

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

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11th, 2025 AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Tony Vaccarella
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. Dir.
Emily Mancheno, DFW
Kelli Perez, SRCD
Fred Reidel, SRCD Assoc. Dir
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
John Takekawa, SRCD
Jeff Taylor, SRCD

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Vaccarella called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:07 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the Board of Directors meeting for June 11, 2025. Mr. Vaccarella asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the May 14, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Vaccarella asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Board meeting of May 14, 2025. 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 May 2025 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the May 2025 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$114,536.38. All expenses were regular general fund operations, salaries, the annual audit, or reimbursable contract expenses. Claim #148 is PAI cost share landowner reimbursement. Claim #149, #151, #154 all contractor expenses associated with DWR Fish Restoration Program and Mein's Landing contracts. Mr. Chappell reported the May 2025 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$10,076.55. All expenses were normal LJI operational and salary expenses. Claim #69 CalWest Marine was for 100 hour service on 115HP outboard motor, 50% to be reimbursed from Miramonte Duck Club. Mr. Chappell reported the May 2025 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$41,373.37. All expenses were Water Managers operational and salary expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the May 2025 Special Revenue Department vendor claims totaled \$3,842.19. The expense diesel purchase for the portable pump program. Discussion ensued. Mr. Waters moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.
- b) FY 25/26~ Draft Budget Review ~ Mr. Chappell presented SRCD draft budgets, with a comparison to current year budget to the Board members. SRCD General Fund does not have many significant changes from last year, mostly health insurance, CalPERS retirement, and worker's compensation rate changes. Water Manager Program: The draft budget includes a payout of John's accrued leave balance upon retirement, 50% of which is budgeted to be reimbursed from DWR. The budget also includes the annual contract COLA on Water Manager Program operational expenses. Lower Joice Island: operational and staff expenses are similar to last year, while projecting a contribution from the SCF endowment of 66,500. This year the budget includes a contribution from SRCD General Fund for habitat work. Increased equipment maintenance costs and raising cost of fuel and propane makes keeping costs down is a challenge. Mr. Chappell reviewed projected Grant Budgets:

Phragmites grant was finished this fiscal year. Fish Screen Restoration Authority grant was closed out this year. Fish Screen Maintenance is minimal with landowner reimbursements. NFWF grant will be coming to an end on August 1, 2025. Pest Weed Program is a landowner reimbursable grant. DWR Support grant has minimal reimbursable staff time when requested by DWR. SMPA Cost Share (PAI) – remaining funding is dwindling down, reducing overall grant revenue overhead to SRCD. Delta Conservancy Pipe Grant, Bird Returns, DWR Mein's Landing, DWR FRPA, and UC Davis Fish & Fowl study will continue into next year. Special Revenue Department is for the portable pump program, Potrero Hills Land Fill, and ENXCO funds.

5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~ Ms. Emily Mancheno presented the DFW report.

Joice Island Pig Hunt

The 2025 Joice Island Wild Pig Hunt season has officially ended. The Hunter success rate this year is higher than the previous 2 years and holds 2nd place for the most pigs taken in a season since 2000. We welcomed a total of 53 hunters and had 3 no shows. Of those hunters, 17 were successful, two hunters were successful in taking 2 pigs. This brought the total to 19 pigs for the 2025 season which resulted in a 0.36 rate of pigs per hunter. Hunter effort was similar to last year, averaging 11 hours in the field per successful hunter. Two hunters were even successful in hunting a pig in as little as 2 to 3 hours. The beginning of the season started off great with 3 of the 4 junior hunters successfully taking a pig. Numbers began to drop the following weeks until hunt 9, when at least 2 pigs were taken almost every weekend until the end of season. The success at the end is more than likely attributed to the levee breach in a neighboring property near Joice Island. With high tides bringing in water to ponds B, C, and D, the pigs were forced to move up to dry levees towards pond A. This made it so that the pigs have less area to be in and gave the hunters a smaller area to hunt, increasing the likelihood of success.

Elk

The deadline for the big game draw has closed and draws for the Grizzly Island Tule Elk survey have been selected. Drawing details will be available for viewing on the website by June 16th but are available on the CDFW app now. Our objective with the elk population remains the same, to bring the bull to cow ratio closer to 2 cows to 1 bull. The number of tags for the Tule Elk hunt will stay the same as the year previous with 16 cow tags, 12 bull tags, and 10 spikes tags for a total of 38 tags.

Four Tule Elk surveys have been completed this surveying season. On the most recent survey, 22 calves were counted. We expect to see more calves with each

completed survey as the season continues.

Wildlife Area

Gravel for the Joice Island Road repairs have begun to arrive. Shipments began on June 1st. As soon as all the gravel has been received, a decision will be made about the best course of action to repair the road.

The Montezuma Fish Screen Project is proceeding as scheduled. The construction crew has installed 4 out of the 7 pipes going in. They will continue to work on completing the non-exterior work until the end of August. After September 1st, they will begin the exterior work and the final steps, such as installing the fish screens themselves.

The Pheasant Crow Counts have also ended. Over the season, we heard a total of 891 crows at 115 stations, bringing the yearly average of crows per station to 8. This is 2 more crows than last years average, but 2 crows less than the average amount of crows heard at each station over the past 14 years.

USGS has been conducting nest searches on the island, which are going well. So far, they have searched 5 fields and have detected a total of 127 nests of which 81 were Mallard nests, 40 were Gadwall, 3 were Cinnamon Teal, 2 were Northern Harriers, and 1 was a Short-eared owl nest.

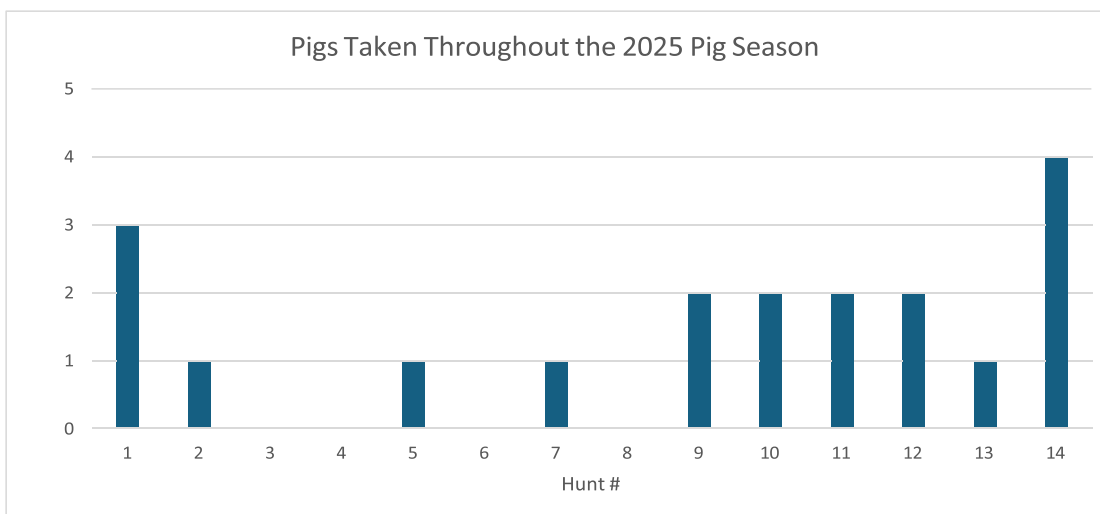


Figure 3. Over the course of the season, we saw fluctuations of the number of pigs taken with 3 in the first hunt and 0-1 during hunts 2-8. Hunt 9 marked the start of a great end, with at least 2 pigs taken in most of the hunts until the end of the season.

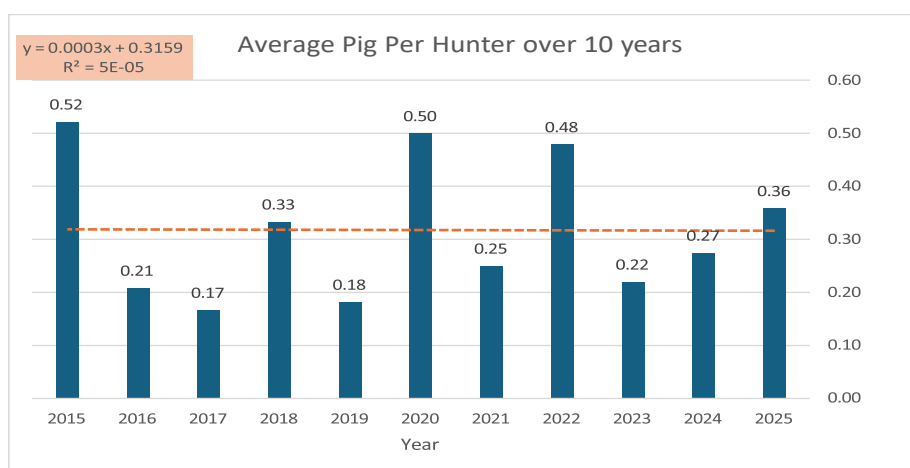


Figure 1. A bar graph depicting the average amount of pigs taken for each hunter over the course of 10 years. We see a fluctuation of rate from year to year, reaching as high as 0.52 in 2015 to as little as 0.17 in 2017. However, the trendline depicts no significant changes over the past 10 years.

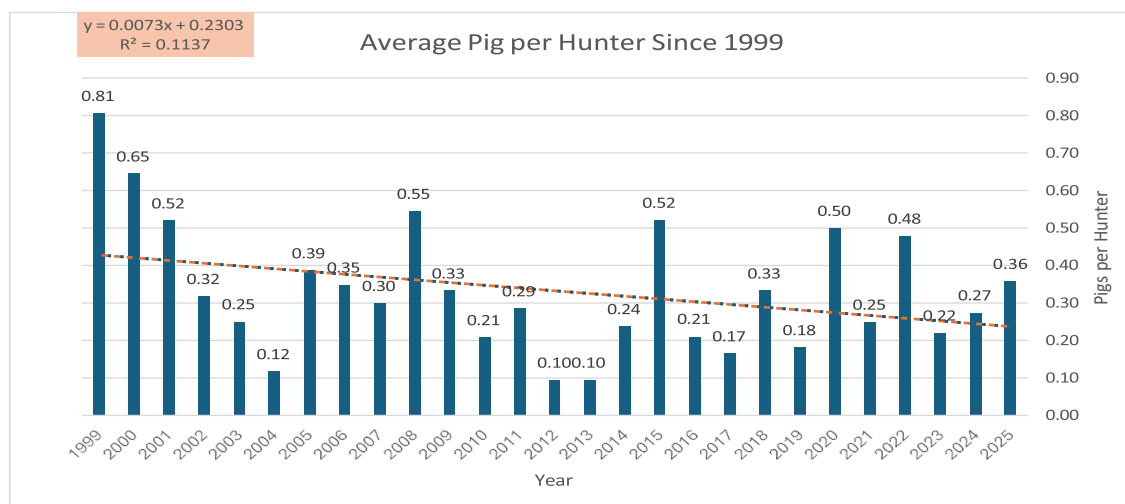


Figure 2. A bar graph depicting the average pig per hunter since 1999 to 2025. A liner trendline shows an insignificant decrease ($R^2 = 0.1137$) over time.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Jamel Stewart presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of May, there are no salinity standards for May. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 0.5 – 7.3 mS/cm. Salinity monitoring station S-97 remained offline while Cygnus was at 8.9 mS/cm. At the end of May, the net Delta outflow was 16,595 cfs. As of June 8th, salinities in the Marsh ranged from 1.5 – 10.2 mS/cm, and Delta outflow had decreased to 6,523 cfs. There are no Suisun Marsh salinity standards for the month of June.

DFD staff completed a field survey and work clearance for Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) for erosion repair work at mile 11.1. Erosion repair work and fish screen cleanings were performed at RRDS. The Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) and Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) had field surveys performed for upcoming maintenance work. DFD staff reduced intake openings to 4" per SRCD's request. DFD staff cleaned intake screens at GYSO. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates will be operating in tidal mode for at least 60 days later this summer. Operations will start earlier than expected at SMSCG, potentially by the end of June. Russian thistle has become more prevalent in RRDS and MIDS. DWR is conducting a study on how to manage Russian Thistle. A 3-year study on Phragmites management is wrapping up, and Blacklock is applying for permits for treatment by SRCD starting this fall.

California reservoir capacity in May ranged from 84-98% of average in the northern Sierra and 81-96% in the southern Sierra. For the new water year, precipitation year to date was 106% of average for the northern Sierra and 68% for the southern Sierra.

7. Suisun Resource Conservation District Reports ~

- a) 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement ~Mr. Chappell attended the May 8th and June 12th Principal's meetings, as well as the E-CAT Meeting June 10th. Mr. Chappell reported that there have been no changes in the 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement. Discussion ensued.
- b) 2025 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update of the PAI programs. Mr. Takekawa completed technical review on June 10th. 5 new applications and 2 corrected applications were submitted for review by May 30th. There will be a review of funds at the end of this year to determine fund balance for next year's program. Discussion ensued.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. Mr. Chappell attended the Adaptive Management Advisory Team meeting on May 13th, which was a Suisun Marsh field visits. The quarterly Applicant's Compliance Team meeting was held May 20th for which Mr. Chappell provided a written report. All required environmental reporting is current. Discussion ensued.
- d) USACE Permits ~ RGP 3 and LOP updates. SRCD continues to administer the RGP 3 permit. A May RGP 3 package was submitted on June 2nd and approved on June 5th. On June 2nd, dredging permits were compiled and submitted to BCDC. The draft dredging permit remains under review and was drafted as a new RGP permit. We hope to see the final permit issued this spring.

- e) SRCD 5 year Strategic Plan Update. ~ SRCD distributed a questionnaire at the spring landowner workshop to help prioritize programs in the new 5 year plan. Mr. Takekawa and Mr. Taylor have drafted a new 5 year plan, distributed it to Board and requested comment. Discussion ensued.
- f) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa presented the Water Manager Program update. Mr. Desmond Mackell was hired as my replacement on May 28th and will be introduced to the Board to provide the Water Manager's report beginning next month. Desmond was formerly with USGS and has a Master's degree in waterfowl ecology from UC Davis. He will be in the office starting on June 17th as we transition the Operations Manager duties to him through my departure on August 1st. Mr. Taylor will take up new duties as the staff's Senior Water Manager, and he will help to schedule Water Manager tasks coordinated closely with Desmond. With these changes, we hope to see a seamless staff transition that benefits future operations.

Mr. Taylor worked with Ms. Guzman to process RGP 3 permits which were approved in early May. He also compiled the May package which was submitted on June 2nd, approved on June 5th, and distributed to landowners on June 9th. He also obtained dredging site photos and supporting documentation to compile a dredging application package for BCDC, and he prepared the package for the RWQCB and USACE for submittal once the USACE dredging application is renewed. He drafted the 2025-2029 SRCD 5-Year Strategic Plan for review by the Board. He completed the final gate monitoring check and submitted the final report on May 21st.

Mr. Edmunds worked on dredging applications for some of his landowners and assisted three clubs in submitting PAI cost share grant applications. He also assisted in preparing three BCDC applications and attended meetings for Reclamation District 2112 and 2129. He ran a pump to undertake a leach cycle at the request of one of his clubs, and he completed an inspection of our chemical storage by County Agriculture staff.

Ms. Guzman began preparing articles for the summer West Wind newsletter. She met with a few landowners on vegetation and infrastructure management, and she completed and submitted RGP 3 permit applications for 8 landowners. She supported landowners in submitting PAI grant applications and finished exterior photo write-ups. She also prepared floats and cable lines for caps that cover the fish screens when they are removed for cleaning which is scheduled for next week. She cleaned out the garage and worked with me to archive project paperwork. On May 28th, Steve, Marina, Jeff, and John met with the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District to discuss management adjustments at the Boynton Outfall.

Ms. Collins completed budget and administration tasks including development of a new Standard Operating Procedure for hiring. She provided support to the Bird Returns project for summer bird surveys and the fall pilot program, and she helped complete the final report and invoice for the *Phragmites* Socioecological Study submitted on May 30th to the Delta Stewardship Council. She also worked on an analysis to identify *Phragmites* from drone imagery. She revised her manuscript on wetland drains and fish biomass submitted to Ecological Applications for review. The 2025 Individual Management Plan revisions were certified by the BCDC commission on May 20th, and she worked on sending out the new plans to each club. She also worked with BCDC on revisions to update the GeoMarsh coverage.

Ms. Brandon met several times with collaborators to complete work on the mouse analyses and initiate work on the manuscript. She assisted Jesirae and Tim with an analysis program to process survey drone imagery and identify patches of *Phragmites* for treatment, and she helped develop a figure for levee repairs on the north unit of Tule Red in Grizzly West RD 2136.

- g) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued to maintain the facilities and habitats on Lower Joice Island. He helped pull the pontoon boat out of the water for a 100-hour tune-up and repaired a stripped propeller hub on his boat. He repaired the John Deere rotary mower to remove sections of rust, make repairs, and prime and repaint it. He obtained a personal welder to train himself to make metal repairs as needed. He repaired damage on the walkways at Lower Joice Island and at Pierce Harbor, adding new boards, caster wheels, and ramps on the bottom edge. He brought out a newly designed HDPE flapgate for installation on the inside of the riser in the south unit. He worked on repairing old equipment including a wheelbarrow compressor, chainsaw, and leaf blower, but only the chainsaw was salvageable. Tim and Jesirae boated out to map invasive species on the managed wetland with a survey drone, but they need to resurvey a portion of the north unit this week. Tim completed treatment to control *Lepidium* in the south unit with the spray drone.
- h) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell reported on meetings. Mr. Chappell attended the Delta Conservancy meeting on May 28th. Mr. Chappell attended the meeting on May 29th for Central Valley Joint Venture to present on Bird Returns. 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. **Closed Session** ~ Mr. Vaccarella announced the closed session Conference with Legal Counsel ~ Anticipated Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 5456.9 [d] [2]. Significant exposure to litigation: 1 case.
- 10. **Reconvene** ~ Mr. Vaccarella reported there was nothing to report from Closed Session ~ Conference with Legal Counsel.
- 11. **Meeting Adjournment** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Waters, seconded by Mr. Vanderkous; all who were present were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 PM.