

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022, AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Doug Bartman, SCF
Dennis Becker, SRCD Assoc. Dir.
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Robin Cheung, DWR
Nimal Jayasundara, DWR
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
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 9, 2022, Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the February 9, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2022 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 February 2022 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the February 2022 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$75,203.90. These claims included normal operational expenses with exception of claim #97 for Delta Growers pre-paid expense for bulk glyphosate purchase for the 2022 Phragmites Control Program. Mr. Chappell also reported that the February 2022 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$6,229.53. All expenses were normal operational expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the February 2022 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$28,950.44. These were all normal operational expenses. Finally, Mr. Chappell reported the February 2022 Special Revenue claims totaled \$3,674.78 for the portable pump program diesel costs. Mr. Waters moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

b) Budget Summary Review ~ 2nd Quarter FY 21-22 ~ Mr. Chappell reported on the SRCD 2nd quarter budget summary at 50% of the year. The Integrated Financial System Report was provided to the Board members for review and Mr. Chappell reported on each Department. Lower Joice Island operational expenses was 45% for salary and 35% for services and supplies. Income payments this year include reimbursements from the NAWCA grant, 10% FEMA retention, and the 2022/23 hunt group use agreement - resulting in a positive fund balance for the department. The SRCD Water Manager program is at 46% for salary and 48% for services and supplies. There is a significant fund balance, but ½ of the operations manager salary needs to be transferred to the General Fund Department. Fish screen maintenance shows -\$4,500 deficit for boom truck improvement expenses, which exceeded grant support amount. The NFWF grant includes expenses that need to be billed after this quarter, and the pest-weed program includes expenses that will be billed out this month. DWR Support grant includes a small amount still to be bill for reimbursement. The PAI fund has a large positive fund balance from landowner reimbursements received from DWR, but then paid in the month following to landowners. DWR Mein's Landing support Department includes expenses for caretaker salary and payment for levee repairs, this will be billed to DWR for SRCD reimbursement. These expenses for the Fish Screen grant has been submitted for payment to the granting agency. The SRCD General Fund salary

expenses are at 51% of budgeted amount, and services and supplies are at 35% of budget. Legal services costs were high for the past two quarters addressing BCDC public hearing and certification assistance. The landowner pump program usage indicates that maintenance costs are increasing with pump age, but those costs are offset with rental fees so far.

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

Joice Island Pig Hunt: Wild pig hunts at Joice Island started up this past weekend. We had 2 successful junior hunters out of 4 drawn with one of the others having a missed shot opportunity. The two successful hunters were able to harvest a total of 3 pigs. Hopefully the remainder of our hunters will continue to have similar success.

Wildlife Area: We've begun our wetland drawdown process, prioritizing ponds that we will be continuing enhancement projects in, like Pond 12. We are also running leach cycles in the Crescent Unit. The crew is moving forward in preparing for our upcoming projects this field season. We are continuing to disc in the 13 and 14 fields to get the site ready to plant 300 acres of native grasses for wildlife and pollinators in the Fall. Crew is continuing regular wildlife area maintenance, to include spraying and mowing. Additionally, we are moving forward with Phragmites control with our first spring burn of the season tentatively planned for next week.

Elk: In coordination with our Region 4 counterparts, our crew has been assisting in Tule Elk captures at San Luis National Wildlife Refuge. The elk we've captured have been moved to Grizzly Island, with the goal of moving 20 individuals in total. These animals will be the first additions to our herd since 2013. Capture efforts began on February 15 and we have since been successful in transporting 14 elk. We are hoping to capture and transport the remaining 6 animals next week. Most captures are young animals and numbers will be ~230 animals on the Wildlife Area, with 33 tags issued this fall. Discussion ensued.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Stewart provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet and introduced the new DWR senior engineer Nimal Jayasundara and DWR staff Robin Cheung. For the month of February, the salinity standard was 8.0 mS/cm for eastern stations and 15.6 mS/cm for western stations. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) Salinities in the Marsh ranged from 2.1 to 10.5 mS/cm, and the Drought Response Program salinity standards trigger values were exceeded. At the end of February, net Delta outflow was 11,526 cfs. The March 7th salinities ranged from 1.2 to 10.1 mS/cm. Delta outflow was 11,752 cfs, and Belden's Landing salinity monitoring station remains under construction through March and not collecting salinity readings.

The Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) maintenance activity plans for 2022 are ongoing including ditch clearing and dredging and at the Hammond Pond intake pond for 2023-2025. Levees are being monitored after high tides. Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) routine maintenance planning for 2022 is ongoing. Levee monitoring continues after high tides. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) 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 (SMSCG) were opened since March 8th, and one gate is out for refurbishment.

A summary report was included on invasive vegetation control efforts, including Russian Thistle, Phragmites, and Alligator Weed. A second report was provided on the Deficiency Period and levels triggering or ending the event which will be decided in May. The PDM at Control Station S-35 exceeded the 9.0 mS/cm trigger value at the end of February.

California reservoir capacity ranged from 32-69% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 27-70%. All reservoirs are below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 84% of normal in the northern Sierra and 74% 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 expenses which are currently up to date. The DWR support contract is scheduled to expire 30 June 2022, but DWR has agreed to process a no-cost time extension of this existing contract. The Principal's meeting occurred on February 10th. The 5-year review of the SMPA is progressing to draft with discussion of removal of some of the existing salinity monitoring stations (requiring an amendment to the agreement) with meetings on February 4th and March 4th. Steve believes the SMPA Drought Response Program funding may need to be increased to reflect the area of the Marsh impacted by increased salinities and areas on Suisun Slough being excluded (east of Suisun Slough). Also, biological monitoring component for wintering waterfowl monitoring has not been implemented for many years. SRCD believes GPS marking of waterfowl can serve as a surrogate to bird counting and provide valuable information on waterfowl habitat selection. SRCD prepared and submitted the SMPA 2022/23 requesting the second-year payment of the drought funds.

- b) 2022 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided a summary of the 2022 PAI Program. The program was announced on February 1st with submittal deadlines on March 31st and June 30th.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There are SMP Principal's meetings on February 10th and March 10th and the annual tidal restoration compliance report is currently being prepared by DWR.
- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continued to prepare for the 2022 RGP 3 permit administration. This season SRCD will be providing digital copies for monthly application administration, this will be a change to the RGP 3 renewal next year. The dredging permit was sent to landowners with a deadline in mid-May.
- e) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Taylor received the approved January package on February 10th and submitted the February RGP3 work request package on March 1st. Announcements were sent in February and early March for the 2022 PAI, diversion reporting, Lepidium control, and gate monitoring programs. The Water Managers continued meetings with clubs about upcoming work activities and installed pumps at several clubs. Mechanic Eric Wylie came out yesterday to work on the boom truck, and he diagnosed an electrical fault, replaced the batteries, and ordered a power takeoff cable replacement. The Water Managers conducted two gate monitoring checks, and Jesirae completed a 10-year renewal of our business radio license that we use for check-ins during gate monitoring. She also developed a worksheet summarizing available grant and contract hours for billing purposes, and she assisted in preparation of supporting documentation for the DFW and DWR invoices.

On February 10th, John and Steve met with the DWR Fish Restoration Program staff to discuss proposed work at Chipps Island, and the San Francisco Estuary Institute to coordinate work on a Suisun Marsh Landscape Planning Tool grant. On February 15th, SRCD participated in discussion of public access funding from DWR for Belden's Landing with Solano County Parks. We met with DWR Suisun Marsh staff to discuss moving the Hunter Cut salinity station to a better location nearby on the levee.

From February 15-22, Ms Collins and Mr. Takekawa worked with postdoc Drs. Adrienne Ernst and Karin Kettenring from Utah State and Dr. Virginia Matzek from Santa Clara and several students to clear revegetation plots of Phragmites stands at three wetlands (Lower Joice, Meins Landing, and Montezuma Club) as part of our Delta Stewardship Council grant.

On February 16th, an installer completed repairs on our Tuffshed storage shed and Tim began to install storage shelves. On February 23rd, Mr. Hagani and Mr. Takekawa coordinated a Mouse Group meeting to initiate planning for the first regionwide mouse survey to be conducted in July and August. We also met with Dr. Chris Potter to work on historic image analyses to document the changing extent of Phragmites in the Marsh.

On February 24th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended the California Waterfowl Hall of Fame where Mr. Chappell presented Mr. Rich Radigonda for induction posthumously. On February 25th, We conducted a fieldtrip with DWR staff to look at the feasibility of treating Phragmites at Blacklock Restoration with a spray-drone in the late summer 2022. Also, we attended an online meeting of the Waterfowl Working Group of the Central Valley Joint Venture. On February 28th, Mr. Takekawa had meetings with the Phragmites study team and the Belden's Landing public use group. Through February, Mr. Chappell, Ms. Collins, Mr. Hagani, and Mr. Takekawa worked on outlining and drafting initial sections of the Essential Fish Screen project final report.

On March 1st, Ms. Collins, Mr. Chappell, and Mr. Takekawa led a meeting at Mein's Landing with DWR manager Mr. Randy Mager, caretaker Mr. George Dana, and four experienced wetland managers to develop an interim management plan for the property. We toured the property and wrote up proposed work for 2022. Also on March 1st, Mr. Takekawa was interviewed by a Yale University student about my efforts to increase collaboration on conservation and studies of waterbirds in the flyways of Asia. On March 2nd, Mr. Hagani, Mr. Takekawa, and WRA's Katie Smith met with a statistician to discuss selection of sites for the upcoming regionwide mouse survey. Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Chappell, and Mr. Takekawa met with Island Club members at the office to discuss upcoming work to improve drainage. On March 3rd, I attended a meeting of the Delta National Heritage Area advisory committee.

On March 4th, we participated in submittal of 2 proposals that were submitted to the Department of Fish and Wildlife Prop 1 grant. On March 4th, I met with Westervelt and DWR to discuss delineating the boundary of the Tule Red property. On March 9th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with Mr. Mike Casazza at USGS to discuss use of telemetry to monitor waterfowl in Suisun Marsh.

- f) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. On February 18th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa completed the post season clubhouse walkthrough with club president Wynne Herron. Mr. Mouton continued to maintain the facilities on the island. After the end of the hunting season, he assisted the hunting club in removing their belongings, and he put away

equipment from the hunting season. He also initiated the first post-hunting drain and leach cycle.

On February 15th, SRCD submitted a marsh burning application for 34 acres that they approved on February 28th. Ms. Collins developed a map to show the proposed burning of 2 areas in the North Unit that also will be used for study plots for our blue carbon sequestration study. On February 20th, the Phragmites study team worked on the South Unit at Lower Joice to clear 10 study plots for revegetation.

On March 2nd, we held an update call on the Lower Joice Island blue carbon project and established locations for study plots. On March 5th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa spoke with Agnes Farres at the Water Board to discuss permit requirements for a pilot project for beneficial reuse of sediment on the Lower Joice levees. On March 7th, we met with Mr. Mouton to review maintenance needs at Lower Joice and develop a work plan for 2022.

Mr. Chappell reported that the Lower Joice Island hunt group requested an extension year or requested consideration of a new 2-year or 3-year use agreement. Mr. Vaccarella recommended Mr. Lewis and Mr. Waters for a subcommittee to consider extension of the use agreement.

- g) Suisun Conservation Fund ~ Mr. Doug Bartman, Annual Financial Report ~ Mr. Bartman provided the annual financial report on the Suisun Conservation Fund's support activities to SRCD. The Suisun Conservation Fund's reports are as of the 2019-2020 fiscal year audited period. The SCF has 3 funds which are 1) the unrestricted General Fund (SCF Fun Shoot fundraiser), 2) the Lower Joice Island (LJI) Fund to support SRCD's annual expenses for operations of Lower Joice Island, and 3) the Wheeler-Gillette fund, which provides 8% of its value annually to support SRCD's general operations. Mr. Bartman summarized SCF's annual contributions the SRCD for the LJI operation for the past 5 years. Mr. Chappell discussed the current LJI operational expenses, revenues, and anticipated needed contribution from SCF for the current fiscal year. Mr. Chappell provided an update from LPL Financial on the LJI and Wheeler-Gillette fund values as of Tuesday, March 8th, 2022. Both endowments continue to grow, the Lower Joice Island fund value was \$843,634 plus \$61,414 set aside in cash for this fiscal year's operational expenses. The Wheeler-Gillette funds value was \$256,189.03. There is currently adequate funds for SCF to be able to support SRCD. Discussion ensued.
- h) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell reported he and John had a meeting today with our counsel to discuss the BCDC approval of the amendment of the Individual Management Plans in the Local Protection Plan. Counsel Ryan FitzPatrick has been working with BCDC and has

assurance for a conditional certification to allow approval with implementation of support for regulations with Solano County. The final hearing is continued to March 17th for a final vote for approval of the updated duck club adaptive habitat management Plans. Mr. Chappell will attend the next SF Bay Restoration Authority meeting on March 18th. He also will attend the Delta Conservancy Board meeting on March 23rd. In addition, the spring landowner workshop is scheduled for April 20th.

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 ~ No report.

e) Associate Directors Committee ~ There may be a great reduction in rice production this year, and there may be a reduction in the pintail limit. Discussion ensued.

9. Adjourn ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Lewis; all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 PM.