

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2021, AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Tony Vaccarella
Terry Connolly
Arnold Lenk
Mike Lewis
Jim Waters

OTHERS PRESENT: Steven Chappell, SRCD
Jesirae Collins, SRCD
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
Ryan FitzGerald, Solano County
Edwin Limanto, DWR
Kelli Perez, SRCD
Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Vaccarella called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the August 11, 2021, Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the July 14, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the July 14, 2021 Board meeting was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Lewis; all were in favor and the motion carried.

4. Financial Reports ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for July 2021 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the July 2021 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$89,187.23. These claims included \$15,943.77 for solar retrofit on the fish screen grant, \$9,600 for the yearly office lease to DFW, and \$9,203.21 for herbicide for pest-weed control program, to be reimbursed by the landowners. Mr. Chappell reported the July 2021 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$9,276.51. All expenses were normal operational expenses with a Herc Rental bill for a pump used under the NAWCA grant. Mr. Chappell reported the July 2021 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$23,588.25. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the claim summaries as presented, Mr. Lenk seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

b) Board Review and Consider Approval of SRCD FY 19/20 Draft Audit ~ Mr. Chappell provide an update of the status of the SRCD FY 19/20 draft audit. Mr. Connolly, Financial Committee chair, reviewed the draft audit and determined that the audit required two corrections. These corrections were incorporated in a letter to the auditor addressing these needed changes, so the revised draft audit will be presented at the September Board meeting for approval.

5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~ The DFW report was provided by Mr. Orlando Rocha and presented by Ms. Laureen Barthman-Thompson.

Elk Season: The first elk hunt took place on August 7th. The raffle tag holder was able to find a very nice mature 9x10 bull. DFW is using this week, with a break in hunting to continue with some of our field work before the rest of the hunts begin. General season hunts will run the 17th to the 22nd of August, then we will have a break until the 9th of September giving us a bit more time to complete some projects on the Wildlife Area before we begin fully flooding for the fall.

Joice Island: Our Joice Island A Pond enhancement project is still progressing, at this point we are just waiting for the pond to dry up enough to continue dirt work within the pond. Once elk hunts are in full swing the crew will shift focus from main Grizzly Island to do some mowing and maintenance in B pond. C and D are partially flooded now and

will be flooded fully in September. B pond will be flooded in late September or early October.

Grizzly Island: The Wildlife Area received a WCB grant to renovate and repair fire damage to pond 12 and upland field 13. The contractor is almost complete with phase 1 of the project, like all projects there were some unexpected delays, but the critical components are installed, and we should be able to begin flooding the closed zone by early September. Ponds 12D and 12E were combined by removing the levee between them, making it a larger more contiguous unit which should reduce disturbance, along with new swales and loafing areas this should increase bird use. We are looking forward to seeing how birds use the unit during the fall and winter this season. New water control structures will reduce water loss, saving us pumping cost, and make flooding more efficient. Staff is spraying phragmites when the wind allows, and we will continue to do so for the rest of summer.

Flood up: The Wildlife Area plan to be fully flooded by opening weekend of waterfowl season, we will not see a reduction in our hunter quota of 350. Unlike many other areas who will see hunter quotas reduced by 40-80%. The Marsh will become a popular spot for those displaced hunters.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Edwin Limanto provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of June, there is no salinity standards. The Progressive Daily Mean Salinities in the Marsh ranged from 12.7 to 22.0 mS/cm. At the end of July, net Delta outflow was 2,793. Salinity values for August 8th were 12.3 to 22.7 mS/cm, and Delta outflow was 3,076 cfs.

Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) maintenance activities for 2021 are being planned and for ditch clearing and dredging at the Hammond Pond intake pond for 2023-2024. Levees are being monitored after 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 planning is ongoing. Levee monitoring continues after high tides, and routine levee maintenance was completed. Invasive Russian thistle has become more prevalent and was hand-pulled by DWR staff on July 23rd prior to seeding. The levees will be sprayed again within the next 1-2 months. DWR will continually monitor the system and will remove Russian thistle when possible. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) coordination continued on removing debris at the inlet, planning for 2021 routine maintenance is ongoing, and fixing the sheet piles around the inlet with improved debris removal will be started in September 2021. Levees continued to be monitored after high tides. Routine maintenance will start by late summer.

The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG) have one gate is out for refurbishment with scheduled return in August.

Reservoir capacity ranged from 28-48% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 28-68%. All but one reservoir remains below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 46% of normal in the northern Sierra and 48% in the southern Sierra.

Discussion ensued on high salinities, SMSCG gate operations, and drought conditions.

7. Conduct a public hearing in accordance with 14 CCR 11210 to consider an amendment to SRCD Local Protection Program replacing each of the existing Individual Duck Club Management Plans with updated Individual Ownership Adaptive Habitat Management Plans (“Plans”) and find that the amendment is exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the reasons stated in the Draft CEQA Notice of Exemption ~ the

Attachments: (see <https://suisunrcd.org/individual-management-plan-updates/>)

- A. Draft Plan example
- B. Draft CEQA Notice of Exemption
- C. Template supporting documentation for Plans
- D. Draft Plan Appendices
- E. Outreach Documentation (Added since 4/15/2021)
- F. ALUC Consistency Determination (Added since 4/15/2021)
- G. Draft Resolution (Updated since 4/15/2021)

Mr. Vaccarella opened the public hearing, and Mr. Steve Chappell introduced Deputy Solano County Counsel Mr. Ryan FitzGerald. Mr. Chappell provided a Powerpoint presentation with a summary of the April public hearing including the background of the plans, examples, and draft CEQA and draft Board resolution. He presented the background of the management plans development in the 1980’s, when they were focused on individual species management, such as alkali bulrush, with a map and narratives. Certified management plans precluded needing a marsh development permit from BCDC for routine managed wetland maintenance.

The updated management plans recognize the need for multi-species management, changes since the plans were initiated 40 years ago, and adaptive management that allows keeping the Plan current hereafter. SRCD met with all the private duck club representatives, led by Ms. Jesirae Collins, and 124 management plans have been updated. The new plans include several elements that are shown in the example with appendices that include background reference information, and there is specific information for different areas of the marsh. SRCD now uses a GIS database for

updating information on the plans and maps including the infrastructure and recent layers of elevation, vegetation, and soils.

In 2018, SRCD received a grant from the Delta Conservancy to develop a hydrodynamic model to determine if landowners can meet a 30-day drainage goal. This assessment is included in the new plans. Mr. Chappell presented the draft CEQA exemption that Mr. FitzGerald will review, and he showed the information that is covered in the appendices. The April 15th hearing included public comments were included in the record. Mr. Chappell reviews the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) review the management plan updates and determined that they were consistent with their planning and review process.

Mr. FitzGerald reviewed the background information he provided in April, and he explained the requirements to meet BCDC regulatory requirements. These included conducting a public hearing and having a SRCD Board resolution, and the public code of regulations requires additional documentation is included (see Attachment list above), and Clause 8 indicates the specific attachments. Discussion has been included on the amendments and relationship to other elements of the Bay Plan, the Suisun Marsh Protection Plan including the SRCD Local Protection Program component with outreach provided. CEQA documents were included with the draft notice of exemption that would be submitted after the Board approved the resolution. Three categories were presented as exempt for the management plan update. Staff and counsel concurred that the CEQA exemption was appropriate. A maximum opportunity was provided for the review, and this included notification to the other agencies and the public as well as the ALUC.

A motion was made by Mr. Lenk to reopen the public hearing that was seconded by Mr. Connolly, all agreed; and the public hearing was reopened. Public comments were requested, and a question was asked about availability of the plans to the public. Mr. FitzGerald indicated that they are public documents, and the plans are available. Another question asked was if the map data would be available. Mr. Chappell indicated that the data was entered in Geomارش but was not publicly made available. Mr. FitzGerald explained next steps and asked for any questions.

No more questions or comments were presented, so Mr. Chappell asked for consideration of SRCD Resolution 2122-01. Mr. Lenk made a motion to accept the resolution, Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the resolution was passed unanimously. Mr. Chappell noted that the next steps would be updating the 1980 SRCD Local Protection Plan next year.

8. Suisun Resource Conservation District Reports ~

- a) 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the SMPA agreement continued to be administered. Weekly calls continue with Branch Chief Mr. Dean Messer, including updates on monthly payment of SRCD expenses. The 5-year review of the SMPA is continuing, and the findings will be discussed at the meeting tomorrow. The waterfowl survey work was discussed and how it would support the Agreement. Mr. Chappell indicated that the severe drought may require that the standards in the Agreement may need to be revisited.
- b) 2021 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided a summary of the 2021 PAI Program. There are 2-3 landowners with reimbursements submitted to SRCD and several other projects currently under construction.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There is a SMP Principal's meeting tomorrow and AMAT meeting on the 16th. The Pacific Flyway Center will make a presentation on their status and plans at the AMAT meeting.
- d) USACE Permits - RGP3 & LOP Permit Update ~ Work continued on the 2021 permit application administration. The July package was submitted to the USACE with authorization received today. The Letter of Permission for the dredging program applications was submitted in July. The dredging window opened August 1st with RWQCB permission was obtained with the USACE dredge permit promised this week and awaiting an update from BCDC.
- e) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell reported on the Water Manager Program. Mr. Taylor sent the July RGP3 package to the USACE. He submitted the hazardous materials report on July 20th and exterior work report for Club #405. He processed drought response funding and had site visits at 5 clubs, and prepared sampling equipment for fall Water Quality monitoring. The Water Manager's assisted DFW staff with landowner access for vegetation surveys. Mr. McKinney used the boom truck to remove fish screens, but the hydraulic unit had a leak, and so the truck was brought to North Bay Trucking for assessment and repair. On July 17th, Mr. Edmunds successfully passed his examination and obtained his Department of Pesticide Regulation certification for operation of the spray-drone. The Water Managers worked with landowners to complete their diversion reporting for those landowners who are now 2 months overdue.

Ms. Collins and the Water Managers completed finalizing all 124 Individual Management Plan updates which were uploaded to provide access for final Board approval. Mr. Takekawa and Ms. Collins met with counsel Mr. Ryan Fitzgerald to

finalize the details of the public hearing on August 3rd which were completed on August 6th. Mr. Chappell and Ms. Collins will meet with BCDC about the final IMP submittal on August 12th. Ms. Collins began training with Ms. Perez on administration tasks as part of her duties.

On July 19th, Mr. Takekawa posted the announcement for the wildlife biologist analyst position which closed on July 31st. Interviewing and selection will take place over the next 2 weeks. On July 20th, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, and Mr. Taylor attended the Delta Stewardship Council Managed Wetland Conceptual Model meeting. On July 21st, all staff attended the annual performance review attended by Mr. Mike Lewis. On July 22nd, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with Mr. Cliff Feldheim of Caltrout to discuss possible collaboration on fish food resources from managed wetlands. On July 27th, Mr. Takekawa attended the interagency drought science meeting.

On August 4th, Mr. Takekawa led a walk and gave a presentation to teachers as part of the Solano Resource Conservation District Water Institute program. Also on August 4th, he met with Robert Eddings to discuss the schedule and funding to initiate the LJI Carbon Sequestration project. On August 5th, Mr. Takekawa met with Mr. John Eadie (UCD) and Mr. Mike Casazza (USGS) to plan the content of the fall landowner science workshop to be held on September 15th, and he met with Ms. Sally Rudd and Mr. Brian Reynolds from Compass Consulting to talk about fish food production in managed wetlands for the DWR Delta Smelt Resilience Program. On August 10th, Mr. Takekawa met with the Phragmites Eco-socio Study investigators, and Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, and Ms. Collins met with Mr. Brett Williams and Mr. Aaron Will at DU to discuss details of submitting for Phase 2 of the Essential Fish Screen Project. Discussion ensued.

- g) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued to maintain the facilities on the island and work on the habitat conditions. He finished draining the island on July 14th and continued herbicide treatments to control Phragmites in the north unit. On July 26th, Mr. Andy Twiss came out to install new carburetors on two ATVs. All of the ATVs are now working. On July 27th, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, Mr. Mouton, Mr. Robert Eddings, and his assistant toured the NAWCA project site to finalize the work plan. Mr. Mouton initiated the ditch work that week which he will continue for 3-4 weeks.
- h) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ The SCF Fun Shoot was held on July 30th and was well attended. The event resulted in \$21K in contributions for the fund. Mr. Chappell met about water rights curtailment with the Delta Watermaster Michael George, and he indicated that the riparian water rights in the Marsh should not be curtailed. Mr. Chappell participated in a Statewide drought call for state wildlife area managers, and he provided a summary of state

water conditions. The next SRCD big event is the Fall Landowner Workshop on September 15th. The Delta Watermaster was invited to attend and give a presentation. Discussion ensued.

9. Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports ~

- a) Agency Committee ~ No report.
- b) Legal Committee ~ No report.
- c) Personnel Committee ~ No report, but a closed session will be held to consider staff salary considerations.
- d) Finance Committee ~ No report.
- e) Associate Directors Committee ~ No report.

10. Closed Session ~ Consideration of Annual SRCD Staff Salary Review. Mr. Vaccarella closed the open session at 3:14 PM to review staff salary considerations recommended by Mr. Lewis for the Personnel Committee.

11. Open Closed Session ~ Mr. Vaccarella then reopened the meeting at 3:34PM reported out of Mr. Lenk made a motion to adopt the personnel committee's recommendation for SRCD staff annual salary considerations, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

12. 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. The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 PM.