

## **MINUTES**

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

HELD REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 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  
Lalo Kwiat, Assoc. Director  
Edwin Limanto, DWR  
Kelli Perez, SRCD  
Melissa Riley, DFW  
Orlando Rocha, DFW  
John Takekawa, SRCD  
Jeff Taylor, SRCD  
Larry Wyckoff, DFW

**1. Call to Order** ~ Mr. Vaccarella called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:02 PM.

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

**3. Open Session** ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the March 10, 2021 Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the February 10, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the February 10, 2021 Board meeting was made by Mr. Waters 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 February 2021 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the February 2021 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$104,029.20 including claims for PAI reimbursements and a third installment of the audit payment. Mr. Chappell reported the February 2021 Lower Joice Island vendor claims included \$4,721.85 of normal operational expenses. Mr. Chappell also reported the February 2021 Water Managers Program vendor claims total as \$31,321.28 of normal operational expenses. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the three claims summaries, Mr. Waters 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 submitted by Mr. Orlando Rocha. **Joice Island Pig Hunt:** The wildlife area completed the first weekend of pig hunts at Joice Island and 2 out of 4 junior hunters were able to harvest a pig. All had a fun and safe weekend, which made it a successful first hunt. Hopefully, the remaining hunts also will be as productive for the hunters. **Wildlife area:** Spring burn season is here, and wildlife area staff, with the help of CWA, plans to burn 150-175 acres of Phragmites this spring. This is a continuation of the Phragmites control project, and the planned burn areas are especially dense with years of built-up thatch and we are excited to see the drastic change in habitat conditions after the burns.

Mr. Rocha reported last year during the March meeting that we had burned pond 17C, a very popular hunting pond, we expected complaints since the burn did such a good job of clearing out a lot of the Phragmites patches (hiding spots). Glad to report that we did not receive any complaints as the right amount of cover came back by waterfowl season and the birds responded liking the new open areas of habitat that the fire produced.

**Hill Slough:** The road construction could begin this spring depending on the settlement of the road surface, if it does begin construction will take 8-10 weeks. Habitat construction will continue in the ponds this summer and will be completed with the

breaches of the exterior levees by early fall.

**6. Department of Water Resources Report** ~ Mr. Edwin Limanto provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of February, 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 4.4 in the east to 13.3 mS/cm in the west. At the end of February, net Delta outflow was 10,525 cfs. The salinity standards for March were the same as February. Salinity values on March 7th were 4.87 to 12.73 mS/cm, while Delta outflow was 7,485 cfs. Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities at the Control Stations exceeded the Drought Response Fund (DRF) trigger at the end of February, so if a trigger is exceeded in March, April, or May, the DRF is triggered (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 and ditch clearing and dredging at the embayment, intake, and Hammond Pond for 2021-2022. Levees are being monitored after extreme high tides. The RGP3 authorization was received for routine maintenance. Planning continued for ditch clearing and dredging at the embayment, intake, and Hammond Pond in 2021 or 2022.

Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) routine maintenance 2021 planning is ongoing. Levees are monitored after extreme high tides, and the RGP3 authorization for routine maintenance was received. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) work continues on planning for 2021 routine maintenance and a plan to fix the sheet piles around the inlet and debris removal in the summer of 2021. The 2021 RGP3 permit was received, and 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. Gate 3 is still being refurbished to restore in August when another gate will be removed.

Reservoir capacity ranged from 30-51% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 23-93%. Most reservoirs are below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 49% of normal in the northern Sierra and 49% in the southern Sierra.

Mr. Chappell noted that Mr. Feldheim has recently resigned his position as the Suisun Marsh Branch Chief and the Suisun Marsh Branch will likely be dissolved in June with the planned reorganization of the DWR's Division of Environmental Management in July of this year. 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. The SMPA 5-year review is continuing and will include a historical contextual narrative of the SMPA Program implementation and what has been achieved in the past 5 years. On Tuesday, the Environmental Compliance Action Team met to discuss permits and obligations are being met. Discussion ensued.
- b) 2021 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update on the 2021 PAI program. A PAI program letter was sent out to the landowners indicating that no funds will be allocated for new 2021 projects, but existing approved 2020 projects will be funded as cost-share. The goal is to have full funding renewed for the PAI project for the 2022 work season. Discussion ensued.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There was a Principal's meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup> and another meeting tomorrow. Work has continued on estimating acreage of tidal restoration completed and underway, and current numbers indicate that we are on task to meet Suisun Marsh Plan acreages objectives.
- d) USACE Permits -- RGP3 & LOP Permit Update ~ Work continued on the 2021 permit applications. The 2021 RGP #3 2021 yearly applications have been sent to landowners. The February package was submitted on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March for review. The dredging permit letter was sent out to the landowners in mid-February. Discussion ensued.
- e) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa reported on the Water Manager Program. Jeff is continuing to process 2021 USACE RGP3 permits with 38 submitted for February. He sent exterior work notifications to the agencies on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and reported on gate checks for the spring salmon diversion restriction period including checks on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and March 9<sup>th</sup>. Letters for dredging, burning, and the pump programs went out after the last Board meeting, and a letter on Lepidium control was sent to landowners in mid-February.

During February, 3 portable pumps were deployed. A few pumps needed repairs that required attention of our pump vendor, and the repairs were completed on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Taylor's truck needed repair of the fuel transfer tank, the hose reel was repaired on Mr. McKinney's truck, and a utility box was repaired on Mr. Edmund's truck.

For the Individual Management Plan updates, we have drafted 67 of 125 plans: 49 are in review with landowners, 14 have been returned by landowners, 35 are in post-

review editing with Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa, and 19 are completed. Our goal is to complete the remaining updates by the end of April.

Ms. Collins is working with Mr. Todd Hallenbeck at BCDC to develop a workflow for water manager annual updates of Geomارش, their online mapping database. She also installed a new Sim card for data and added satellite background imagery on our Leica RTK/GPS survey unit. Mr. McKinney worked on updating the SRCDC website with a software update and repairs of formatting issues.

On February 12th, Mr. Takekawa worked with university partners and with Ms. Collins to submit a proposal on developing a regional *Phragmites* control plan submitted to the Delta Stewardship Council. On February 19th, Mr. Takekawa worked with USGS partners and Ms. Collins on a proposal to examine soil salinities across Suisun Marsh and the upper estuary that was submitted to the Department of Fish and Wildlife Prop 1 grants. On February 22nd, we had a service technician come to work on our office Wifi system. He recommended replacement of the unit, which we have arranged for in March. The new network attached storage is at the office and the bulk of our files have been transferred, so we will be switching over to it tomorrow, March 11th. On February 25th, Mr. Takekawa participated in the Delta Stewardship Council Delta Adapts workshop on climate change vulnerability and adaptation.

On February 26th, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Takekawa had initial discussion with a solar expert on upgrading the fish screen solar systems as part of the SF Bay Restoration Authority grant. We scheduled a field assessment visit for March 18th. On March 3-4 and 8th, Mr. Edmunds worked with Good Samaritan Electric to assess and initiate work on upgrading the electrical systems on the Essential Fish Screens with solar power.

On March 2nd, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a meeting with Mr. Forest Halford and Mr. Mike Casazza at the former Wings Landing clubhouse to discuss conservation and education priorities for the newly formed TerraMar Research Institute.

On March 2nd, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa had a discussion with engineer Mr. John Lavorik at Valero about potential beneficial reuse of dredged materials for Suisun Marsh wetlands. Valero dredges 35,000-50,000 cubic yards of sediment each year to keep their docks accessible. We discussed the logistics of establishing beneficial reuse of sediment in Suisun Marsh under the Bay Area Sedimatch program, and we proposed developing a short proposal to conduct a pilot project this summer to see its feasibility.

On March 8, the water managers and Mr. Chappell met with Mr. Dan Smith at UC Davis to discuss his analyses and results for seed production of wetland plants in Suisun Marsh.

Mr. Chappell provided an update on the Duck Club Management Plan updates effort. SRCD will need to hold a special public meeting on the update process to amend SRCD Local Protection Program, and consider CEQA categorical exemption, supported with a Board Resolution. He has suggested a special meeting in mid-April is likely good for the review with dates before the April board meeting or after the April 21 Spring Landowner Workshop. Discussion ensued. The Board set the date for the morning of April 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM.

- e) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. The duck season at Lower Joice Island ended with 3 hunters participating in the Veteran's Hunt on February 13-14 who bagged 4 ducks (2 wigeon, 1 teal, 1 canvasback) from 4 hunter days. On February 25<sup>th</sup>, we completed the clubhouse walkthrough with Club President Wynne Herron, and everything was in good shape.

Mr. Mouton initiated work on the habitat with an initial drain of the ponds and then initiated a leach cycle. We held a habitat committee meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> with Mr. Chappell, Mr. Mouton, and Mr. Takekawa and committee members Mr. Mike Lewis, Mr. Mike Kelly, Mr. Kent Hansen, and Mr. Doug Bartman. We discussed blocking the weirs across the middle of the club to dry out the north and keeping the south flooded this summer. This would allow SRCD to finish work improving the northeast corner of the property drainage and prepare for a marsh management burn at the end of March or early April. Added work may include installation of an existing blind in the Ropp Pond and mowing between the Betty and Belleci blinds to open up the areas more.

Mr. Andy Twiss is coming out today (March 10<sup>th</sup>) to repair our 3 old ATVs, and mechanic Mr. Erik Wylie is scheduled to come out Friday (March 12<sup>th</sup>) to tune-up the 3 pieces of equipment. Mr. Mouton also obtained a new cell phone to replace his previous phone which had ceased working. Both island boats are running well.

- 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. All the meetings have moved to online meetings. February was quiet with few updates. We have spring meetings set up for the staff meeting and the spring landowner meeting on Wednesday April 21<sup>st</sup> which is likely

going to be held remotely. We have been asked to help with a SF Bay Restoration Authority fieldtrip to the March. March 24<sup>th</sup> will be a Delta Conservancy Board meeting. 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 ~ There is a meeting with the Auditor on Thursday March 11th to discuss FY 19/20 year end of the fund balances and completion of the audit.
- e) Associate Directors Committee ~ No report.

**10. Adjourn** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Lenk and seconded by Mr. Waters; all were in favor and the motion carried by roll call. The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 PM.