

## **MINUTES**

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

HELD REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021 AT 2:00 PM  
Zoom Video Teleconference Meeting

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Tony Vaccarella  
Arnold Lenk  
Mike Lewis  
Jim Waters

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW  
Steven Chappell, SRCD  
Lalo Kwiat, Assoc. Director  
Dan Lehman, Assoc. Director  
Edwin Limanto, DWR  
Kelli Perez, SRCD  
Melissa Riley, DFW  
Orlando Rocha, DFW  
John Takekawa, SRCD  
Jeff Taylor, SRCD

**1. Call to Order** ~ Mr. Waters 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. Waters opened the March 10, 2021 Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the March 10, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2021 Board meeting was made by Mr. Lenk and seconded by Mr. Lewis; all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote.

**4. Financial Reports** ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for March 2021 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the March 2021 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$125,515.28 including claims for final 2020 PAI landowner reimbursements and a portion of the SRCD FY19/20 audit expense. Mr. Chappell reported the March 2021 Lower Joice Island vendor claims included \$5,242.83 of normal operational expenses. Mr. Chappell also reported the March 2021 Water Managers Program vendor claims total as \$24,234.31 of normal operational expenses. Finally, Mr. Chappell reported a Special Revenue claims total of \$3,201.15 for the portable pump program. Mr. Lewis moved to approve the claims, Mr. Vaccarella seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote.

**5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report** ~ The DFW report was provided by Mr. Orlando Rocha. The Joice Island pig hunt has been through 6 of 8 weekends with 8 pigs taken. The last weekend was 4 for 4 for the first time, and the last 2 weekends may have more favorable conditions. The spring burn season on the Wildlife Area has included 4 burn days and >100 acres of Phragmites with one more burn tomorrow. Some of the ponds have built up litter with higher water levels; once burned, the water in Pond 19 is seen to be higher than optimal and management will be adjusted to lower the shoot level for better habitat for fall migrants and lower pumping costs. Spraying and mowing is occurring for habitat management throughout the Wildlife Area.

**6. Department of Water Resources Report** ~ Mr. Edwin Limanto provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of March, the salinity standards under the current Deficiency Period for the eastern compliance stations was 8.0 mS/cm and 15.6 mS/cm for the western compliance stations. Progressive Daily Mean Salinities in the Marsh ranged from 2.9 in the east to 12.0 mS/cm in the western Marsh. At the end of March, net Delta outflow was 9,026 cfs. The salinity standards for April were 11.0 mS/cm in the east and 14.0 mS/cm in the west. Salinity values on April 11th were 2.71 to 11.11 mS/cm, while Delta outflow was 7,284 cfs. Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities at the Control Stations exceeded the Drought Response Fund (DRF) trigger at

the end of March, so the DRF is triggered for the western marsh (although the fund will not be allocated until May).

DWR Suisun Marsh Staff coordinated with Delta Field Division (DFD) on routine Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) 2021 maintenance activities and are planning for ditch clearing and dredging at the Hammond Pond intake pond for 2022-2023. Levees are being monitored after extreme high tides. Some routine maintenance has been started including mowing, spraying, grading, and levee repairs that will continue into the fall.

Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) routine maintenance 2021 planning is ongoing. Routine maintenance will start soon. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) work continues on removing debris at the inlet, planning for 2021 routine maintenance, and fixing the sheet piles around the inlet with improved debris removal in the summer of 2021. Levees continued to be monitored after extreme high tides. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG) have tidal operations in effect in response to high salinity conditions.

Reservoir capacity ranged from 54-69% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 50-107%. Most reservoirs are below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 50% of normal in the northern Sierra and 51% in the southern Sierra. Discussion ensued.

## **7. Suisun Resource Conservation District Reports ~**

- a) 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement Update and 2020 PAI Grant Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the SMPA agreement and grant program continued to be administered. Weekly calls continue with Branch Chief Dean Messer including monthly payment of expenses and SRCD received final 2020 PAI payments for landowner reimbursement. Under the SMPA, deficiency standards have been triggered and SMSCG are in operation through May. SRCD will send DWR an invoice for payment of the drought response funds which will be allocated after May conditions are known and modeled allocations are determined for year of the drought and the subsequent year. SMPA 5-year review effort is continuing with a meeting early in May.
- b) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There was a Principal's meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup> and Mr. Waters attended the April meeting that Mr. Chappell could not attend.
- c) USACE Permits -- RGP3 & LOP Permit Update ~ Work continued the 2021 permit application administration. The March package approval has been received. The

Letter of Permission for the dredging program was sent out to landowners with applications due is May 28<sup>th</sup> with only 1 application submitted at this point. Discussion ensued.

- d) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa reported on the Water Manager Program. Mr. Taylor processed March USACE RGP 3 packages the February package was returned approved on March 18<sup>th</sup>. The March application package went out on March 31<sup>st</sup>, and we received approval on the package on April 9<sup>th</sup>. In addition, he is working on drafting the 2020 SRCD Annual Report.

The water managers participated in club 2020 project meetings. During March, water managers deployed 6 pumps. Spring salmon gate monitoring was completed on March 26<sup>th</sup> and the first smelt monitoring was done on April 6<sup>th</sup>. For the Individual Management Plan updates, 60 of 122 plans have been drafted: 59 are in review with landowners, and 3 are remaining to compile. To develop final versions, 50 have been returned by landowners, 10 have been edited for finalizing, and 36 are completed. Our goal is to complete all updates by the May or June Board meeting.

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, Tech2U finalized installation a new network attached storage at the office that doubles our storage capacity and increases the network speed. We also upgraded the WIFI router. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa had a call with Dr. Susan De La Cruz at USGS and Dr. Andy Green with the Doñana Biological Station in Seville, Spain to develop a paper examining the role of Suisun Marsh waterfowl in seed dispersal of wetland plants.

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, SRCD staff had the second triannual staff meeting and reviews. Mr. Taylor provided staff required Haz Mat training updates. On March 22-23, Mr. Edmunds and Mr. Takekawa had training on the operation and maintenance of our spray drone system by Mr. Bill Reynolds of Leading Edge Aerial Technologies, and Ms. Collins also received training on the drone mapping software.

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, and County counsel Ryan FitzGerald discussed amendment of the SRCD Local Protection Program and the update of the Individual Ownership Adaptive Habitat Management Plans with BCDC. Also, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a review of Suisun Marsh vegetation updates with Chico State. In follow-up, Ms. Collins sent along a shapefile with ownership parcels for analyses.

On March 30<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa hosted a call of the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse Working Group to initiate planning for the first rangewide survey in 2022 supported through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant. On April 1-2, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Takekawa went with Mr. Brett Williams at Ducks Unlimited to

visit and assess the condition of each of the fish screens. He will be working to develop a summary of needed upgrades and cost estimates for a Phase 2 proposal we will submit this fall.

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa attended a call on avian influenza studies and waterfowl ecology with the Chinese CDC and several academic institutions. Our most recent SRCD quarterly Newsletter was mailed out April 14<sup>th</sup>. The Spring Landowner Workshop will be held on Wednesday, April 21 from 9-12 (NOT 10-1) on Zoom.

- e) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, our equipment mechanic Erik Wylie came out to complete tune-ups on all of the equipment and repair the tractor alternator. On March 19<sup>th</sup>, we were invited to work with partners at CWA to develop a proposal to examine carbon sequestration at Lower Joice Island. Mr. Takekawa worked with Dr. Karen Thorne and Dr. Scott Jones at USGS to develop the draft proposal for consideration. Mr. Andy Twiss repaired 2 of our 3 old ATVs, but it is becoming clear that the ATVs are outliving their useful life, and we will need to be replacing them in the future. On April 5-8, Mr. Mouton, Mr. Chappell, and all water managers worked with assistance from Associate Director Lalo Kwiat to undertake marsh management burns of 67 acres at Lower Joice Island. We selected one 15-acre area in the northwest corner of the North Unit and 2 areas in eastern side of the South Unit. The northern area was burned successfully on Monday. The first southern area was burned on Tuesday and was extinguished that afternoon, but it flared up during the evening and escaped containment when high wind conditions arose. We established new containment on Wednesday, but the fire flared again on Wednesday night which we extinguished Thursday morning. The extensive standing litter under the salt grass resulted in areas of smoldering fuel and resulted in flaring up. In the end, we had a good burn on 74 total acres.
- f) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell indicated we have met all of our obligations with meetings while maintaining Covid-19 measures. On March 24<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Waters attended the monthly Delta Conservancy Board meeting. On March 25<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell attended a tour of the state wildlife area with the WCB director and upper management with DFW, DU, and CWA to see projects including Pond 12 water infrastructure improvements. The Board package included information on a proposed gas well project based at Arnold Ranch, environmental interests have provided strong comments in opposition. On April 13<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell participated in the Suisun City scoping meeting for the development at Pennsylvania at Hwy 12. Mr. Chappell will meet with the city planner and will provide a comment letter about the wetlands on the sites. Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa have been asked to help with a SF Bay Restoration Authority fieldtrip in May with a planning trip tomorrow, April

15th. The Spring Landowner Workshop on Wednesday April 21<sup>st</sup> is going to be held remotely on Zoom from 9-12. 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 ~ Mr. Chappell explained that the auditor provided an update that there will be a report provided on April 23<sup>rd</sup> for adoption at the June meeting.
- e) Associate Directors Committee ~ No report.

**10. Adjourn** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Lenk and seconded by Mr. Lewis; all were in favor and the motion carried by roll call. The meeting was adjourned at 2:48 PM.