

MINUTES

**SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING**
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 8th, 2024, AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET, FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Kevin Clark, DWR
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
John Eudy, SRCD Assoc. Director
Rayna Fitzgerald, DFW
Scott German, Fechter and Company
Kelli Perez, SRCD
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
Dajanae Stitts, DFW
John Takekawa, SRCD
John Telfer, SRCD Assoc. Director
Randy Weinrich, DFW

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Vaccarella 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. Vaccarella opened the May 8, 2024, Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Vaccarella asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the April 10, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Vaccarella asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 10, 2024, Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Waters; all were in favor and the motion carried.

4. Financial Reports ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for April 2024 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the April 2024 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$147,860.38. All expenses are regular general fund operations with 3 PAI project payments and grant expense reimbursements. Mr. Chappell reported the April 2024 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$14,213.20. All expenses were normal LJI operational and salary expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the April 2024 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$33,730.34. All expenses were normal Water Managers operational and salary expenses with vehicle repairs in preparation for the pumping field season. Mr. Vanderkous moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Hansen seconded the motion, Mr. Waters abstained, all others were in favor, and the motion carried.

b) For Board Consideration ~ Fechter & Associates Presentation of Suisun RCD Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Audited Financial Statements ~ Mr. Scott German, CPA from Fechter and Associates provided a summary of the 2022-2023 audited financial statements. He explained the background to the audit and the required SRCD staff and auditor's communications. The audit financial report was considered a "clean" report without modifications. Mr. German discussed SRCD's CalPERS retirement unfunded liability calculations and reporting. He provided a summary of SRCD's Fiscal Year 2022-2023 assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenditures. Overall revenues exceeded expenditures by \$130K. The audit was accepted by the SRCD Board of Directors, with a motion made by Mr. Hansen and seconded by Mr. Waters; all were in favor, and the motion carried.

5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~ Mr. Orlando Rocha provided the DFW report, which was read by Ms. Rayna.

Joice Island Pig Hunt: This is the final month of Joice Island wild pig hunts. Since the beginning of the hunting season, 6 pigs have been harvested by 4 hunters. We have hosted 39 hunters in total and the current success rate is 15%. Though success rate is lower this year compared to last year, hunters are reporting seeing pigs and having shot opportunities. There are 3 weekends left in the hunting season, and we hope to see increased success among the remaining 12 hunters.

Joice Island Bridge: Since the last SRCD Board meeting, bridge work has been put on hold due to required pressure treated lumber failing an inspection. The new lumber is scheduled to arrive this week, The contractors remain confident that it will take two weeks to finish work left on the bridge decking, allowing the reopening of the bridge to vehicle traffic.

Elk: DFW has begun receiving calls about our 2024 tule elk hunts. The Big Game Hunting Digest is available online and has all the information to apply for not only our elk hunts, but all big game hunts in the state. The deadline to apply is June 2nd. Five bull tags were added this year to the Grizzly Island hunt, bringing the total tags available this upcoming season to 38.

Wildlife Area: Upland nesting fields look good so far. USGS has completed 1 complete drag cycle (345 acres) and have found 39 nests so far of which 24 are MALL, 8 GADW, 3 CITE, and 4 “others.” 26 of these nests are still active. Nest numbers are up from last year in all locations. Hopefully the next nest searching cycle will continue to show new nests on the ground. General maintenance continues across the wildlife area between rain events. The crew is currently trying to catch up on mowing. We’ve had some long-term absences recently, which has impacted our day-to-day work. Next week we are holding interviews to fill our vacant fish and wildlife habitat technician position, we are looking forward to adding a new staff member just in time for the summer work season.

Marsh Wide Vegetation Survey: DWR will be conducting a Marsh wide vegetation survey this summer. DFW will be ground truthing the aerial vegetation imagery. DFW staff will be reaching out to SRCD for assistance in gaining access to survey points that fall on private lands.

Laureen Barthman-Thompson introduced herself as the environmental scientist supervisor, and she introduced Randy Weinrich as the area supervisor and Dajanae Stitts who follows Sarah Estrella as a Suisun Marsh environmental scientist.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Jamel Stewart and Kevin Clark presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet.

For the month of April, salinity standards were 11.0 mS/cm in the east and the west. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 0.2-2.1 mS/cm.

At the end of April, net Delta outflow was 39,134 cfs. As of May 5th, salinities ranged from 0.2-1.6 mS/cm with Delta outflow at 26,372 cfs and a salinity standard of 11.0 mS/cm at the eastern and western stations. Salinity monitoring station S-97 remains offline, and Cygnus station S-33 is being used instead of Ibis S-97. No drought response fund triggers were exceeded. Discussion ensued.

The Roaring River Distribution System levee inspections were conducted. Environmental staff completed a clearance for annual maintenance and for the Montezuma Dataline Trenching project, but it has been delayed. Delta Field Division (DFD) staff continues to conduct Roaring River fish screen cleaning. For the Morrow Island Distribution System, DWR conducted levee inspections, and DWR received authorization from USFWS to conduct work during the California Ridgway's Rail breeding season. Levee inspections also were conducted at Goodyear Slough Outfall, and environmental staff completed clearance for debris which DFD conducted. DWR received authorization from USFWS to conduct work during the Ridgway's rail breeding season. At the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG), gates were in the open position due to the low salinities, and Gate 2 remains out for refurbishment.

Preliminary data showed the Water Year type as likely Above Normal, resulting in Fall X2 where the 30-day average of X2 is ≤ 80 km in Sept. and Oct.; 60 day SMSCG operations from July 1 through August 30, use of a 100 thousand acre feet block of water running for 60 more days through the end of Oct., and flashboards will remain in place through the summer.

California reservoir capacity in March ranged from 69-100% of average in the northern Sierra and 65-100% in the southern Sierra. For the new water year, precipitation year to date was 96% of average in the northern Sierra and 88% 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. The next Applicant's Compliance Team meeting is May 21st.
- b) PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the PAI Program cost share program. Final payments were received and processed for three 2023 PAI projects. The seven PAI projects from the first-round of 2024 proposals were submitted to DWR for approval on April 18th. The deadline for the second and final 2024 application period is June 30th with panel review scheduled for July 8th. Discussion ensued.

- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. The next Principal's meeting will be May 9th. An Adaptive Management Advisory Team meeting will be held at Rush Ranch on May 19th. This meeting will include a tour of the Goat Island restoration sites and the Montezuma Wetlands dredged disposal site. Discussion ensued.

- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continues to administer the RGP 3 permit. The 2024 April landowner application packages were submitted on April 30th, processed and approved on May 2nd. SRCD has submitted the LOP Dredging Permit 10-year application renewal to the USACE and RWQCB. Landowners have submitted their 2024 dredging permit application and Water Managers are reviewing these applications. The application deadline was April 30th. SRCD is preparing a 3-year BCDC Marsh Development Permit for annual dredging of the 13 fish screen sites. There will be a need for endangered species consultation and possible amendment of the USFWS 2013 Biological Opinion if western pond turtle and longfin smelt are listed as threatened or endangered species. Discussion ensued.

- e) Discuss California Forever Initiative – Consider Taking an Official Agency Position ~ Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa provided a Power Point summary presentation of the California Forever East Solano County initiative. The Board discussed multiple concerns with the proposed project and possible future impacts to the Suisun Marsh, wildlife resources, and water quality. Upon conclusion of discussions. Mr. Vanderkous made a motion, the Suisun Resource Conservation District is opposed to the proposed East Solano Project, which is inconsistent with the conservation of Solano County and Suisun Marsh's natural and biological resources and does not align with SRCD's mission and conservation objectives to preserve and protect the unique wetland and wildlife resources of the Suisun Marsh; Mr. Waters seconded the motion; all were in favor, and the motion carried.

- f). Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa presented the Water Manager Program update. Mr. Taylor sent out landowner notifications on the March RGP 3 approvals on April 15th, and the Water Managers sent the April RGP 3 application package to the Corps on the 30th, which approval on May 2nd. Jeff submitted the 10-year renewal for dredging to the Corp and Regional Water Quality Control Board, and he worked on 2024 dredging applications. Mr. Taylor also worked on drafting a Water Quality spring monitoring proposal for 2024-2025. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Edmunds completed gate monitoring on April 19th and May 1st, and the Water Managers continued to service club requests for pumping with extra help hourly assistance from Mr. Zach Stratton.

The Water Managers also began working on deferred trailer maintenance to service axles, hubs, and tires at Les Schwab, and Mr. Taylor and Mr. Edmunds had maintenance repairs completed on their truck suspension and pump systems. Mr. Taylor picked up a tow pump that was repaired at Davis Machine in Meridian, and he continued working with Mr. Andy Twiss on repairs for the navigation boat for which they installed a new steering box. Tim completed annual certification of the boom truck and conducted repairs on the mirrors and lights. He replaced a bad inverter on the #426 fish screen, and he mailed out a 2024 Phragmites control program letter on May 8th.

Ms. Guzman completed the quarterly West Wind Newsletter with assistance of the other Water Managers and mailed it to landowners on April 24th. She offloaded data from water loggers for the Delta Conservancy drainage improvement project to assess the water levels during draining and leach cycles. She and Mr. Chappell organized a meeting with a new landowner to provide them with information on SRCD services and landowner management issues, and she coordinated a meeting with 2 clubs to discuss a water management issue.

Ms. Collins continued to assist Ms. Perez in administrative tasks on contracts and grants. She was notified by BCDC that the 2023 Individual Management Plan updates would be listed at the next commission meeting, and she updated GeoMarsh. She completed the final least cost path analyses for the DWR fish biomass study, and she worked on finishing map updates and landowner contacts for Suisun Fire.

Ms. Brandon provided support in revising the SRCD Excel timesheet. She worked on salt marsh harvest mouse occupancy modeling by delineating the extent of study sites for spatial analyses. She assisted DFW fieldwork on SMHM captures at Joice Island. She worked on the salinity manuscript draft.

On April 16-17, the SRCD staff worked on preparation and hosting of the Spring Landowner Workshop. It was well attended by more than 120 people either in-person or online, and the new internet connection that we had installed in the warehouse linked to Pete's office seemed to work well. Our next event will be the SCF Fun Shoot on Friday, July 26th. On April 19th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended part of a Grizzly Island Wildlife Area fieldtrip for DFW headquarters staff and hosted presentations in our office. On May 1st, Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Chappell, and Mr. Takekawa attended the Schafer-Pintail Reclamation District 2112 annual meeting.

- g) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton maintained the facilities and habitats on the island with the extra help assistance of Mr. Cody Suire who will be leaving at the end of this week after helping

on deferred maintenance and clean up over the past month. They continued clearing vegetation around the clubhouse and facilities including removal of several volunteer palm trees, and they repaired a roof support on the decoy shed. They removed and disposed of a row of interior boat docks, and they cleared an old trailer and vegetation and sealed the roof of a shed on Suisun Slough. They also cleared vegetation around the boat dock at the Family Club. Mr. Mouton continued to schedule our diesel mechanic for equipment issues, and our mechanic was able to make the dozer operational, but we continued to have problems with the Massey-Ferguson tractor. We ordered new fuel for the tractor, but it has not been running in the past week. Mr. Mouton and Mr. Suire completed the demolition of the remains of the Witter shed and hauled it off the island to multiple construction waste dumpsters. They installed a sink on the back porch, and they began working on repairing the siding on the caretaker house. Mr. Mouton was able to complete 2 leach cycles between rainfall events.

- h) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update on meetings. The Suisun Marsh Spring Landowner Workshop was held on April 17th. Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa have a meeting and tour planned next week with Ms. Deanna Sereno from the Contra Costa Water District to discuss water issues and Suisun Marsh. Mr. Chappell also will be leading a tour with the Water Education Foundation on May 17th. 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. Waters and seconded by Mr. Lewis; all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 PM.