California reservoir capacity in June ranged from 86-100% of average in the northern Sierra and 91-102% in the southern Sierra. For the new water year, precipitation year to date was 90% of average in the northern Sierra and 83% 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 SRCD contract expenses. We are currently completing end-of-fiscal-year invoicing and reporting. On June 11th was the Environmental Compliance Advisory Team meeting.

- b) PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the PAI Program cost share program. The deadline for the second and final 2024 application period was June 30th with the review panel (SRCD, DWR, DFW, CWA) completed on July 8th. Discussion ensued.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. The Principal's meeting call was held on June 13th with the next call scheduled for July 11th. There is a petition to list longfin smelt and western pond turtle, so there will be a new biological assessment under the Suisun Marsh Plan to give Section 7 Endangered species take authorization for the newly listed species. Any changes to existing permits will be addressed at the fall or spring Landowner Workshop. Discussion ensued.
- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continues to administer the RGP 3 permit. The 2024 May-June landowner application packages were submitted to the USACE and were approved. Landowners have submitted their 2024 dredging permit application and Water Managers are preparing the 2024 application package. SRCD submitted a 3-year BCDC Marsh Development Permit for annual dredging of the 13 fish screen sites in the Marsh, and our permit will be good through 2026. The LOP dredging fee's costs will be increasing significantly in the new 10-year permit. Discussion ensued.
- e) California Forever Initiative ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update to the Board. There were several news articles in the Board package. The initiative and land use designation change has obtained enough signatures to qualify for the November 5th ballot. Mr. Chappell attended the Solano County Board of Supervisors' June 25th meeting. The Solano County Board of Supervisors requested a 30-day study review from staff before their final action to consider placing it on the November 5th ballot. Discussion ensued.
- f) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa presented the Water Manager Program update. Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Takekawa picked the first week of July or the hottest week of the year to pull the fish screens for maintenance, and we were able to sweat through removal of 11 of 14 screens. Three screens may require an excavator for lifting: one screen had nonworking brushes and was silted in while 2 large screens were behind a bulkhead that needs clearing to site the boom truck closer for the lift. Mr. Edmunds also made the order for herbicide for summer *Phragmites* control and worked on the plan for helicopter treatment. The Water Managers began to deliver herbicide to landowners. They also completed all work for the pumping program, inventoried the diesel, and prepared invoices for the end of the fiscal year. A trash pump repaired in Pittsburg was towed back and another pump was taken to Turlock for repairs.

Mr. Taylor completed the May-June package for the USACE which was sent on June 13th and approved on June 17th, and he handled drought response funding request for two clubs. He processed a response letter to BCDC for dredging application, and he submitted a response to State Lands on the 10-year lease renewal. He arranged for servicing tires and axles for 3 trailers and a pump at Les Schwab.

Ms. Guzman worked with landowners on 2024 PAI applications and met with DWR to coordinate a survey for exterior work on the Chipps Island Restoration project. She also took exterior work photographs and helped in pump refueling. She met with Fairfield-Suisun Sewage District on coordination, and she assisted in responding to BCDC comments on project applications in response letters. She also drafted the July newsletter.

Ms. Collins continued assisting on several admin tasks on contracts and grants including support for fiscal year closeout. She worked on the design of the vegetation guide on the website, and she completed GIS dredging layers for submittal to GeoMarsh. She printed and filed the updated Individual Management Plans for last year. She submitted an updated budget for our work on the Suisun Marsh Landscape Tool project. Ms. Brandon continued her work on the multi-species occupancy modeling. She standardized marsh polygons and established covariates for analyses, and she obtained GIS data layers to obtain those data.

Considering the rapidly increasing costs of stainless-steel water control structures, Mr. Takekawa organized a meeting with a company in New Jersey to discuss manufacturing HDPE water control structures on June 13th. They finalized design schematics in the next week, and Mr. Eddings with CWA ordered 4 HDPE flap-gates to test on our Delta Conservancy project at Wheeler Island. On June 18th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with the DWR Fish Restoration Program staff for our monthly update meeting. On June 19th, Mr. Takekawa gave a presentation on our Phragmites socioecological study for the Delta Stewardship Council, and on June 19th and 24th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority to discuss funding adjustments for our essential fish screen project. On June 25th, Mr. Takekawa met with the Greater Bay Area Conservation Hub, and Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with the Suisun Marsh Landscape Tool committee. On June 26th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with USGS to discuss an analysis of wetland flooding. On July 8th, Mr. Takekawa conducted the second 2024 PAI panel review of 13 project applications, and on July 9th, Mr. Takekawa hosted a job walk at Mein's Landing to protect erosion sites on Montezuma Slough with sheet pile bulkheads.

g) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton maintained the facilities and habitats on the island. He received the materials for installing a small bulkhead on Montezuma Slough. On June 21st, the Covello family, whose grandparents were caretakers at Lower Joice in the 1970s, came to the island for a visit. The Polaris Pro XD 2000D AWD UTV was delivered to

Pierce Harbor, and Mr. Mouton moved it out to Lower Joice. We had a tune-up completed on the Kubota M9000 tractor and installed new rear tires on June 28th. Also, Mr. Mouton and Mr. Takekawa repaired the pontoon barge. This past week, Mr. Edmunds worked with Mr. Chappell on a plan to map for this year's Phragmites control at Lower Joice which will be conducted this summer.

- h) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update on meetings. Mr. Hansen and Mr. Vanderkous attended a field trip with Mr. Chappell on areas of Suisun Marsh. On July 16th, we will host the Central Valley Joint Venture with a workgroup meeting at Grizzly Ranch. On July 9th, Mr. Chappell attended the Suisun City Logistical Center proposal meeting with the Suisun City Planning Commission. They intend to mitigate for the development in Suisun Marsh. Staff had recommended a modified proposal with a footprint that had reduced wetland effects from ~46 to ~5 acres, but the Commissioners chose to adopt the largest development option, while filling all the wetland on site. The Suisun Conservation Fund Fun Shoot and Social event will be held on Friday, July 26th at Birds Landing. The Fall Landowner Workshop will be on Sept. 18th. Discussion ensued.

9. 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 Director's Committee ~ No report.

- 10. Meeting Adjournment** ~ 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 3:26 PM.