

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

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9th, 2025 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
Jim Waters

OTHERS PRESENT: Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Phil Choy, DWR
Mike Frost, Frost Ranch
Marina Guzman, SRCD
Caitlin Perez, SRCD
Fred Riedel, Assoc. Dir.
Melissa Riley, DFW
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
Dajanae Stitts, DFW
John Takekawa, SRCD
Jeff Taylor, SRCD
Randy Weinrich, DFW

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Vaccarella called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:03 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ Mr. Chappell reported the death last month of Mr. Arnold Lenk, former Board Member for 24 years. There were no other public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the Board of Directors meeting for April 9, 2025. Mr. Waters asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

- a) Approval of the March 12, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Vaccarella asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Board meeting of March 12, 2025. A motion was made by Mr. Hansen and seconded by Mr. Lewis to approve; all were in favor and the motion carried.
- b) Adopt Resolution of Appreciation 2425-3 honoring Ms. Kelli Perez ~ Mr. Chappell read a SRCD resolution to honor Ms. Kelli Perez for her 24 years of service to the District and Suisun Marsh in advance of her retirement. Mr. Lewis moved to approve the resolution as presented, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. A roll call vote was held, and the resolution was unanimously approved. Mr. Takekawa provided notice of the end of his tenure as Operations Manager on August 1st. Ms. Caitlin Perez was introduced as the incoming SRCD administrative assistant. Mr. Chappell reported that Mr. Robert Eddings of California Waterfowl Association, has been promoted to Vice President of Conservation, and Mr. Zach Stratton has been promoted to Suisun Marsh Program Manager.

4. Financial Reports ~

- a) Approval of Vendor Claims for March 2025 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the March 2025 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$192,746.98. All expenses were regular general fund operations, salaries, or reimbursable contract expenses, PAI reimbursements, with claim 120 and 134 as two months of CalPERS health care premiums, claim 128 as SRCD's annual liability insurance premium, and claim 131 as partial payment of the annual audit fieldwork. Mr. Chappell reported the March 2025 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$18,738.31. All expenses were normal LJI operational and salary expenses with claim 48 for electrical repair and claim 55 for generator repair. Mr. Chappell reported the March 2025 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$30,459.38. All expenses were Water Managers operational and salary expenses. Mr. Waters moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Hansen seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.
- b) FY23/24 SRCD Audit Update ~ Mr. Chappell presented an update on the FY2023-2024 audit. On March 25th, the auditors completed their field visit and

Continue to request additional information remotely. Mr. Chappell expects to receive a clean audit report for FY 23/24. Mr. Chappell is hopeful we will receive a draft of the audit report to share with the Board this month. Mr. Chappell has requested the Auditor present the draft Audit at the May 14th Board meeting for consideration and adoption.

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

Joice Island Pig Hunt: We are about halfway through the wild pig hunts at Joice Island, we have 7 weekends remaining. Since the last board meeting, we've had an additional 16 hunters hunt at Joice Island but only 1 pig taken. According to comments, many hunters are seeing lots of pig sign and there have been a few missed shots. 5 pigs have been taken so far, which happens to be the same as last year at this point of the season. We are hopeful that our hunters will increase their success as the season progresses.

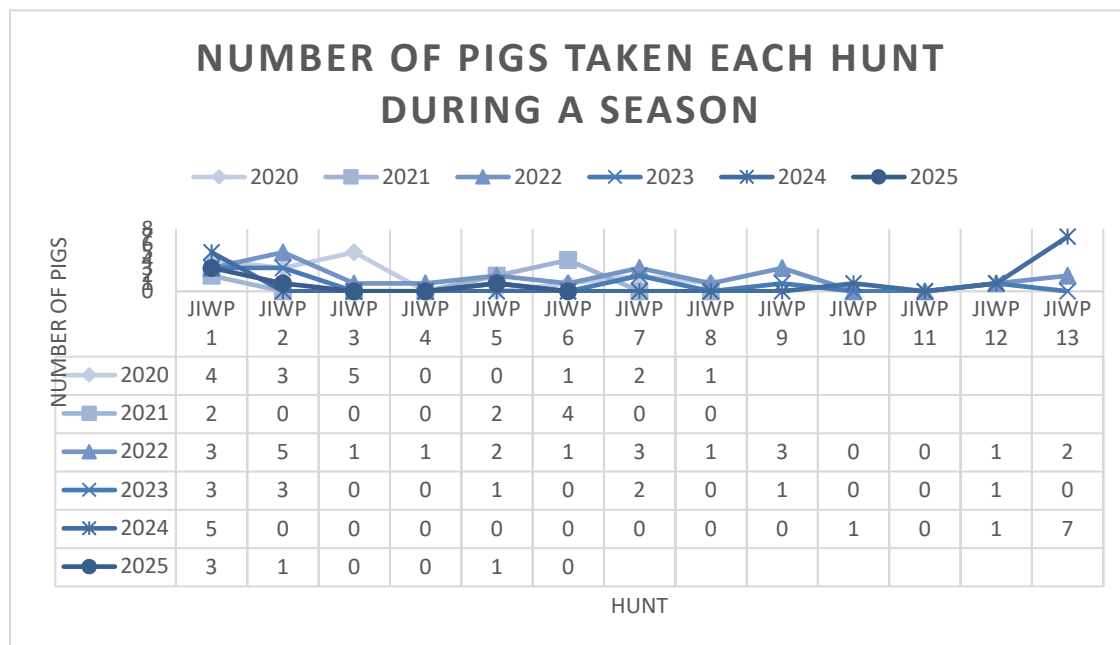


Figure 1. Graph depicting the number of pigs taken during each hunt throughout the season since 2020. In 2022, the number of hunts per season increased from 8 to 13. 2025 hunts continue until May 25th, 2025.

Wildlife Area: Staff in the wildlife area have mostly completed drawdowns for the year. The remaining water on the island will be used for brood habitat. In anticipation that this season will be another good nesting year, we are going to hold just over 700 acres of flooded habitat on Grizzly proper alone. We will also be holding the majority of Island

Slough for year-round water. In areas that we can drain tidally, we are finishing leach cycles. These areas include Crescent unit, Laughing Mallard, Bent Barrel, and Crescent Family. General mowing, and other maintenance continues.

We received a total of 9 burn permit requests from clubs for the 2025 burn season, that season will end soon. Remember if you are one of those clubs, we will be waiting for actual burn maps and updates from those clubs.

Pheasant crow counts. The scientific interns have completed 4 surveys, hearing over 550 crows. The current average of crows per station is 9. This is 4 more at each station than last year at this time.

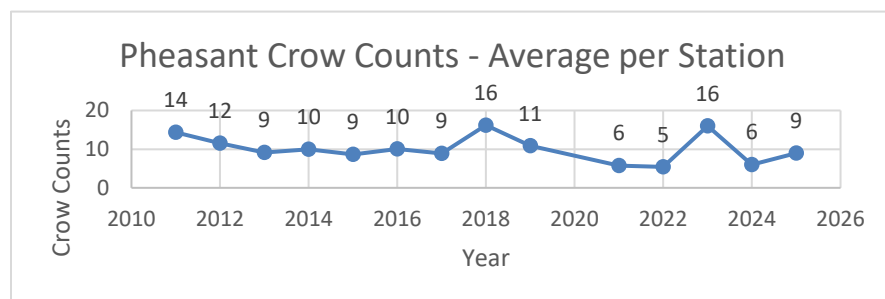


Figure 2. Graph depicting the average amount of crows heard at each station since 2011. Trendline shows a negative trend in the average number of crows heard.

Projects

Ridgeway's Rail surveys: There is only one survey left in this rail season, and at this point no Ridgeway's rails have been detected at any of the project-based surveys or the annual rotational survey transects. Other birds detected included black rails, Virginia rails, and soras. Discussion ensued.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Jamel Stewart presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of March, the salinity standards for the Marsh were 8.0 mS/cm for eastern and western stations. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 0.2 – 2.6 mS/cm. Salinity monitoring station S-97 remained offline. At the end of March, net Delta outflow was 32,509 cfs. As of April 7th, salinities in the Marsh ranged from 0.2 – 2.6 mS/cm, and Delta outflow was 46,495. Suisun Marsh salinity standards in April are 11.0 mS/cm for the eastern and western marsh stations.

Levee inspections were conducted for Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS), and environmental staff completed surveys and an environmental clearance for DFD levee repairs and road grading. Erosion repairs began on March 24th and will be completed on April 10th. Environmental staff assisted CDFW with California Ridgeway's rail surveys in

March at the Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) and Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO). The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates operations were suspended due to low salinities and a potential upstream water cost. Discussion ensued.

California reservoir capacity in December ranged from 64-84% of average in the northern Sierra and 68-96% in the southern Sierra. For the new water year, the precipitation year to date was 118% of average for the northern Sierra and 75% for the southern Sierra.

7. Conduct a Public Hearing in Accordance with 14 CCR 11210 to consider a Minor Amendment to the SRCD Local Protection Program Updating 34 Individual Ownership Adaptive Management Plans and SRCD Board Resolution #2425-4. Attachments: A) IOAHMP Annual Update 2024 Summary, B) CEQA Notice of Exemption ~ Mr. Chappell presented a draft Board resolution to approve the 2024 annual update for 34 Duck Clubs Individual Ownership Adaptive Management Plans (IOAMP). The resolution summarized the regulatory requirements, history of IOAMP updates and procedure for public and landowner notifications. Mr. Waters made a motion to approve, Mr. Hansen seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held, and the resolution was unanimously approved.

8. 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. March 13th was the Principal's meeting and April 10th will be the next meeting. Discussion ensued.
- b) 2025 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update of the PAI programs. Nine projects were received in the 2025 initial application review period, six projects were recommended for approval by the technical review panel for funding by DWR. Discussion ensued.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. On April 8th, SRCD, DFW and USFWS met to review existing USFWS Biological Opinions and monitoring and reporting requirements,
- d) USACE Permits ~ RGP3 and LOP updates. SRCD continues to administer the RGP 3 permit. The March RGP 3 package was approved, and the April package has been submitted for USACE review. The draft Letter of Permission dredging permit is being drafted. In the new Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), water quality certification surcharge for LOP dredging volumes had increased to \$0.92 per yard in the new Permit. SRCD requested the RWQCB reconsider of the permit classification and consider the project a ecological enhancement and restoration project. The

RWQCB agreed to reclassify the permit type, which eliminated to \$0.92 per yard dredging fee and reduced the annual permit fee to a flat \$563 per year. As a result of this significant permit fee cost reduction, Mr. Chappell recommended reducing SRCD annual LOP Dredging Permit fee from \$500 down to \$250. Discussion ensued and the SRCD Board supported the SRCD application fee reduction for the 2025 dredging program.

Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa presented the Water Manager Program update. Mr. Edmunds continued working with his landowners on RGP 3 permit and PAI grant applications. He treated the weeds growing at all of the fish screen sites, and consolidated the storage of herbicide at the office. He also worked on drafting the 2025 Phragmites program letter, and he installed a pump at one of his clubs.

Mr. Taylor completed the January to March exterior work notifications and submitted the March package of 30 applications to the Corps on April 8th. He mailed out a Delta smelt notification letter and conducted a gate monitoring survey on April 7th. He completed a final report on the salmon closure period and submitted the first Delta smelt gate check report. He attended meetings with the Regional Water Quality Board to discuss dredging fees for the new 401 certification. He installed pumps at 5 clubs and completed drawdown at one club. He helped organize rental of a dumpster for waste disposal and yard clean-up, managed servicing of the fire extinguishers for the District, submitted a newsletter article, and edited a draft questionnaire for the District's 5-year plan update.

Ms. Guzman processed RGP applications for her region of the Marsh, met with landowners on water level management, obtained pre-work photos for proposed dredging and worked with Tim on installing shelves for chemical storage in a shipping container. She participated in two gate monitoring surveys, refueled water pumps, and worked on cleaning up the shop area.

Ms. Collins completed several budget and administration tasks. She completed 21 site verification visits for Bird Returns projects and provided support to California Audubon staff for compliance checks and bird surveys. On March 24th, she submitted the final report for the SF Bay Restoration Authority essential fish screen project, managed entry of sections for the final Delta Stewardship Council Phragmites socioecological study, and organized a habitat committee meeting for Mein's Landing - that Mr. Chappell, Ms. Guzman, and Mr. Takekawa. She worked on a revision of fish biomass methods paper for resubmittal to a new journal, completed the update of 34 Duck Club Individual Management Plan updates, sent landowner invitations and reminders for the April 23rd Spring Workshop on evite and updated pages on the SRCD website.

Ms. Brandon continued work on a revised mouse analysis with the assistance of USGS scientists. She also completed a Tule Red levee inspection for DWR that included a

newly identified levee area within their boundary along Gum Tree Road.

Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a coordination call with DWR's Fish Restoration Program on March 18th and met with the Bird Returns lead Ashley Seufzer on March 26th. All staff attended our second triannual review on March 20th.

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 installed a new battery management system on the lithium batteries. He bucked up a fallen eucalyptus on the Suisun Marsh levee and hauled it back to the clubhouse. He mowed the outer levees and trimmed the palm trees in front of the clubhouse.

On March 25th, a mechanic from Howeco worked with Mr. Mouton to tune-up the larger machinery on the island including the excavator, dozer, and tractor. On March 27th, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Takekawa worked with Mr. Mouton and club president Phil Green on a marsh burn of 21.9 acres in the South Unit just south of the clubhouse. On April 4th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa worked with Mr. Mouton to organize his workshop and assemble storage racks and cabinets. Mr. Mouton began updating the kitchen of the caretaker house by removing the old stove and linoleum flooring and replacing it with laminate flooring.

- e) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell reported on meetings. He attended a tour of the Marsh for the Delta Stewardship Council Independent Science Board on March 19th. On March 21st, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Takekawa met with DWR about the ownership on Tule Red in RD 2136. The SRCD 5-year Strategic Plan update is underway, and SRCD staff asked Directors and Associate Directors for comments on the questionnaire. 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 ~ No report.
- e) Associate Director's Committee ~ No report.

- 9. **Meeting Adjournment** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Waters seconded by Mr. Hansen; all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 PM.