

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021 AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Terry Connolly
Arnold Lenk
Mike Lewis
Jim Waters

OTHERS PRESENT: Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
Dan Lehman, SRCD Assoc. Dir.
Edwin Limanto, DWR
Kelli Perez, SRCD
Melissa Riley, DFW
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
Daja Stitts, DFW
John Takekawa, SRCD

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Lenk called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

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

a) Approval of the October 13, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the October 13, 2021, Board meeting was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Connolly; all were in favor and the motion carried.

4. Financial Reports ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for October 2021 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the October 2021 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$79,764.18. These claims included normal operation expenses with exception of claims 41-43 which were reimbursements to landowners for SMPA Agreement Drought Response Program expenses. He also reported that the October 2021 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$8,427.91. All expenses were normal operational expenses at the Island. Mr. Chappell reported the October 2021 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$25,049.08. These were all normal operational expenses. Mr. Connolly 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 ~ 4th Quarter FY 2020-2021 ~ Mr. Chappell presented the budget summary review for the 4th Quarter FY 2020-2021. SRCD General indicates salary at 104% of the budgeted amount, services and supplies were at 97%, and there was a net loss of \$19,538 in the General Fund, but these costs are covered by grant funding in other Departments. Lower Joice Island had 98% of projected expenses and operations at 129%. The hunting lease, NAWCA grant reimbursement, and payment of the FEMA levee repairs 10% retention – ended the year with a net income of \$20,990. These funds will be used to offset Island operational costs in the 21/22 fiscal year budget. The Water Manager program was at 98% of projected salaries, and services and supplies were at 118%. The balance showed a deficit of \$9.7K, but it will be offset once program expenses are fully billed. Fish screen maintenance showed a negative balance \$14,592, but this was a budgeted fixed asset expense and included a SRCD match for the boom truck renovation (\$20,000) was paid through the Measure AA essential fish screen grant.

The NFWF Mouse grant had \$59K in revenue and \$56K in costs, with a net for John's time of \$2,928. The SCMAD program had a balance of -\$0.01, but next year the landowners will pay SCMAD directly. The Pest-Weed Control program for Lepidium and Phragmites was discussed. The two CA Dept. of Food and Agriculture grants provided landowner cost share for the programs, and netted income \$29,669 to the General fund. The DWR Support Grant provided funds for DWR facilities improvement, and SRCD

received \$14K for grant administration and project delivery. The PAI fund included a 5% admin fee for SRCD, this year \$19K was made under that Department. The DWR Meins Landing Support grant included salary costs for a part-time caretaker and contracts for habitat and maintenance work. The Measure AA Essential Fish Screen grant provided a net income as the project was completed, and a second grant has been submitted with DU likely administering the contracting. The Portable Pump Program is in the Special Revenue account and has a rental fee of \$3/h and reimbursement of diesel costs. Some of the pumps are near the end of their useful life and a plan for replacement may need to be considered.

c) Board Consideration of SRCD Resolution No. 2122-2 to enter in an agreement with DWR for management support of DWR's Suisun Marsh owned properties related to implementation of the 2010 Fish Restoration Program ~ Mr. Chappell requested the Board consider the draft resolution to enter into a contract agreement with the DWR Fish Restoration Program. Mr. Waters moved to approve the resolution as read into the record, Mr. Connolly seconded the motion; all were in favor, and the motion carried.

5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~ The DFW report was provided by Mr. Orlando Rocha. Most of DFW's staff time is being taken up by the waterfowl check station these days, and hunters are happy to be back out chasing birds. DFW reconfigured the check station to improve hunter check in, and we are still following basic Covid procedures and keeping hunter and staff contact to a minimum. Hunters now approach the check station from the front and interact with staff through 3 large windows that are covered with plexiglass dividers.

With the lack of water in other parts of the state and many Wildlife Areas and Refuges having reduced capacity due to the reduced flooding, we expected to see more hunters and birds in the Marsh this year. Both assumptions were correct, and opening weekend was a big success. The only issue was the significant rain we saw on Sunday, and it really spread the birds out. By opening Wednesday, the November doldrums hit with full force. Hopefully the averages turn around sooner than later.

Waterfowl summary of bids harvested opening weekend 2021-2022 Seasons

2021/2021 Opening Weekend Summary					
Date	Total waterfowl Hunters	Total Ducks	Total Geese	Total Waterfowl	Average
10/23/21	383	1457	0	1457	3.80

10/24/21	107	347	0	347	3.24
Top Five Birds for opening Weekend 2020/2021					
Bird	Northern Shoveler	Green-Winged Teal	Mallard	American Wigeon	Gadwall
Number	753	671	174	103	38
2020/2021 Opening Weekend Summary					
Date	Total waterfowl Hunters	Total Ducks	Total Geese	Total Waterfowl	Average
10/24/2020	362	744	7	751	2.07
10/25/2020	128	139	1	140	1.08
Top Five Birds for opening Weekend 2020/2021					
Bird	Northern Shoveler	Green-Winged Teal	Mallard	American Wigeon	Gadwall
Number	297	241	218	70	22
2019/2020 Opening Weekend Summary					
Date	Total waterfowl Hunters	Total Ducks	Total Geese	Total Waterfowl	Average
10/19/19	391	903	1	904	2.31
10/20/19	129	173	4	177	1.37
Top Five Birds for opening Weekend 2019/2020					
Bird	Northern	Mallard	Green-	Gadwall	American

	Shoveler		Winged Teal		Wigeon
Number Harvested	530	294	167	29	21

Pheasants: Pheasant season opens on November 13th. We're hoping for a better opener than last year when our hunters shot 5 wild birds on the opening Saturday. Drought conditions didn't help when it came to bird production this year. Pheasant crow counts were consistent with past years, but nest success was where things changed. The broods I did see on the Wildlife Area only had 4-5 chicks on average.

DFW's apprentice pheasant hunts are scheduled to take place on November 20th, and we are still looking for volunteer dog handlers. If you know of anyone with a dog that would like to help new hunters enjoy a new experience, have them get in contact me. Both the Junior and the Family hunts are full and have people on the wait list.

Projects: Field 13 Planting; Pole line contract – contract for drains to north side of the wildlife area; DU Intake proposal; Montezuma Slough Contract. Discussion ensued.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Edwin Limanto introduced Jamel Stewart, a new engineer with DWR. Mr. Limanto provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of October, the salinity standard is 19.0 mS/cm. The Progressive Daily Mean Salinities in the Marsh ranged from 10.6 to 18.5 mS/cm. At the end of October, net Delta outflow was 13,127 cfs. The measurements at the Control and Compliance Stations did not exceed the trigger value of 20 mS/cm at the end of October. The heavy rain in October improved the salinity conditions for the Marsh. The November 10th salinities ranged from 5.0 to 13.5 mS/cm with standards of 15.5 mS/cm for eastern stations and 16.5 mS/cm for western stations. Delta outflow was 1,717 cfs, and Belden's Landing salinity monitoring station remains under construction.

The Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) maintenance activity plans for 2022 were ongoing, and plans were ongoing for ditch clearing and dredging at the Hammond Pond intake pond for 2022-2024. Levees are being monitored after high tides. Some routine maintenance has been started and will continue into early November including mowing, spraying, grading, and levee repairs. Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) routine maintenance planning for 2022 is ongoing. Levee monitoring continues after high tides, and routine levee maintenance was completed with monitoring for Russian thistle.

Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) coordination continued on removing debris at the intake as needed. Planning for 2022 routine maintenance is ongoing. Levees continued to be monitored after high tides. Routine maintenance was completed. The Suisun

Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG) operation has been suspended because of low salinity conditions. One gate is out for refurbishment.

California reservoir capacity ranged from 23-35% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 13-82%. All reservoirs remain below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 342% of normal in the northern Sierra and 221% 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. Weekly calls continue with DWR Branch Chief Mr. Dean Messer, including updates on monthly payment of SRCD expenses. The invoices for Water Manager expenses have been processed and submitted for payment, and DWR is current. The 5-year review of the SMPA is continuing, and the plan is to have a draft at the end of the year.
- b) 2021 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided a summary of the 2021 PAI Program. Reimbursements were completed for 3 landowners, and there will be more projects submitting reimbursement request this month. There are a few landowners with reimbursements submitted to SRCD, and several other projects that are currently under construction as a few projects have been delayed until next year by landowners. The 2022 PAI Program is budgeted for next year according to DWR.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There is a SMP Principal's meeting on November 18th, and there will be another meeting with a vegetation survey call next week. Delta Stewardship Council has been holding monthly meetings related to BCDC public access requirements in the Marsh.
- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ Work continued on the 2021 RGP 3 permit administration. There was no October package submitted to the USACE. The year-end work season report will be compiled in December. The 2021 authorized dredging projects can be completed until the end of November.
- e) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa reported on the Water Manager Program. SRCD's main office renovation is now scheduled to begin on November 15th, and we will be out of the office until early December. On October 26th, Guacamole Press came out to discuss where to move our microwave dish for office internet access from the current mounting post that will be torn down during the office renovation this month. Tim installed a new post at the back of the building, and Phelan ran a new network cable across the attic. The installation was completed this

morning. We also initiated an office clean-up in advance of the renovation. A dumpster was brought in and filled during the first week of November.

Jeff continued to work on USACE permitting and exterior work post construction inspections. Water quality sampling continued with sonde swaps and data management. Pump repairs were initiated with the mechanic coming out today. We are awaiting the boom truck hook block to improve the lifting capacity to clear customs. Jesirae worked with Steve and I to finalize the update of the Individual Management Plans and the letter to submit the final package to BCDC.

Phelan, Steve, and John attended the last weekly Roaring River flood-up calls with several landowners on October 13th. Steve and I attended the last state interagency drought call on October 20th. On October 14th, we met with Cliff Feldheim from Caltrout to discuss a project with UC Davis to sample fish food production in managed wetlands. Steve, Jeff, and I attended a meeting with the Delta Stewardship Council on an update of the managed marsh conceptual model. Steve, Jesirae, and I attended a call on our pre-proposal for the Delta Conservancy and received approval to submit a full proposal.

On October 15th, we submitted a proposal under the state Covid relief program for California Special Districts through their counties. Final allocations will be made by December 6th with allocations in early January. On October 20th, we had a call with Emma Mendonsa at DWR to finalize details of a new DWR support contract under the Fish Restoration Program Agreement.

On October 22nd, Jesirae completed the model for determining distance from managed wetland drains to fish sampling locations for the biomass analysis with DWR. On October 25th, I met with other investigators to discuss progress on our DSC Socioecological Phragmites Study. We are awaiting final contracts from the DSC for that project.

On October 26th, Jesirae and I met with Aaron Will at DU, Dr. Dennis Baldocchi and Dr. Ariane Arias Ortiz from UC Berkeley, and Dr. Karen Thorne and Dr. Scott Jones from USGS to discuss coordination of carbon sequestration studies at Hill Slough with work being done at Lower Joice Island. On October 27th, I had another work session with Steve Andrews and Richelle Tanner on the levee breach salinity manuscript.

On October 28th, I meet with Dr. Karen Thorne at USGS to coordinate on our Lower Joice Island Blue Carbon Project. On October 29th and November 1st, I participated on a panel to interview 4 candidates for a postdoc position with Utah State for our DSC Socioecological Phragmites Study. On November 3rd, I talked with Dr. Brenda

Grewell at USDA about her project to sample genetics of native and invasive Phragmites. Finally, a gate monitoring schedule was established for the winter, and the first gate monitoring survey was conducted on November 1st with good compliance.

- f) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued to maintain the facilities on the island and work on the habitat conditions. Marque has shifted to working weekends for the hunting season with Mon-Tue days off. The new habitat areas in the north unit have had good numbers of birds. The new Ropp and Spider blinds were found to have slow leaks, so we have obtained bilge pumps that will be installed so that they are available during the season. Mr. Mouton lit all the pilot lights in the clubhouse, but one of the refrigerators has not stayed lit and may need a new thermocouple. The hunting group moved into the clubhouse on schedule, and the full group hunted during the opening weekend with good success including taking mallards. The total was 49 birds including 6 mallards and 16 teal on the opening Saturday by 9 hunters (5.4 birds/hunter), and 10 were bagged on Sunday with 4 hunters (2.5 birds/hunter). The average for the first 3 weekends (29 hunter days) was 2.6 birds including 36 spoonbills and 27 teal.

In the last 2 weekends following the heavy rains, the club has taken far fewer birds, although there are good numbers of birds on the island. Our Blue Carbon Project team met on the island on November 8th to measure frames for water control structures and discuss the upcoming work for the project to be initiated in the spring. We will have 3 studies this year at Lower Joice Island including: 1) blue carbon with CWA and USGS, 2) Phragmites control with Utah State and 3 other universities, and 3) fish food production with Caltrout and UC Davis.

- g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa finished participating in the statewide drought call for wildlife area managers. Mr. Chappell reported that the Pacific Flyway Center received a \$1.4M grant from the Delta Conservancy for the Walk in the Marsh, and the effort to move the proposal to reality is continuing. Yesterday, Mr. Chappell attended the Board of Supervisors meeting, and our Delta Conservancy proposal was approved for support. He will participate in the SFB Restoration Authority advisory meeting on Friday. Discussion ensued.

8). Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports ~

- a) Agency Committee ~ No report.
- b) Legal Committee ~ No report.
- c) Personnel Committee ~ Mr. Lewis attended the triannual staff review on Friday November 5th.

- d) Finance Committee ~ There was a brief discussion between Mr. Connolly and Mr. Chappell about the need to consider paying down the SRCD CalPERS retirement contracts unfunded liability, but no action was taken.
 - e) Associate Directors Committee ~ No report.
- 9. Adjourn** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Connolly and seconded by Mr. Waters; all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 PM.