

MINUTES

**SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13th, 2024, AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533**

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Tony Vaccarella
Kent Hansen
Mike Lewis
Dick Vanderkous
Jim Waters

OTHERS PRESENT: Dennis Becker, Assoc. Director
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Kevin Clark, DWR
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
Rayna Fitzgerald, DFW
Mike Frost, landowner
Fred Riedel, Fleetside Club
Melissa Riley, DFW
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
John Takekawa, SRCD
Jeff Taylor, SRCD
John Telfer, SRCD Assoc. Director

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Vaccarella called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:08 PM. Dick Vanderkous was introduced as the newest member of the SRCD Board of Directors.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the March 13, 2024, Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Vaccarella asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the February 14, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Vaccarella asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 14, 2024 Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Lewis; all were in favor and the motion carried.

4. Financial Reports ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for February 2024 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the February 2024 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$73,157.43. All expenses are regular general fund operational expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the February 2024 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$5,525.74. All expenses were normal LJI operational and salary expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the February 2024 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$19,367.53. All expenses were normal Water Managers operational and salary expenses. Mr. Waters moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Lewis 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 which was reported by Rayna Fitzgerald.

Joice Island Wild Pig Hunt: DFW completed our second weekend of pig hunts at Joice Island. The first weekend, 3 out of 4 junior hunters successfully harvested a total of 5 pigs. No pigs were harvested the second weekend, but all the hunters put in a good effort and saw pigs but could not get close enough to take a shot. We hope to see more success for our remaining hunt weekends.

Joice Island Bridge: Follow up on February report, DFW is conducting Ridgeway Rail surveys before bridge work can continue. We have completed 3 of the 4 required surveys, and the contractors are planning to resume work on the 20th after the last rail survey is complete and USFWS gives approval.

Wildlife Area: We've begun spring drawdown in some of our ponds and have started leach cycles in Crescent Unit. While the spring rains are good and bring fresh water into our systems, it's causing some delays in spraying and mowing around the Wildlife Area. Once the rain lets up, we'll hopefully get a couple spring habitat enhancement burns to continue moving forward with *Phragmites* control.

Projects: A new pump has been installed near parking lot 2 to allow flooding of pond 15 for the first time in many years. We will also be replacing the main intake at Island

Slough soon, because it was failing and has been leaking for years due to age and regular wear.

Tule Elk: In coordination with our Region 4 counterparts, our crew spent two days assisting in tule elk captures at San Luis National Wildlife Refuge. 1 female and 2 males were successfully captured and relocated to Grizzly Island. This is the third time in recent years that we captured and relocated animals to our Grizzly Island herd. Last year, this effort resulted in 30 elk being added to the Grizzly Island herd across 2 days. The previous year, 23 animals were added across 8 days. Our goal is to add 4 to 7 more elk this year if more captures can be scheduled.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Jamel Stewart and Kevin Clark presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of February, salinity standards were 8.0 mS/cm in the east and the west. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 0.2-3.2 mS/cm. At the end of February, net Delta outflow was 83,431 cfs. As of March 11th, salinities ranged from 0.2-1.5 mS/cm with Delta outflow had dropped to 67,492 cfs and a salinity standard of 8.0 mS/cm at the eastern and western stations. Salinity monitoring station S-97 remains offline, and S-42 was online on February 2nd. Cygnus station S-33 is being used instead of Ibis S-97 and a chart was provided. No drought response fund triggers were exceeded. Hunter Cut S-54 and Volanti S-42 water quality monitoring station repair work was completed. DWR will install permanent water quality equipment once the repairs stations are approved. Discussion ensued.

The Roaring River Distribution System water levels continue to be monitored following high tides with an urgent and unforeseen rodent burrow levee repair on mile 11.6 completed on January 18-19 and seepage was reported at mile 14.3. Planning began on installing new conduit near the RRDS fish screens. Environmental staff submitted an RGP3 amendment for additional levee coring on February 28th. For the Morrow Island Distribution System, DWR continues working on levee inspections, and environmental staff worked with CDFW to obtain California Ridgway's rail surveys at MIDS at the outfall of the M- and C- lines. Intakes were closed on March 1st. There was a reported kill of a few fish today in the ditch at MIDS involving non-listed fish species. Levee inspections were conducted at Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO), and Ridgway's rail surveys were conducted at the outfall. At Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates, gates were in the open position with the low salinities, and Gate 2 remains out for refurbishment. There was no update for the Montezuma Day Use Area. Russian Thistle is prevalent at several sites, and a vegetation monitoring work plan including invasive species is in development. Discussion ensued.

California reservoir capacity in February ranged from 66-83% of average in the northern Sierra and 59-99% in the southern Sierra. For the new water year, precipitation year to date was 97% of average in the northern Sierra and 84% in the southern Sierra. Discussion ensued.

7. Conduct a Public Hearing in Accordance with 14 CCR 11210 to consider a Minor Amendment to the Local Protection Program Updating 8 Individual Ownership Adaptive Habitat Management Plans (IOAHMP) and SRCD Board Resolution #2324-1. Attachments: A) IOAHMP's Annual Update 2023 Summary, B) CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Mr. Chappell introduced the public hearing, provided a presentation on the IOAHMP 2023 annual update, and presented IOAHMP's Annual Update 2023 Summary for Board consideration. Mr. Waters moved to approve the IOAHMP updates under SRCD Board Resolution #2324-1, Mr. Vanderkous seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the resolution was unanimously approved.

8. 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. The ECAT meeting is set for March 19th, and the AMAT science meeting with the Delta Stewardship Council for March 28th. The next AMAT on May 14th will include a tour starting at Rush Ranch and the Montezuma Wetlands. SRCD will lead the set up of a waterfowl monitoring workgroup which is required under the Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement. Discussion ensued.
- b) PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the PAI Program cost share program. The 2024 PAI 75:25, 50:50, and Joint Use Facilities programs have been released to the landowners, and water managers are helping landowners prepare 2023 applications, for the March 31st first application deadline. Discussion ensued.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. A regular monthly meeting for the SMP Principals was held on February 8th and will continue March 15th. The Applicants Compliance Team meeting was held February 20th. Discussion ensued.
- d) Potrero Hills Landfill Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update on the Potrero Hills Landfill SRCD Government Service Fee. A table was provided to the Board showing the disposal tons and tipping fee estimates for the landfill for 2023. Only 6.4% of this disposal amount is currently in Phase 2 and January 2023 amount only includes one week. At \$0.40 per ton, the 2023 total was \$23,184.45. SRCD has established a special revenue fund separated from the SRCD general fund to receive these monthly payments. More information on possible expenditure will be discussed at a

future Board meeting. Potrero Hills Landfill has offered a fieldtrip to the landfill to review site operations, if more than two Board members would like to attend, We will have to schedule a Special SRCD Board meeting and make it open to the public to attend.

- e) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continues to administer the RGP 3 permit. The 2024 January and February landowner application packages were processed and approved. SRCD is preparing the application for the LOP Dredging Permit renewal and a second draft was prepared for internal review. Submittal of the renewal package should be in the late spring of 2024.
- f). Water Manager (WM) Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa presented the Water Manager Program update. Jeff initiated spring salmon closure gate monitoring on February 21st, and 5 gates were adjusted to meet compliance. On the March 5th inspection, all gates complied with the spring salmon closure. Mr. Taylor has been working with boat mechanic Andy Twiss is working on repairing the exhaust system and steering box on the navigation boat. He also sent drought response letters to westside clubs and met with clubs on their management.

Mr. Edmunds provided a presentation on drone spraying to State Parks Boating and Waterways. He received confirmation of his crane truck operator's certification, and on March 8th, he passed the test for aquatic applicator's certification with the Department of Pesticide Regulation. He also mailed out the 2024 invasive Lepidium control program letter. Ms. Guzman continued her recovery working half time. She updated the landowner database and talked with some of her clubs on upcoming management actions. She attended a workshop on invasive stinkwort plants and is preparing the April 2024 Land of the West Wind Newsletter.

Ms. Collins completed BCDC updates for Geomarth and 10 landowner Individual Management Plan which were reviewed in a Board hearing earlier today. On February 15th, she and Mr. Takekawa met with webmaster Charles Fox to update the SRCD website, and on February 23rd, we worked with DWR's Brett Harvey on Suisun Fish biomass and wetland drainage analyses. On March 5th, Ms. Collins and Mr. Takekawa and I met with Kent Hansen to work on our test aerial imagery of the Goodyear Club taken by Mr. Edmunds with a survey drone – the imagery seems to provide useful information for deciding management actions. On March 7th, Ms. Collins arranged a call with Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa to meet with Suisun Marsh Landscape Tool project staff Lydia Vaughn and Kendall Harris from SFEI to define Suisun Marsh land management categories. Also on March 7th, Ms. Collins and Mr. Takekawa met with Professor Zhao Ma and grad student Teresa Paniagua from Purdue University about landowner surveys on Phragmites control, and on

March 8th, we led a monthly meeting of the study team. Ms. Collins also scheduled a Mein's Landing habitat management meeting for March 21st.

Ms. Brandon continued to work on salt marsh harvest mouse analyses. She formatted figures and tables for our study of the effects of Suisun Marsh breaches for the journal *Estuaries and Coasts*. Ms. Brandon and Mr. Takekawa worked with Steve Andrews of GEI on our levee-breach hydrology paper on February 15th. All the biologists continued working on the update of the Suisun Marsh vegetation guide for distribution at the Spring Landowner Workshop on April 17th.

- f) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued maintaining the facilities and habitat on the island. He continued maintaining the facilities and habitat on the island. He monitored levees after storm events and detected a roughly 10–20-foot eroded site along the Montezuma Slough levee that will require a new 20-foot bulkhead this year. On February 26th, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, and Mr. Mouton met with club president Wynne Herron for the end-of-season clubhouse inspection, and the clubhouse was in good condition completing the handoff. We are continuing to assess winter storm damage to a wooden shed and the equipment cover to determine next steps. Also, on February 27-28, Mr. Mouton had the transfer case repaired on his truck.

The 2023-2024 hunting season at Lower Joice Island finished with a total harvest of 435 ducks with 160 hunter days or 2.72 ducks/hunter day. A total of 272 ducks were taken in the north unit with 163 taken in the south unit. In comparison to other years, the 2023 harvest was 33% lower than the 643 ducks taken in 2022 but about 5% more than the 413 in taken in 2021 and 29% more than the 338 taken in 2020. The total was 5.6% greater than the 10-year average of 412 ducks per season, so in general, it was a good year. The species composition included 232 teal, 107 spoonbills, 30 mallards, 27 wigeon, and 27 sprig which is much fewer wigeon, less spoonbills, and more teal than in previous years.

- g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update. On March 8th, Mr. Chappell helped guide a National Academy of Sciences fieldtrip in Suisun Marsh organized by DWR and the Bureau of Reclamation. He and Mr. Takekawa will attend a Delta salinity workshop on March 26-27, and he is asking Jim Waters to attend the Delta Conservancy Board meeting those conflicts on March 27th. On February 27th, he attended a meeting with the new Fish and Game Commission (Darius Anderson). He also provided a copy of the comments on the Solano County draft ordinance for California Forever – it will require 50,000 signatures to be on the ballot, and then it will be voted on by the county in November. The Board has suggested that SRCD take a position on California Forever, and it will be discussed at a future Board meeting. The Flannery

Group has acquired several properties within Suisun Marsh, primarily cattle grazing and upland on the eastern side of the Marsh. The SRCD triannual staff meeting, and reviews will be held on March 15th. 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. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Hansen, all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 PM.