

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 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: Dennis Becker, SRCD Assoc. Dir.
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Robert Eddings, CWA
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
Dan Lehman, SRCD Assoc. Dir.
Edwin Limanto, DWR
Phelan McKinney, SRCD
Kelli Perez, SRCD
John Takekawa, SRCD
Jeff Taylor, 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. Mr. Lenk provided a comment about Laurie Lenk Frank Memorial Health Fair by the Solano Family Justice Center that highlighted recognition of Laurie Lenk Frank (his daughter who recently passed away) who originally organized the event.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Lenk opened the October 13, 2021, Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the September 8, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the September 8, 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 September 2021 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the September 2021 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$157,366.28. These claims included claim #28-30 for landowner PAI reimbursement and claim #35 for Drought Response landowner reimbursement. Claims #32 and #36 are vendor payments under the SFB Restoration Authority fish screen and NFWF mouse grants. Mr. Chappell reported the September 2021 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$5,549.79. All expenses were normal operational expenses with the largest claim amount for the caretaker's boat motor service and repairs. Mr. Chappell reported the September 2021 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$22,515.21. These were all normal operational expenses. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the claim summaries as presented, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

b) Budget Summary Review ~ 4th Quarter FY 2020-2021 ~ Mr. Chappell deferred the budget summary review for the 4th Quarter FY 2020-2021 until the November Board meeting.

c) Revised WM August Vendor Claim Summary ~ Mr. Chappell presented a revised Water Manager's Program August 2021 vendor claim summary. Claim 2021-11 for Anthem Blue Cross had an incorrect amount that was corrected reducing August claims. Mr. Chappell the Board to consider the revised amount of \$22,594.79. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the revised vendor claim summary, Mr. Waters 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 Ms. Lauren Thompson. The second half of the 2021 Tule elk season resulted in 24 successful hunts. Fieldwork resumed September 28th. Mowing was completed in the Type B areas, Goodyear, and Island Sloughs, and staff did ditch cleaning and swale work. A few water management repairs were done, mowing was completed, and Wetlands Construction finished swales in the Crescent Unit. The 16-18 fields were flooded and only need topping off. Bent Barrel and Laughing Mallard are flooding, Pond

11 is flooded, and Pond 20 is the last to be flooded. The ponds should be at shoot level early next week. Ponds 12G and 12H were flooded after pump repairs. Island Slough is flooding slowly and may remain below capacity. The Hill Slough Tidal Restoration has completed 2 breaches so far and an old water control structure has been removed. The rest of the exterior levee breaches will be completed in November.

Elk Season: The day after the last Board meeting, DFW began the 2nd half of our Tule Elk season. All 24 of our remaining hunters successfully harvested their animals, and we were able to resume field work by September 28th, giving us some extra time before we progressed with flooding up.

Grizzly Island: In the last few weeks before waterfowl season, our crew has focused on completing the most pertinent remaining field work, mostly mowing. We've completed the mowing at our type B areas, Goodyear Slough, and Island Slough. At Island Slough we also conducted some levee repairs to improve access, and we've done some pond work as well including ditch cleaning and swale work to improve water movement. On the wildlife area, we've done levee repairs to fix low spots out of parking lot 9. We've mowed in one of our newer blind units, Bent Barrel, as well as pond 12H, and continued mowing levee roads across the island. Wetlands Construction finished in Crescent Family unit, where they did swale work and replaced water control structures. PG&E replaced a line of old power poles that had been worn thin by the Elk in pond 12 to prevent fires.

Flood up: Flood up has been continuing mostly as planned. We started flooding the 17s, 16s, and 18s on the southern half of the wildlife area shortly after the last board meeting. These ponds are mostly at shoot level, with the 18s just needing to come up some final couple inches. Within Crescent Unit, Freitas 1 and 2 are at shoot level, Bent Barrel and Laughing Mallard started flooding up Friday and Monday respectively, and we will begin flooding Crescent Family Unit today. Pond 11 is finished flooding and was put on maintenance flow yesterday, so we can use Grizzly Ditch water to start flooding our last pond, Pond 20, today. We began flooding the remaining dry ponds on the northern side of the island last week and expect for them to be at shoot level by Friday or early next week. Unfortunately, PG&E power pole replacement delayed us beginning flood up in Pond 12. On the 5th, when power was restored to pump 6, we began flooding 12G & 12H, which are a little more than halfway done now. Once those ponds are finished, we will move on to getting the rest of pond 12 flooded.

In our type B areas, we have West Family unit at shoot level and anticipate putting Goodyear Slough into maintenance mode by tomorrow. Island Slough is continuing to flood relatively slowly and will likely not be completely flooded by opening weekend, meaning a reduced capacity.

Overall, we anticipate being almost completely fully flooded on opening day, with the

last few ponds in 12 and some parts of Island Slough to continue filling throughout the beginning of the season.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Edwin Limanto provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of October, the salinity standard is 19 mS/cm. The Progressive Daily Mean Salinities in the Marsh for September ranged from 11.1 to 19.7 mS/cm in the Marsh. At the end of September, net Delta outflow was 1,542. Salinity values for October 11th were 12.7 to 20.4 mS/cm, and Delta outflow was 3,443 cfs. Belden's Landing station remains under construction with hopes for completion this month. Also, some work was being conducted at Volanti Station resulting in no data being collected.

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 and will continue into early November including mowing, spraying, grading, and levee repairs. Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) routine maintenance planning is ongoing. Levee monitoring continues after high tides, and routine levee maintenance was completed. Seepage was detected on 2 sections of the M-Line levee that were repaired. 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, and debris will be removed from in front of the intake this week. Intake repair work was completed on September 30th. Planning for 2021 routine maintenance is ongoing. Levees continued to be monitored after high tides. Routine maintenance was completed. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG) continue to be operated due to high salinity conditions. One gate is out for refurbishment.

Reservoir capacity ranged from 22-37% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 13-85%. All reservoirs remain below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 15% of normal in the northern Sierra and 47% 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 continued to be administered. Weekly calls continue with 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 SRCD is current on payment. September 14th was the Environmental Compliance Team Meeting and Applicant's Compliance Meeting. Exterior work reports have been requested from the landowners and year-end dredging reports

are in progress. The 5-year review of the SMPA is continuing, but the September meeting was canceled with an effort to have a draft report at the end of the year.

- b) 2021 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided a summary of the 2021 PAI Program. There are a few landowners with reimbursements submitted to SRCD, and several other projects are currently under construction as a few projects have been delayed by landowners.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There is a SMP Principal's meeting on September 9th and will be another meeting on October 14th. DSC has been holding monthly meetings related to BCDC public access requirements, and SRCD has been attending those meetings to voice concerns about public access conflicts. There is a preference for improving existing public access sites including Belden's Landing. There is another meeting on October 20th to review the Tule Red public access plan.
- d) USACE Permits - RGP3 & LOP Permit Update ~ Work continued on the 2021 permit application administration. There was no September package submitted to the USACE. The Letter of Permission for the dredging program applications was approved on September 10th and it was sent out on September 13th. Dredging was light, but next year may have some larger projects. USACE's Mr. Will Connor has been promoted to the North Section Chief, so there will be a new person involved.
- e) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa reported on the Water Manager Program. Work began on September 8th on renovating the DFW Grizzly Island compound buildings. Progress has been slow, and we now don't expect our office to be renovated until November when we will be working from home for a few weeks.

Mr. Taylor completed USACE permitting and exterior work inspection reporting. Water quality sampling continued with downloads on September 10th, 13th, 28th, and 29th, sonde swaps, and data management. The Water Managers worked with landowners in September to schedule fall flooding for Boynton and Goodyear Slough, the Northwest Region, Roaring River, and Solano Cut and coordinated with Mosquito Abatement. Mr. McKinney, Mr. Chappell, and Mr. Takekawa attended weekly Roaring River flood-up calls with several landowners.

Maintenance work was completed on the boom truck, and a becket and hook block were ordered to improve the lifting capacity. All of the fish screens were cleaned, serviced, and reinstalled in mid-September. In late September, maintenance and repairs were completed on the navigation boat and gate monitoring boats, and an initial gate monitoring schedule was drafted. Pump bills were processed for 3 clubs (219, 425, 529). The Fall 2021 Salmon Restriction Letter was mailed out to

landowners in late September. Mr. McKinney assisted UC Davis staff on access to Blacklock for a continuing study on Phragmites.

Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa continued to attend semi-monthly DFW interagency drought coordination calls through the month. On September 13th, Mr. Chappell, Ms. Collins, Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Takekawa attended an invasive species fieldtrip associated with the Fall Landowner Workshop as well as the new Delta Stewardship Council supported Socioecological Phragmites Control Study. Also, preparations for the Suisun Marsh Fall Landowner Science Workshop were completed on September 13th and 14th, and the meeting was held on September 15th. The hybrid meeting was our first to include both in-person attendance at the Pete Smith Equipment warehouse and remote online. Participation was good with more than 130 in attendance.

On September 16th, Mr. Edmunds and Ms. Collins installed new staff gauges on Solano Cut. On September 17th, Mr. Takekawa held a job walk for work on Mein's Landing, and that work was contracted to a SRCD pre-qualified vendor with the lowest bid on September 24th. On September 20th, Ms. Collins and Mr. Takekawa met with Brett Harvey at DWR to continue progress on Suisun Fish biomass analyses, and the next week, Jesirae met to troubleshoot programming issues with Ramona Zeno at ICF. On September 24th, Mr. Takekawa was interviewed by a UC Davis grad student for a study on social aspects of wetland management, and later that afternoon, he attended a budget briefing about \$15 billion in state funding being allocated for climate adaptation .

On September 27th, Ms. Perez, Ms. Collins, and Mr. Takekawa attended a workshop on a \$100 million grant opportunity for Covid Relief for Special Districts which we are preparing for submittal on Friday, October 15th. Mr. Takekawa also attended calls on the Belden's Landing and Phragmites Socioecological Study projects. On September 29th, we received an email from BCDC about details for completing the final submittal of the Individual Management Plan updates, and we initiated work on the final submittal letter and documents. On September 30th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a public access dialogue meeting hosted by the Delta Stewardship Council.

In the last week of September and first weeks of October, Mr. Edmunds worked with Ms. Collins on fish screen solar installations to complete final wiring for cleaning brushes and actuators. On October 7th, SRCD submitted a Phase 2 grant entitled "Wetlands Without Water? Phase 2 - Rehabilitating Essential Fish Screens of Suisun Marsh for Habitat Resiliency" to the SFB Restoration Authority for \$3.3 million dollars. On October 8th, Ms. Collins worked with Leica technicians to update the software and firmware on the RTK GPS unit and controller. On October 12th, Mr.

Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a call with the Delta Stewardship Council on climate adaptation, and Mr. Takekawa attended two calls for planning of the Delta National Heritage Area.

- 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. The NAWCA project improvement work on the North Unit was completed. On September 9th, Mr. Taylor brought 2 blinds (used blinds donated by Wings Landing) from the compound to Pierce Harbor, and Mr. Mouton brought them out to Lower Joice. Mr. Mouton, Mr. Chappell, and Mr. Takekawa installed a blind in the Ropp Pond and replaced a bad blind in the Spider Pond on September 21st and 22nd. Mr. Mouton then removed the blockages from the pipes separating the North and South Units, mowed the final areas in the South Unit, and pulled all of the equipment from the field. On September 30th, Mr. Takekawa met with Mr. Cliff Feldheim of Caltrout to discuss a newly funded project on fish food production in managed wetlands and with USGS on carbon sequestration studies at Lower Joice Island. Mr. Mouton initiated flooding on October 1st and coordinated with Mr. Damon Gray at the Mosquito Abatement District who sampled the wetlands on October 4th. On October 4th and 5th, Mr. Marque and Mr. Takekawa worked on cleaning the clubhouse and yard for the Lower Joice Island club walkthrough held on October 8th for them to take possession of the clubhouse for the hunting season.
- g) California Waterfowl Association (CWA)~ Information Presentation: Conservation Easement & Endowments for Mitigation Sites ~ Mr. Chappell introduced the topic of conservation easements in relation to a potential proposal to restore part of Lower Joice Island. On Mr. Connolly's request a presentation from Mr. Robert Eddings on CWA's experience and role in conservation easements and endowment requirements. Mr. Eddings explained how CWA recently became an accredited land trust. Generally, each conservation easement is structured differently. CWA's roles can differ monitor and report on mitigation sites, they can hold or manage the easement for the mitigation property, or a variety of those roles. CWA's main role has been as the project monitor. Mr. Connolly asked Mr. Eddings several questions about how a project sponsor, landowner, environmental consultant, construction contractor, agency review team (DFW, EPA, etc), conservation easement holder, and long-term property steward process works. Mr. Eddings stated that the monitor is typically not the easement holder. There are typically 4 parties that handle the easement – typically agencies want multiple parties involved, but it could be one group. A concern is with ongoing liability – Mr. Connolly thought the long-term steward was liable for the exterior levee maintenance into the future. Mr. Eddings indicated that an endowment must be established with strict requirements that are significant, and the annual management plan is based on a 50- to 100-year-planning horizon. Expenses not covered in annual budgeting which puts the endowment in jeopardy would lead to a meeting to revisit the easement and

consider next steps. Mr. Connolly asked about estimated costs for restoration and is hunting allowed on the easement by CWA? Yes, there are compatible use clauses to allow for hunting and restorations cost vary, based upon site considerations. When the mitigation bank sale is complete, if the endowment is inadequate, and the mitigation company is no longer responsible for future unanticipated expenses. Further discussion ensued.

- h) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa continued to participate in the statewide drought call for state wildlife area managers. Mr. Chappell attended the SFBRA advisory meeting last month and was asked to give a presentation to the Solano County Orderly Growth and the local Audubon chapter on October 14th. 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 ~ No report.
- e) Associate Directors Committee ~ No report.

- 9. Closed Session** ~ The open session was closed at 3:10PM. Conference with Real Property Negotiators Pursuant to GOV § 54956.8. Property: Lower Joice Island in Suisun Marsh. Agency Negotiators: Terry Connolly and Arnold Lenk. Parties with whom the Agency's Negotiators may Negotiate: Mitigation Investment Holdings: Under Negotiation: Price and terms

- 10. Report Out of Closed Session** ~ Mr. Lenk stated that there was nothing to report.

- 11. 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 3:28 PM.