

## **MINUTES**

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

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2022, AT 2:00 PM  
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS  
675 TEXAS STREET  
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Steven Chappell, SRCD  
Tim Edmunds, SRCD  
Nimal Jayasundara, DWR  
Charlene Lenk  
Melissa Riley, DFW  
Orlando Rocha, DFW  
Jamel Stewart, DWR  
John Takekawa, SRCD

**1. Call to Order** ~ Mr. Lenk called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Pursuant to Government Code Section 54953, Subdivision (b), it was announced that the following Board Member will participate by teleconference: Director Tony Vaccarella, from 2397 Goodwin Avenue, Redwood City, CA 94061 (open to the public).

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

**3. Open Session** ~ Mr. Lenk opened the August 10, 2022, Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the July 13, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the July 13, 2022, Board meeting was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Lewis; all were in favor by roll call vote and the motion carried.

**4. Financial Reports** ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for July 2022 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the July 2022 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$148,238.66. Most of these claims were normal SRCD operational expenses except for claim #2 for California Reforestation pest-weed treatment, which will be reimbursed from landowners, #8 to Marsh Rat Tractor and #11 to Wetland Construction for DWR FRPA contract reimbursable expenses. Mr. Chappell also reported the July 2022 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$6,692.95. All expenses were normal LJI operational expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the July 2022 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$25,732.49 with claims #4 for fuel and #6 for State compensation insurance expenses. These were all normal Water Manager Program operational expenses. Mr. Waters moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, all were in favor by roll call vote, and the motion carried.

b) Board Consideration of the SRCD Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Draft Audit ~ Mr. Chappell presented the SRCD Fiscal Year 20/21 final audit report for Board consideration and approval. Mr. Waters made a motion to approve the FY 20/21 SRCD Audit as presented, Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, all were in favor by roll call vote and the motion carried.

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

### **Elk Season**

The Fundraiser Tag hunt began this past weekend on the 6<sup>th</sup>, and the hunter has 30 days to hunt. The hunter has not harvested an animal yet, because he has a particular bull in mind, and it is well worth the wait. It is hard to count all the points, but from what I can tell, it's a 9x10 or 10X11. The hunter will have the rest of this week before the general hunts start up on the 16<sup>th</sup> and run through the 21<sup>st</sup>. He can hunt during the

general hunts, but I'm hopeful that his hunt concludes before that.

From August 21<sup>st</sup> – September 8<sup>th</sup>, there will be a break in the hunt periods, and most hunts occur in late September. Staff and contractors will be using the break in late August and early September to continue some of the dirt work and final mowing needing to be done before fall flood up starts.

### **Grizzly Island**

Work was completed to replace old and failing water control structures off Roaring River and Grizzly Ditch. This will be the first time in a long time that the units south of Grizzly Island Road don't have leaky gates. Dirt work in 23A was also completed, basic swales and levee repair to make that pond function properly. The first phase of cleaning Poleline Ditch is complete, and we'll move forward with removing the eucalyptus grove from parking lots 7 through 8 in the future. Phase one of raising Poleline Road was also completed. We'll add more material as needed once the road settles, but in the meantime, staff and waterfowl hunters should be able to utilize the road throughout the winter. Staff is wrapping up some pond work around the wildlife area until the elk season and flood-up begins. Some eucalyptus trees were removed in the headquarters complex and in the area to the west.

### **Flood Up**

GIWA is planning on being fully flooded by opening weekend of waterfowl season. We've held off from flooding additional units on the 1<sup>st</sup> to finish up some last-minute work in the ponds. Today we began flooding the Island Slough Unit, and we will begin flooding pond off Roaring River by the end of the week. We should begin seeing early migrant very soon. With other areas lacking water it is especially important for the Marsh to provide needed habitat for migrating birds that are going to begin showing up. With that being said, we look forward to a decent waterfowl season with plenty of water for our hunters

**6. Department of Water Resources Report** ~ Mr. Jamel Stewart provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of July, there are no salinity standards for the Marsh. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 10.0 to 21.4 mS/cm. At the end of July, net Delta outflow was 5,310 cfs. The August 8th salinities ranged from 13.2 to 20.4 mS/cm. Delta outflow was 7,016 cfs. Mean salinity values in late August over 17 mS/cm at one station or S-35 will require salinity control gate operations in September, and it looks like it may occur this fall.

The Roaring River Distribution System maintenance activity plans for 2022 are ongoing including ditch clearing and dredging and at the Hammond Pond intake pond for 2025 or later requiring multiple seasons and significant funding to complete. Levees are being monitored after high tides. Maintenance was ongoing. There may be a leak in the levee

system. Morrow Island Distribution System routine maintenance planning for 2022 is ongoing. Levee monitoring continues after high tides. Planning is ongoing for repairs of a potential leak on the M-line levee. Goodyear Slough Outfall operations continued by removing debris at the intake as needed. Planning for 2022 routine maintenance is ongoing. Levees continued to be monitored after high tides. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates have ended operations since May 31, and Gate 3 is refurbished and being reinstalled, while Gate 1 is being removed for refurbishment once Gate 3 is returned. All gates are closed or have stoplogs during the work through August 26<sup>th</sup>. Russian Thistle is prevalent at Meins Landing, so DWR has been conducting a study on best practices for removal. Randall Mager has been leading efforts for DWR. The Phragmites treatment for the fall with contracting through SRCD remains in discussion. A vegetation management plan is in development.

California reservoir capacity ranged from 29-85% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 31-66%. All reservoirs are below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 79% of normal in the northern Sierra and 63% 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. Bi-monthly calls continue with DWR Branch Chief Mr. Dean Messer including updates on monthly payment of SRCD contract expenses. The 5-year review of the SMPA is progressing with regular meetings on July 25<sup>th</sup> and next week. There is a draft in preparation for a final version to share with the Executive of each of the signatory Agencies and SRCD Board of Directors.
- b) 2022 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the 2022 PAI Program. Agreements were sent to landowners in late May, and we have most of the agreement returned and signed. We had new 11 applications submitted for the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline, and technical reviews were completed on July 11<sup>th</sup>. Ten of the projects were recommended for DWR funding for a total of \$197K. One project was not yet approved without an elevation survey and design review. Discussion ensued.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There was a SMP Principal's meeting on August 11<sup>th</sup> after the July meeting was canceled.
- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continued to administer the 2022 RGP 3 permit. The Water Managers prepared and submitted the RGP July application package on August 1<sup>st</sup> which was approved on August 8<sup>th</sup>. The General

Permit renewal is soon closing for comments. The Letter of Permission has not been completed yet, but we are awaiting a BCDC clarification letter. Discussion ensued.

- e) Water Manager (WM) Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Water Manager program update. The Water Managers received RGP3 approvals from the June package were received in early July. Mr. Taylor prepared and submitted the RGP3 requests for July on August 1<sup>st</sup>, which were approved on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Taylor sent drought response notification letters to eligible landowners. Mr. Taylor pulled water quality housings and gathered monitoring equipment in advance of flood-up. Exterior work reports were finished for 706, 715, the salinity control gates, and on some of Mr. McKinney's clubs. SRCD has a meeting with Mosquito Abatement set for August 11<sup>th</sup>. The Water Managers conducted inspections on a few remaining PAI projects.

The first regionwide salt marsh harvest mouse and small mammal survey was initiated on July 11<sup>th</sup> by biologists working across the Bay Area led by SRCD, DFW, and WRA Consulting with several regional partners. Coordination meetings were held with the team leaders were scheduled for every Monday. Mr. Hagani had a lead role in project coordination and worked with our seasonal technician, Mr. William Clafin to coordinate genetics and eDNA sampling for the project. Mr. Hagani and participated in some of the early morning surveys with assistance from Mr. Taylor and Mr. McKinney. This week is the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the intensive 7-week trapping schedule which will continue through the end of August.

Ms. Collins helped to complete the July newsletter which was edited by Mr. McKinney before he departed and sent out on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. She continued to work on spatial analysis of managed wetland drainages and fish biomass in Suisun Marsh. Mr. Hagani continued to develop a manuscript on historical Phragmites analyses and worked on a historic trapping summary report for salt marsh harvest mouse.

On July 14<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended the Bradmoor and Arnold Slough Tidal Restoration groundbreaking ceremony, and Mr. Chappell provided one of the keynote talks. Mr. Hagani and Mr. Takekawa met online with postdoc Dr. Adrienne Ernst to schedule her fieldwork which she conducted from 1-5 August with our assistance and help from students at Santa Clara University and technicians from our blue carbon project.

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa met with Ms. Kathleen Wong of Estuary News to discuss an article on the small mammal survey and arranged a field visit in early August. On July 16<sup>th</sup>, Steve and Mr. Takekawa attended a DFW meeting to discuss an agreement to reimburse DFW for a portion of pumping expenses on the Poleline drainage ditch. Mr. Takekawa attended a DWR meeting to discuss public use at

Belden's Landing, and Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a monthly update meeting to discuss our work with the DWR Fish Restoration Program Agreement.

On July 20<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa attended a coordination meeting of the Solano Water Institute for a teacher workshop scheduled from August 3-5. On July 21<sup>st</sup>, the SRCD staff conducted our triannual staff meeting and completed annual reviews. On July 25<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa led the monthly meeting of the Delta Stewardship Council project team on the socioecological study of Phragmites control in Suisun Marsh, and we had a monthly meeting on Belden's Landing NFWF project work with Solano County Parks. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa attended the Delta Conservancy Board meeting and provided responses to Board member questions prior to their award of a \$452K grant to SRCD and CWA under Proposition 1 to improve drainage infrastructure for 6 landowners in Suisun Marsh.

We had the last meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> Suisun Conservation Fund Fun Shoot on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Preparations and setup were completed the afternoon of July 28<sup>th</sup>, and we hosted the event with over 105 participants on July 29<sup>th</sup>. A good time was had by all. Mr. Takekawa, Ms. Collins, Mr. Chappell, and Mr. Brett Williams of DU met to submit a \$1.25M 2022 proposal for support to renovate fish screens from the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Measure AA grant prior to the 29 July deadline.

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mr. Takekawa led 27 teachers on a morning walk to discuss water issues in Suisun Marsh. Also, Mr. Takekawa and two of our Phragmites principal investigators met online with Delta Stewardship Council project managers to discuss budgeting adjustments for the new fiscal year.

At the end of July, we acknowledged Water Manager Phelan McKinney's departure with a luncheon and parting gift thanking him for all of his work for the district. The Water Manager Biologist position vacancy application period closed on July 31<sup>st</sup>, and 26 applications were received. Interviews of the top 9 candidates were completed on August 5<sup>th</sup>, and the top 4 finalists were scheduled for panel interviews on August 11-12 with selection next week.

f) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued to maintain the facilities and habitat on the island. He continued to maintain the facilities and habitat on the island. We received the coring bucket from DeLoss Equipment in Barstow. The bucket was moved to the island for installation. On July 15<sup>th</sup>, the Lower Joice Island Blue Carbon Team met to discuss upcoming sampling. The team continued to set plots and measure gas exchange from different areas of the island. Work continued on Phragmites revegetation studies. Mr. Mouton completed putting up blinds in the clubhouse windows and

moved his old refrigerator into the back room for reinstallation. He worked with Mr. Andy Twiss to tune-up the caretaker boat, and he also scraped the bottom. He worked on leveling the ground with the bulldozer in the boat area on the island. He has been cleaning and piling up trash for a dumpster reserved for next week.

g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell reported on our meetings. The fish screen grant resubmittal was completed on July 29th. The Suisun Conservation Fund Fun Shoot was held on July 29<sup>th</sup>. September 21<sup>st</sup> is the date of the Fall Landowner Workshop. Discussion ensued.

**8. Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports ~**

a) Agency Committee ~ Mr. Lenk provided legislative action alerts. He mentioned that he obtained an email from the Missouri Club of San Francisco. They are no longer being involved in supporting junior hunts because of legislative changes in California for junior hunters (not allowed to advertise to minors). Hunter education for youth is now in question. Senate bill 505 will require gun owners to obtain liability insurance, and Mr. Mark Levene proposed a bill to increase taxes on firearms and ammunition. HR8164 would repeal the Pitman-Robertson Act established in 1937. Discussion ensued.

b) Legal Committee ~ No report.

c) Personnel Committee ~ No report.

d) Finance Committee ~ No report.

e) Associate Directors Committee ~ No report.

**9. Meeting Adjourned** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Lewis, all were in favor by roll call vote and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 PM.