

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021, AT 2:00 PM
Zoom Video Teleconference Meeting

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Jesirae Collins, SRCD
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
Lalo Kwiat, Assoc. Director
Dan Lehman, Assoc. Director
Edwin Limanto, DWR
Phelan McKinney, SRCD
Kelli Perez, SRCD
Melissa Riley, DFW
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 2:00 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the June 9, 2021, Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the May 12, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the May 12, 2021 Board meeting was made by Mr. Lenk and seconded by Mr. Waters; all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote.

4. Financial Reports ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for May 2021 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the May 2021 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$66,258.50. Mr. Chappell reported the May 2021 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$3,383.95 for normal operational expenses. Mr. Chappell also reported the May 2021 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$33,467.75 for normal operational expenses. Finally, Mr. Chappell reported the May 2021 Special Revenue vendor claims totaled \$3,243.42 for the portable pump program. Mr. Waters moved to approve the May vendor claims as presented, Mr. Lenk seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote.

b) Review of SRCD's Draft 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budgets ~ Mr. Chappell reported on the SRCD Draft 2021-2022 budgets. For the SRCD General Fund, the annual DFW contract has been renewed, special grants significantly influence annual revenues including DWR Mein's Landing and DWR support grant. This year salaries and benefits included a 4th position for Jesirae Collins to support District operations and program delivery under the general fund. Estimated operational expenses are similar to past years. The General Fund is currently projecting a budget deficit of \$9,000, but we are hopeful new application can cover these expenses. For the SRCD Water Manager Program all operational and salary expenses are reimbursed by DWR, so this is a balance budget with the only increase is the annual contract COLA amount. For the Lower Joice Island Fund, we have received notice of a new private foundation grant over the next 2 years will help offset the caretaker salary to conduct habitat management to support a managed wetland carbon sequestration study. Under the existing NAWCA grant, SRCD staff will complete most of the work ditch cleaning and creation with SRCD equipment, but a skilled operator will be asked to handle the finish work at the end of the project. The budget projection for SCF's reimbursement to SRCD for operations of the island is anticipated to be around \$17K this year. The island's propane generator replacement is included in this budget, although the generator is still running.

5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~ The DFW report was provided by Mr. Orlando Rocha and presented by Melissa Riley. **Joice Island:** The DFW crew was able to pull a leaking gate and fabricate a new flap type system that stopped uncontrolled flooding into D Pond. This will help give our overworked pumps on Joice a break. While our crew was out on Joice they took advantage of equipment being on Island and fixed a small section of levee that was overtopping on the big high tides. **Grizzly Island:** Mowing in Pond 12 is under way in support of our *Phragmites* control project, we will be mowing through the summer on the whole wildlife area and spray for the final time of this project later this fall. While we were hopeful that we would be able to continue to spray, the spring winds had other plans and we have not had a spray day since the last Board meeting. We are hopeful the wind lays down soon and we can get out and still spray some of the later flowering *Lepidium*. Staff began ditch cleaning along Grizzly Island Road since the ditch had finally dried out. Our operator made it down 100 ft of ditch and over the weekend a member of the public decided the ditch needed water and opened a gate and flooded the ditch. The gate is now locked up and the ditch cleaning will go a bit slower, but we will continue. The crew has just completed mowing all our roads and levees for the 2nd time this season on the Wildlife Area. We suspect that the vegetation will not be growing much unless we unexpectedly get a lot of rain.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Edwin Limanto provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of May, we are in Deficiency Standards and salinity standards for the eastern compliance stations was 11.0 mS/cm and 12.5 mS/cm for the western compliance stations. Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) Salinities in the Marsh ranged from 10.1 to 15.2 mS/cm in the western Marsh. At the end of May, net Delta outflow was 4,932 cfs. There were no salinity standards for June. Salinity values for June 6th were 11.7 to 19.3 mS/cm, while Delta outflow was 2,907 cfs. PDM salinities at the Control Stations exceeded the Drought Response Fund (DRF) trigger at the end of March, so the DRF was triggered for the western Marsh (the funding allocation has been forwarded to the Board for approval). The PDMs at control stations were above trigger values in February, March and May but below triggers in April. Under section 7.c of the SMPA, the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates may be operated in September to improve conditions to meet the October salinity standard. DWR is preparing for this possibility.

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 extreme high tides. Some routine maintenance has been started including mowing, spraying, grading, and levee repairs that will continue into the fall. Mr. Waters asked about clearing of vegetation, and Mr. Limanto said he would check.

Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) routine maintenance 2021 planning is ongoing. Levee monitoring continues after extreme high tides, and routine levee maintenance was completed. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) coordination continued on removing debris at the inlet, planning for 2021 routine maintenance, and fixing the sheet piles around the inlet with improved debris removal in August or September 2021. Levees continued to be monitored after extreme high tides. Routine maintenance will start by late summer. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG) control season has ended. One gate is out for refurbishment, and flashboards were removed on June 3rd. There is possible September operations of SMSCG, as 17 mS/cm is a trigger, and it likely will be exceeded.

The Drought Response Fund of 2021 was triggered. PDMs at control stations exceeded trigger values of 9.0 mS/cm at the end of February, 9.0 mS/cm at the end of March, and 12.0 mS/cm at the end of May. PDMs of 12.0 mS/cm were not exceeded at the end of April.

Reservoir capacity ranged from 41-95% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 57-107%. Most reservoirs are below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 46% of normal in the northern Sierra and 48% in the southern Sierra. Discussion ensued.

7. Continuance of a Public Hearing to July 14, 2021, for SRCD's amendment to the Local Protection Program ~ Mr. Chappell reported that SRCD would continue the public hearing at the next Board meeting. We are continuing to complete drafting the final plans, so there is no action to take currently. SRCD was informed that an Amendment of the SRCD Local Protection Program would require a review by the Airport Land Use (APLU) Committee for Travis Airforce Base. An application was prepared and submitted to the APLU on the management plan update, and they will consider it in July.

8. 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 updates on monthly payment of expenses. Under the SMPA, salinity deficiency standards have been triggered and operations of the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates ended in May. SRCD has sent DWR a request for payment of the 2021 Drought Response funds, which will be allocated based off DWR's salinity modeling results. DWR and SRCD discussed the bulkhead repair at Goodyear Slough Outfall, and SRCD requested dredging with this year's maintenance work. SMPA 5-year review effort is continuing with meetings in June, and monitoring

activities are being included in the report. Institutional knowledge has been lost with Agency staff turnover, so the team is working on the history of the monitoring programs as an Appendix to the report.

- **2021 Drought Response Program – 2021 property participation and funding allocation.** For Board consideration and approval, SRCD staff has prepared a memorandum for allocation of 2021 Drought Response Funds under the Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement. There are \$138,226 authorized for the year of drought and the following year. Of this, \$19,158 is allocated to DFW, leaving \$118,868 available to the private landowners. DWR has prepared salinity plot maps showing the areas where the standard is exceeded by 1 mS/cm in the months of February, March, and May. The modeling tool projected the area of affected lands. Lands eligible for participation were the western marsh west of Suisun Slough. The preliminary estimate was \$19.59/acre and allocated based on parcel floodable acres (6,069 ac). Mr. Chappell requested a motion from the Board to approve the 2021 allocation, based upon the finding in the memorandum. Mr. Waters made a motion to approve, Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, all agreed, and the motion carried on a roll call vote.
- b) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There was no solicitation for new 2021 PAI projects, and we are currently updating 2020 PAI projects to extend the agreement length and adjusting any outstanding projects. Two projects have been completed, one project may withdraw, and one project may get delayed to next year. There was a Principal's meeting with a AMAT meeting Tuesday, May 18th. The Applicant's Compliance Team meeting was June 9th. All monitoring and compliance reports have been completed and submitted on time. There have been two agency meetings discussing public access requirements and where it is appropriate.
- c) USACE Permits -- RGP3 & LOP Permit Update ~ Work continued of the 2021 permit application administration. The May RGP3 package has been submitted to the USACE and was authorized within a week of submittal. The Letter of Permission for the dredging program applications are due to SRCD on May 28th, and we have 6 applications this year. DFW will be a major applicant for dredging this year, if they obtain additional funding in the new fiscal year. The RGP3 5-year permit expires in March 2023, so a renewal package preparation will be started this fall. Discussion ensued.

Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa reported on the Water Manager Program. The April RGP3 package was approved and returned on May 13th, and Mr. Taylor processed and submitted the May USACE package on June 1st. The Spring Water Quality Report was submitted on May 24th. During May, water managers

deployed 3 pumps and have a few sites left to finish pumping. Gate checks continued on May 20th, and the Sea Ark boat electrical problems were repaired.

For the Individual Management Plan updates, Ms. Collins and the water managers are finishing work on the 124 plans: 95 (78%) are drafted, 18 (15%) are in final review with landowners, and 7 (6%) are in final editing. Our revised goal is for completion by the July Board meeting. In addition, she assisted with the SCF Fun Shoot announcement, helped with a website update (the new front page now has rotating images), and acquired a faster laptop to improve GIS processing. She will meet on analyses of zooplankton production for salmon next month.

Mr. Edmunds completed treating the weeds at the fish screens. He worked with our electrical contractor on fish screen #634, and the water managers pulled screen #525 to prepare for a fieldtrip of the SF Bay Restoration Authority grant management team this coming Friday (June 11th). He also completed the paperwork to take the final examination with the Department of Pesticide Regulation on July 17th for operation certification for the spray-drone.

On May 18th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended the Advisory Team Action Team (AMAT) meeting that highlighted Science in the Marsh. On May 19th, they attended the annual meeting of the Suisun Conservation Fund Members and Trustees. In the afternoon, they also attended a Science Advisory meeting call for the Solano Land Trust at Rush Ranch. On May 20th, Mr. Takekawa organized an update call for the project leaders of the NFWF Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse team, and on May 24th, he worked with Dr. Steve Andrews at RMA and Dr. Richelle Tanner at UC Davis on a manuscript on salinity effects from levee breaches.

On May 25th, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Takekawa met with DWR and USACE staff to discuss proposed repairs on Goodyear Slough outfall. On May 26th, Mr. McKinney worked on an update of the website which was posted live in late May. On May 27th, Mr. Chappell and the Water Managers met with Mr. Dan Smith from UC Davis to discuss wetland management and analyses of his seed sampling data. On May 31st, Mr. Takekawa had a monthly conference call on the NFWF Belden's Landing public access project.

On June 2nd, Ms. Collins and Mr. Chappell met with BCDC to discuss more details for the management plan update. On June 7th, Mr. Takekawa worked with Tech2U to complete the final check-out on our NAS system. On June 8th, Mr. McKinney completed an initial draft of the June newsletter which now is in review. Also on June 8th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a call with Valero, Dutra Group, and DFW to discuss possible beneficial dredge reuse placement of sediment on Lower Joice and DFW's Joice Island. Dutra Group will undertake a survey to see if the access is feasible.

Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update.

Since blocking the weirs on May 7th, Mr. Mouton has continued efforts to dry the island for upcoming fieldwork. A 4" pump was rented on May 14th to drain down areas, and it was operated at the eastern weir through May 18th. Since that time, Mr. Mouton has reinforced the blocks at the weirs, and he did trouble shooting on leaks. On June 8th, Mr. Takekawa worked with Mr. Mouton to bring 6 drums of diesel to the island for operations and inspected the ditch on the east side of the island – it appears that the main problem was a leaking gate. The northern unit is now drying out, and we should be able to operate machinery on the unit in July.

Mr. Andy Twiss assessed the 2 nonworking ATVs and determined that we needed 2 new carburetors. Mr. Eric Wylie assessed the bulldozer and he found that there was a problem with the central processing unit. He arranged for a technician with Pape Machinery to come out and diagnosis the problem on June 11th. Mr. Mouton successfully installed the new water pump on the water system, so it is now fully operational. However, his shower valve stopped working, so a plumber is coming out on June 10th.

On May 20th, biologists from Audubon Canyon Ranch surveyed the wader colony and found 19 Great Egret and 4 Blue Heron nests, compared to 72 and 17 in 2019 and 54 and 15 in 2018, so 2021 had only 25-33% of nests seen in previous years. However, the declines were like those seen in some other large Suisun Marsh colonies, so it may be a poor breeding year for waders in the Marsh and not a problem specific to LJI.

On May 28th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with Robert Eddings of CWA to discuss the approved foundation funding for a Lower Joice Island project on improved water management and the potential for increasing carbon sequestration.

e) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~

Mr. Chappell reported the SF Bay Restoration Authority Board of Director's fieldtrip in Suisun Marsh is now set for Friday, June 11th. Mr. Waters participated in the May Delta Conservancy Board meeting. The next SRCD Board meeting may be in person. Discussion ensued.

9. Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports ~

a) Agency Committee ~ No report.

b) Legal Committee ~ No report.

c) Personnel Committee ~ No report.

- Board Consideration of SRCD Resolution No. 2021-3 ~Update SRCD's Employee Handbook – Leave of Absence Section and consider paydown of a portion of SRCD staff accrued and lost leave – Due to Covid restrictions

SRCD staff has been unable to take accrued leave. The earned time should be credited, so a proposal was developed to consider these unprecedented situations. The Personnel Committee has suggested changes to the SRCD Employee Handbook- Attachment A that amends vacation leave where up to 40 hours may be paid out, if 2 weeks have been taken in the past year. The request must be in writing. A second change is for overtime, a comprehensive time off (CTO) exceeds a set level, it may be paid out. Each employee must keep track of their accrual time and request the payout. The second aspect of the recommendation is a one-time approval of payout to SRCD staff for lost leave accrued. The staff was consulted at the June 7th staff meeting on this proposal. Mr. Chappell read the draft resolution No. 2021-3; the resolution was approved by the Board will allow this to paid out this year. Mr. Waters made a motion to approve the Resolution, and Mr. Lenk seconded the motion, all agreed, and the motion carried by roll call.

- d) Finance Committee ~ Year-end closing is occurring for the 20/21 fiscal year. Mr. Chappell intends to bring the draft FY19/20 audit for the Board review and consideration at the July 14th 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 3:12 PM.