

## **MINUTES**

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

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8<sup>th</sup>, 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  
Dick Vanderkous  
Jim Waters

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

**1. Call to Order ~** Mr. Vaccarella called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:08 PM.

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

**3. Open Session ~** Mr. Vaccarella opened the Board of Directors meeting for January 8, 2024. Mr. Vaccarella asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

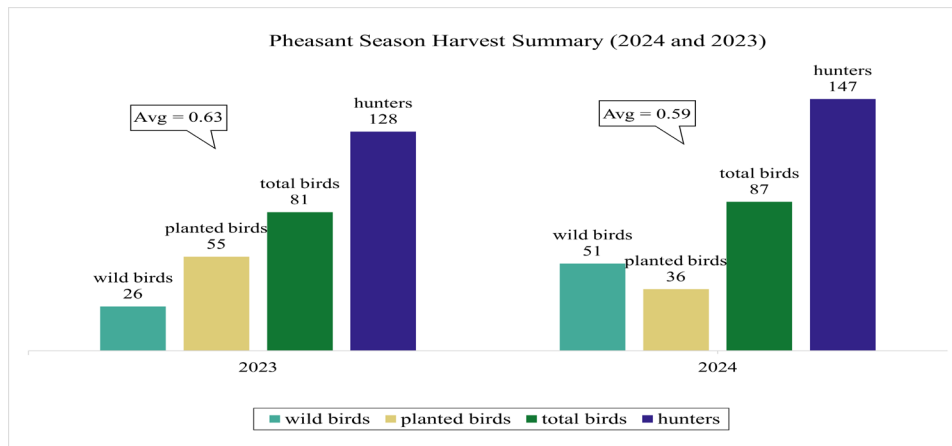
a) Approval of the December 11, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Vaccarella asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Board meeting of December 11, 2024. A motion was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Vanderkous to approve; all were in favor and the motion carried.

**4. Financial Reports ~**

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for December 2024 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the December 2024 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$333,460.15. All expenses were regular general fund operations, salaries, or reimbursable contract expenses with claim #78 for DWR Mein's Landing sheet pile installation project and 3 claims for landowner reimbursement for completed PAI cost share program. Mr. Chappell reported the December 2024 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$11,456.02. All expenses were normal LJI operational (propane and fuel) and salary expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the December 2024 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$28,713.36. All expenses were Water Managers operational and salary expenses. Mr. Waters moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Vanderkous seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

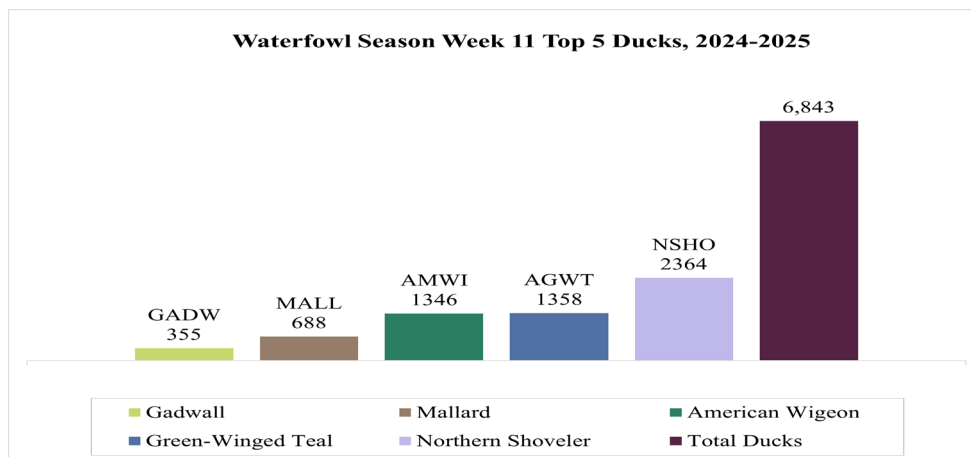
**5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~** Mr. Orlando Rocha provided the DFW report.

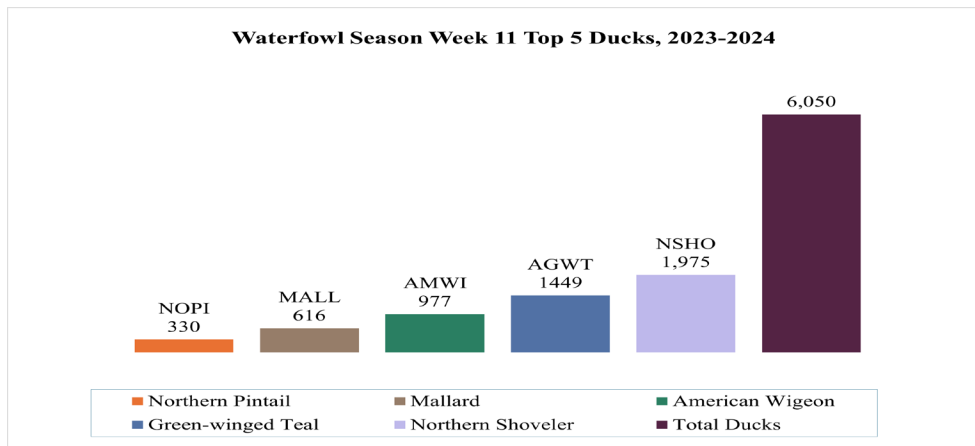
**Pheasants:** Pheasant season ended on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. We were happy to see a higher pheasant hunter turnout this year than in the last several years, with 147 pheasant-only hunters on the wildlife area. In total, 87 pheasants were harvested, with 51 of those being wild birds. The average was 0.59 which is down a little from last year. These numbers do not include the junior and family pheasant hunts, which took place in November. The graph below shows a comparison of pheasant season harvest data between this year and 2023.



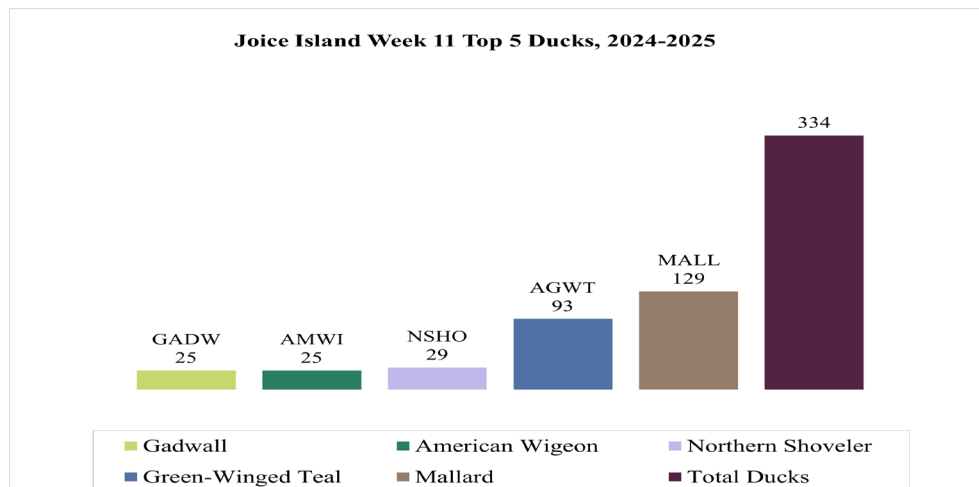
Bar graph comparing harvest of wild and planted pheasants and numbers of hunters between 2024 and 2023.

**GIWA Waterfowl:** As of last weekend, we've had 3,757 hunters harvest 6,843 ducks and 71 geese for a 1.84 waterfowl average. Last year at this time, we had 4,129 hunters harvest 6,050 ducks and 46 geese resulting in a 1.47 waterfowl average. Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Mallard, and Gadwall are still our top 5 birds. See graphs below for a comparison of top 5 birds between this year and last.





Bar graphs showing the top 5 harvested birds for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 waterfowl seasons at GIWA summarized through week 11.



Bar graph showing the top 5 harvested birds for the 2024-2025 waterfowl season at Joice Island summarized through week 11.

**Joice Island Waterfowl:** As of last weekend, we've had 102 hunters harvest 334 ducks and 2 geese resulting in a 3.29 waterfowl average. The top five ducks are Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, and Gadwall. Since bridge construction was still occurring this time last year, there is no harvest data to compare in the 2023-2024 hunt year. However, numbers are higher compared to two years ago at this time, when we had 73 hunters harvest 219 ducks and no geese resulting in a 3.0 waterfowl average.

**Joice Island Wild Pig Hunt:** The applications for the Joice Island Wild Pig Hunt are open now. This year, there are three drawing periods, one for month of March, April, and May. Pig hunts will take place on Saturdays through Sundays beginning March 1<sup>st</sup> and ending on the weekend of May 31<sup>th</sup>. The first weekend will be reserved for junior

hunters only. With 4 hunters drawn each weekend, 52 hunters will have an opportunity to hunt pigs on Joice Island. In 2024, 14 pigs were harvested, which was up three pigs from 2023. We're hoping hunters will see more success this year.

**Nutria:** The Nutria program split the Marsh into two separate Management Units: 53A and 53B. Unit 53A: Cameras deployed: 335; Traps: 100. Unit 53B: Cameras deployed: 114; Traps: 4 (changed due to flooding on Van Sickle Island). Total Nutria Suisun Marsh: 490.

**6. Department of Water Resources Report ~** Mr. Jamel Stewart presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of December, the salinity standards for the Marsh were 15.5 mS/cm for eastern and western stations. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 1.3-5.2 mS/cm. S-97 remains offline. At the end of December, net Delta outflow was 27,598 cfs. As of January 5<sup>th</sup>, salinities in the Marsh ranged from 0.2-4.5 mS/cm, and Delta outflow had increased to 47,067 cfs. Suisun Marsh January salinity standards were 12.5 mS/cm for the eastern and western marsh stations.

The Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) levee inspections were conducted by DWR staff, and Delta Field Division (DFD) conducted multiple levee inspections and fish screen cleanings. DFD submitted an urgent and unforeseen request to address erosion and over-topping that was approved through SRCD with work to begin in early January. Environmental staff continued post-project monitoring for trenching work at the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates, and all 3 gates have been in tidal mode since November 18th. Final RGP3 reporting was submitted for the Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) and Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) facilities, and DFD conducted debris clearing at GYSO and refurbished a walkway at the A-96 Fleet monitoring station.

California reservoir capacity in December ranged from 48-87% of average in the northern Sierra and 40-98% in the southern Sierra. For the new water year, precipitation year to date was 133% of average for the northern Sierra and 69% for the southern Sierra. Discussion ensued.

## **7. 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. The Contract continues to fund the SRCD water Managers Program and 2024 PAI cost share program. On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, DWR requested SRCD's support to replace S-97 (Ibis) with S-33 (Cygnus) and remove S-28 (Teal) on Frank Horan Slough. This request from DWR is under review. This morning, DWR asked for a meeting with SRCD to discuss existing cost-share challenges with Bureau of Reclamation not reimbursing DWR for 40% of Suisun Marsh Program expenses. Discussion ensued.

- b) 2024 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided a summary of the PAI programs from 2016 to 2024. The 75/25 program expenditures were \$2,124,972.12, the 50/50 program was \$420,970.57, while the JUF program expenditure was \$961,845.59. A total of \$676,075.31 funds remained in the 75/25 and 50/50 program for the 2025 program year. The highest annual program expenditure was \$553,997 in 2018. Thus, Mr. Chappell believed that the PAI 75/25 and 50/50 program had adequate funding to release the program in 2025, without any funding limitations. The Board agreed with this determination and announcing the 2025 Program with no major revisions or funding restrictions. Discussion ensued.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. Mr. Chappell reported that he participated in the December 12<sup>th</sup> Suisun Marsh Principals call.
- d) RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continues to administer the RGP 3 and Letter of Permission dredging permits. All of the annual permit reports have been prepared and submitted to the Agencies for the 2024 LOP dredging program and RGP 3. The USACE Public Notice comment period was closed at the end of December, for the LOP renewal application. There were no public comments, and Mr. Chappell is hopeful the new LOP will be available in early March 2025. The storm events during King Tides on December 14<sup>th</sup> resulted in several urgent and unforeseen permitting requested for exterior levee repairs. The Board of Supervisors prepared an emergency declaration for storm damages for consideration by CA State OES office. Discussion ensued.
- e) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa presented the Water Manager Program update. The Water Managers focused on completing end-of-year reporting for the actual work conducted during the 2024 field season. They finished covering and winterizing drainage pumps and replaced belts on one pump. Mr. Edmunds finished a series of required online continuing education classes for his applicator's license with the Department of Pesticide Regulation and submitted the fees for his update. He obtained RGP 3 work reports from his clubs, and he completed a dredging report for BCDC. He conducted a gate monitoring survey and attended the RD 2136 meeting. He conducted a levee inspection to report on storm damage following the December 14<sup>th</sup> King Tide at the Tule Red Tidal Restoration Project north unit levee.

Mr. Taylor brought the fish screen power washer and gate boat trailers to Schwab for maintenance. He drafted the 2025 RGP 3 landowner application letter, which will be mailed by the end of the week. He updated the 2025 the Ridgeway's Rail work season restriction, Spring Salmon, and Spring Burn letters to send to landowners, and he circulated a draft gate monitoring schedule for 2025 to enlist the passengers.

He drafted and submitted the summary reports for the 2024 RGP 3, Letter of Permission, BCDC dredging activities, the Incidental Take Permit report, and the supplemental report for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Ms. Guzman completed the newsletter draft on January 2<sup>nd</sup> and prepared it for distribution this week. She completed exterior work activity reports, RGP 3 reporting, and assisted in maintenance of the gate monitoring boat with a survey conducted on December 2<sup>rd</sup>. She conducted an inspection of a completed PAI project at River Dog Club 907 and worked on 2024 Geomارش Duck Club Management Plan updates.

Ms. Collins worked on drafting the fish screen project final report. She worked on submitting timesheets and producing a revised timesheet for the new calendar year. She updated quarterly grant hours and budget tracking worksheets. On December 20<sup>th</sup>, Jesirae submitted a fish biomass and wetland drainage paper to Ecological Indicators for review. She updated the RTK GPS survey firmware and transferred the software to her laptop and retired the old desktop, and she pursued renewal of our office network license. She worked on revising Individual Management Plans and obtained the new information for updating Geomارش.

Ms. Brandon continued working on occupancy models for the salt marsh harvest mouse and is finishing the wetland analysis. She met with Dr. Laurie Hall at USGS on December 17<sup>th</sup> to review the progress. She and Mr. Taylor conducted the Christmas Bird Count at Lower Joice Island on December 16<sup>th</sup>, and she wrote up an article on the CBC survey for the quarterly newsletter.

- f) 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 hauled a load of propane and diesel fuel to the island, and he returned empty water jugs to Culligan. He completed several clubhouse maintenance activities, including fixing a broken water pipe and changed out his hot water heater. A generator service company conducted a service call for a tune-up of the generator and diagnosed the auto-on switch for repair. Mr. Mouton replaced a bad starter on his boats outboard motor, and he submitted photos to Mr. Taylor to complete the LJI dredging report.

Mr. Mouton responded to the December 14<sup>th</sup> King tide storm, and he repaired a leak in the clubhouse roof. He removed a sunken boat from Suisun Slough and managed water on the island making several water control adjustments. He moved a fallen tree out of the boat ditch, and he added straw and grass seed to the yard to reduce mud. On December 19-20, Mr. Mouton, Mr. Chappell, and Mr. Takekawa repaired damage to the main boat dock and installed a short wooden breakwater at the low point on the Suisun Slough levee just south of the clubhouse to prevent any further levee damage from overtopping during the next king tides.

For the past month, the club harvested 100 ducks including 31 teal, 27 mallards, 18 shovelers, 11 wigeon, 7 gadwall, and 6 pintail in 32 hunter days for a 3.1 bird per hunter average. In 2023, the harvest was 157 birds taken during 47 hunter days or a slightly higher average of 3.3 birds/hunter. Species composition differed between years including many more teal in 2023 with 113 teal comprising 72% of the bag vs. 31% in 2024, 27 spoonbills comprising 17.2% vs. 18%, but only 2 mallards vs. 27 (27%).

- g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell reported on meetings he has attend. He will attend the hunting and conservation coalition meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **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 2:57 PM.