

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2023, AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Lauren Barthman-Thompson, DFW
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
John Eudy, SRCD Assoc. Director
Marina Guzman, SRCD
Kent Hansen, SRCD Assoc. Director
Charlene Lenk,
Kelli Perez, SRCD
Melissa Riley, DFW
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
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 2:08 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the April 12, 2023, Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the March 8, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Vaccarella asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 8, 2023 Board meeting. A motion 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 March 2023 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the March 2023 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$85,885.61. Most of these claims were normal SRCD operational expenses with health care costs a major component. Mr. Chappell reported the March 2023 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$8,566.83. All expenses were normal LJI operational expenses, including annual equipment service. Mr. Chappell reported the March 2023 Water Managers Program Department of the General Fund vendor claims totaled \$25,217.11. Claims were normal operational expenses and salaries for the program. Mr. Chappell reported the March 2023 Special Revenue Department vendor claims totaled \$5,886.37. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the four vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Lenk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

b) Fiscal Year 21/22 Bad Debt Write offs ~ Mr. Chappell presented the FY 21/22 bad debt write offs. These are unpaid bills sent to SRCD landowners for the annual RGP 3 Permit Administration and Program Support Fees. For delinquent invoices, SRCD's has an established policy and penalties to allow landowners to return to good standing with SRCD. The bad debts for 4 properties in the marsh total \$5,896 for the past 3 years. Mr. Connolly made a motion to approve the write-off, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

c) SRCD Resolution No. 2223-2 ~ Authorizing SRCD Executive Director to enter into grant #SFB0046-RA016 with the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority for Phase II Rehabilitation of the Essential Fish Screens of Suisun Marsh ~ Mr. Chappell presented the background requesting authorization to accept the grant with SFBRA for Phase II of the fish screen rehabilitation project and read aloud the draft resolution. Mr. Connolly made a motion to accept the resolution as presented, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried by roll call vote.

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

Joice Island Pig Hunt: Wild pig hunts are continuing on Joice Island. Since the last

Board meeting, DFW has had 20 pig hunters with 4 of them successfully harvesting one pig each. That brings our total harvest this year up to 7, which is about half of the pigs harvested this time last year. Spring rains have kept our ponds flooded and higher than ideal. We have had to close half of the parking lots to vehicle access. This along with the wet weather has likely made the hunts more difficult these past few weeks. Hunters are still leaving positive comments and see pigs regularly.

Wildlife Area: DFW has been taking advantage of the low salinities to perform leach cycles in the Crescent Units with plans to drain them later this summer. With the help of CWA, DFW has completed one small spring burn on Long Point Land unit, and will do another burn this week, if the weather allows. With the rain finally letting up, DFW will continue general mowing and maintenance across the Wildlife Area. The crew has readied our spray rigs in preparation to begin spraying, targeting perennial pepperweed and other weeds.

Pump 2, which aids in draining Poleline Ditch, has been rebuilt and is operational. Pump 3, which serves the same function has been removed and is currently being rebuilt as well. Pump 7, which drains the upland fields, is running until it can drain Tule Red Ditch enough to remove the pump from the coupler so it can get rebuilt. We've been completing pheasant crow count surveys when the wind allows and have seen a decrease in average crows per station. With parts of the upland fields disced in preparation for our planting project, and other parts flooded, there isn't currently a lot of pheasant habitat in the upland fields. DFW is actively submitting permits for the Joice Island bridge repair which is slated to begin in September.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Jamel Stewart provided and read the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of March, the salinity standards in the Marsh were 8.0 mS/cm for the eastern stations and 15.6 mS/cm for the western stations. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 0.2 to 4.9 mS/cm. At the end of March, net Delta outflow was 100,383 cfs. As of April 9th, salinities ranged from 0.2 to 3.2 mS/cm with a salinity standard of 11.0 (east) to 14.0 mS/cm (west). Delta outflow was 69,468 cfs.

The Roaring River Distribution System USACE maintenance package was submitted on March 14th. Levees have been inspected weekly for erosion. Some areas still have sandbags and plastic on them. Levees continue to be monitored with extreme tides and rain events.

DWR received authorization for the RGP 3 work application for the Morrow Island Distribution System routine maintenance and levee repairs. DWR is working to remove a fallen tree on the MIDS M-line levee. Levee monitoring continues after high tides and rain events. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) routine maintenance dredging was planned for 2023, and the 2023 RGP 3 application was authorized. Dredging sediment

from the intakes and ditch clearing is planned for 2023. No California Ridgway's Rails were detected in surveys completed at GYSO and the Morrow Lane Bridge which were reported to SRCD. Levees continued to be monitored after high tides and rain events. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates tidal operations remain suspended due to low salinity conditions, and Gate 1 remains out for refurbishment.

A water quality station update was provided. The salinity monitoring stations were inspected for safety. Options are being considered for safety improvements at the stations identified as deficient. Maintenance is no longer being done at the closed stations since February 16th. Data quality will be assessed starting this week. The drought response criteria was not triggered in March.

California reservoir capacity in March ranged from 33-81% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 45-97%. Most reservoirs are above historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 133% of normal in the northern Sierra and 179% 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. Monthly calls continue with DWR Branch Chief Mr. Dean Messer including updates on monthly payment of SRCD contract expenses. The 5-year review of the SMPA is completed with a draft report being prepared by USBR and DWR. On March 14th, there was a quarterly ECAT and Applicants Compliance Team meeting.
- b) 2023 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the PAI Program. Fifteen projects were reviewed on April 6th and SRCD will forward the technical review recommendations to DWR for approval. There is one remaining 2022 project for reimbursement. All other landowner PAI reimbursements have been processed for payment.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. Regular monthly meetings for the SMP Principals continues. The next Principal's meeting will include discussion of proposed RGP 3 work activities at Chipps Island, to support future tidal restoration planning.
- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continued to administer the RGP 3 permit. On April 3rd, SRCD processed all landowner applications submitted in the monthly package. On April 5th the USACE approved the March package. The 10-year LOP Dredging Permit expires at the end of the 2024 work season. SRCD had a meeting with BCDC on March 7th to discuss timing of the 2023 LOP program

and permit application procedures. The timeline will be moved up this year, thus requiring landowner permit requests will be submitted earlier. Also, the State Lands Commission 10-year dredging lease is expiring, SRCD has begun the renewal process. SRCD has processed a special RGP 3 application package for the DFW Grizzly Ditch fish screen rehabilitation project.

- e) Water Manager (WM) Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Water Manager program update. The Water Managers continued submitting monthly RGP 3 work applications with 29 submitted to USACE in March. The Water Managers sent out the 2023 dredging program letter and compiled 11 potential projects to date, delta smelt diversion restriction letter, and workshop flyer. The Water Managers met with several clubs on upcoming infrastructure work and also installed and tended to pumps at several clubs. The Water Managers also assisted with final preparation of 2023 PAI applications for the March submittal. Gate monitoring was completed on March 16th and April 3rd with reports submitted immediately afterwards.

On March 13th, Mr. Hagani and Mr. Takekawa led a meeting of the NFWF mouse project to discuss Phase 2 and 3. On March 14th and 28th and April 7th, Ms. Collins and Mr. Takekawa continued to have regular meetings with Mr. Brett Harvey on managed wetland drains and food production effects on fish biomass in Suisun Marsh. On March 15th, SRCD held our second triannual staff meeting and review.

On March 16th, Jesirae Collins met with Todd Hallenbeck about BCDC Dredging & GIS layers, and work on a dredging layer and standard operating procedure was initiated. Ms. Collins completed 2021 and 2022 updates to the new individual management plans and continued to convert the new maps from ArcGIS to ArcPro. Also, on March 16th, Mr. Takekawa hosted DWR staff to visit the Tule Red Restoration site and discuss maintenance. On March 17th, Ms. Collins, Mr. Chappell, and Mr. Takekawa helped to organize a Mein's Landing habitat committee meeting with a final recommendations report to support DWR habitat work this year.

On March 21st, Mr. Takekawa attended an online international workshop on communications for our Phragmites socioecological study and led a team meeting on March 22nd. Also on March 21st, he discussed maintenance work with the Fish Restoration Program team and delaying levee treatments with herbicide because of inclement weather. On March 22nd, he provided a talk on wildlife careers for the California State University San Marcos field class on Grizzly Island. Also on March 22nd, Ms Collins and Mr. Takekawa attended a meeting to discuss GIS coverages for the SFEI Suisun Marsh Landscape Tool project, and Ms. Collins, Mr. Hagani, and Mr. Takekawa met with the Phragmites Control Socioeco Study Team.

Throughout March and early April, Mr. Takekawa continued to meet with the Central Valley Joint Venture organizing committee to develop the upcoming science meeting for May 9th and 10th to be held at Pete Smith's Warehouse. In the first week of April, Mr. Takekawa developed a subcontract with Steve Andrews at RMA to assist us with assessment and modeling of climate change effects for an infrastructure resiliency project supported by a Delta Conservancy grant. On April 3-5, Mr. Edmunds attended boom truck class in Sacramento and passed his written test. He will take the operations test in early May. On April 4th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended the second SRCD Associate Director's update call. Also on April 4th, Mr. Edmunds completed a draft Russian Thistle Management Plan and forwarded it to our pest control advisor, Dr. Krista Hofmann at DFW.

On April 11th, Mr. Hagani submitted our paper discussing our spray drone herbicide work to the journal Remote Sensing. Also, he submitted our revision of the Phragmites remote sensing paper to Frontiers. He continued work on our salt marsh harvest mouse LiDAR habitat paper and drafted the progress report for our NFWF Phase 2 mouse grant.

Staff is continuing to work our upcoming Suisun Marsh Spring Landowner Workshop on April 19th. This year is the 60th anniversary of the Suisun Resource Conservation District, and we planning to commemorate the occasion by having a few dedicated talks about the history of SRCD as well as a few other celebration events.

- f) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued to maintain the facilities and habitat on the island. Mr. Mouton completed repairs on the sidewall of the shed along Montezuma Slough and repaired the roof. On April 4th, mechanic Erik Wylie came out and serviced LJI's equipment. The next day, Andy Twiss worked on the 3 ATVs and was able to get them running, but they are nearly 20-years old and past their useful life, so we are investigating the availability of another used UTVs. Mr. Mouton fixed cleats broken in March windstorms on the caretaker boat, and he repaired the weather seals and windshield on the District truck. On April 7th, he transported 5 new canal slide gates to the island for installation under the blue carbon habitat improvement project. On April 10th, the Water Managers, Mr. Mouton, Mr. Hagani, and Mr. Takekawa conducted a controlled burn in the north unit at Lower Joice Island. Despite the wet conditions throughout the spring and light winds on the day of burning, we had a good burn of 19.3 acres. In addition, we were able to remove two logs from an exterior water control gate in the north unit. Mr. Mouton also initiated mowing of the compound area and exterior levees.
- g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Steve's term on the SFBRA Advisory Committee ended and so he is no longer attending meetings.

The Spring Landowner Workshop and SRCD 60th Anniversary celebration is April 19th with a fieldtrip from 9-11 AM on April 20th starting at Hill Slough. Mr. Chappell and Director Lewis presented the draft 60 years of SRCD history for the upcoming workshop. SRCD board members provided input and additions to the anniversary presentation.

8). Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports ~

- a) Agency Committee ~ No report.
 - b) Legal Committee ~ Consideration of Potrero Hills landfill expansion status may warrant a letter from counsel if clarification is not coming from the landfill.
 - c) Personnel Committee ~ No report.
 - d) Finance Committee ~ Mr. Terry Connolly reported that we are continuing to work on the annual audit details.
 - e) Associate Directors Committee ~ Appreciate the monthly Associate Director meetings.
- 9. Adjourn** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Lenk, all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 PM.
- 10. Reconvene** ~ The meeting was reconvened at 4:08PM at the request of Mr. Vaccarella. Mr. Lenk announced his retirement from the Board of Directors after 22 years of service.
- 11. Adjourn** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Connolly. All were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:18 PM.