

MINUTES

**SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2023 AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533**

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Tony Vaccarella
Kent Hansen
Mike Lewis
Jim Waters

OTHERS PRESENT: Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW
Dennis Becker, SRCD Assoc. Director
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Marina Guzman, SRCD
Rhiannon Klingonsmith, DWR
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 2:02 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the June 14, 2023, Board of Directors meeting and welcomed H. Kent Hansen as a new Board Director replacing Arnold Lenk who recently retired from the Board. Mr. Vaccarella asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the May 10, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Vaccarella asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 10, 2023 Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Waters; all were in favor and the motion carried.

4. Financial Reports ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for May 2023 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the May 2023 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$66,887.81. Most of these claims were normal SRCD operational expenses with claims for SRCD annual Audit and DWR contract reimbursable expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the May 2023 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$9,162.87. All expenses were normal LJI operational expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the May 2023 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$26,377.69. Claims were normal operational expenses and salaries for the program. Mr. Chappell reported the May 2023 Special Revenue Department vendor claims totaled \$4,830.84. Claims were for pump program diesel purchase and oil for pump maintenance. Mr. Waters moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

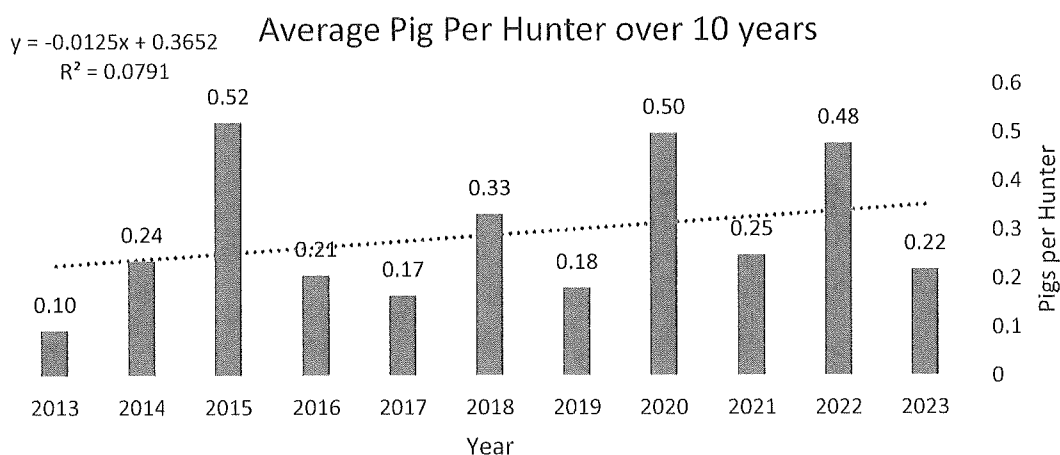
b) Review SRCD Draft Budgets FY 23-24 ~ Mr. Chappell presented the draft FY 23-24 Budgets. The SRCD General Fund operating expenses and salaries are separated from individual program grant revenues and expenses. Last year's increases in staff salaries and benefits are included. Expenses projections are conservative for the draft budgets, and the current SRCD General Fund projections indicate a surplus in the next fiscal year. SRCD has a CalPers retiree unfunded liability of \$78,687 and it may be paid down as a SRCD discretionary payment. The Board directed Mr. Chappell to include the paydown of this unfunded retiree liability in the revised budgets. Lower Joice Island (LJI) operational expenses are offset by the Suisun Conservation Fund, and a used UTV is budgeted for the coming year. The LJI use agreement revenue is included in the budget as is the blue carbon grant, which offsets a portion of LJI staff costs. The Water Manager Program is funded under the SMPA contract with DWR and USBR is reimbursable and includes 3.5 positions and operational expenses. Discussion ensued.

c) Board Authorization to enter into a new five-year Copier Lease & Maintenance Agreement for the Water Managers ~ Mr. Chappell presented the new copier

agreement for the Water Managers office. The currently lease will be expiring later this year and new lease agreement will be higher per month but a lower cost per copy. Mr. Waters moved to approve the new copier agreement, Mr. Lewis 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.

Joice Island Wild Pig Hunt: Joice Island pig hunts have concluded for this season, and hunter success this year was lower than last year but similar to averages in years passed. We had 50 hunters and 3 no shows. Of the 50 hunters, 11 successfully harvested one pig each, resulting in an average of 0.22 pigs per hunter. This is much lower than last year when we saw great success. While it's hard to know exactly why we saw this big decline in hunter success, high water levels due to spring rains kept ponds high and forced us to close parking lots during some hunt weekends which likely played a role. On average, hunter effort was slightly less this year as well. Last year, the average time spent hunting in the field was 14 hours compared to 13 hours this year.



Elk. Applications for our tule elk hunts closed a week and a half ago and were drawn and posted last night. DFW issued the same number of tags again this year as the last three, with 33 total tags consisting of 7 bulls, 10 spikes, and 16 antlerless. The hunter who purchased the fundraising tag in 2020 and 2022 will return again this year and attempt to take another bull via archery this August.

Wildlife Area: Contractors are continuing work across the wildlife area, including completing the raising of the Montezuma levee at its lowest spot at pond 4, and disking the upland fields in preparation for the planting in our upland nesting and pollinator project. The wind hasn't let up much in the last month, so finding opportunities for spraying perennial pepperweed has been difficult, but we've sprayed when able. Wildlife area staff are continuing to mow levees, and as ponds continue to dry, we hope to be able to get into the ponds for mowing soon. We are starting to see more duck broods on our summer water, with a few mallard broods utilizing our new reverse cycle brood ponds. On the most recent elk survey, 19 calves were seen, and we expect a few more late calves to still hit the ground.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Jamel Stewart and Ms. Rhiannon Klingonsmith presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of May, the salinity standards in the Marsh were 11.0 mS/cm for the eastern stations and 12.5 mS/cm for the western stations. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 0.1 to 2.1 mS/cm. At the end of May, net Delta outflow was 68,222 cfs. As of June 12th, salinities ranged from 0.1 to 1.4 mS/cm with no salinity standards. Delta outflow was 51,291 cfs.

The Roaring River Distribution System annual maintenance was initiated on May 15th and completed on June 12th. Levees continue to be monitored with extreme tides events. A levee inspection and environmental surveys were completed on May 11th. Both drains were opened on June 5th and will remain open until water levels subside.

The Morrow Island Distribution System routine maintenance and levee repairs will begin by the week of June 19th including erosion repairs, gravel additions, and grading. DWR staff conducted a site visit on May 17th to complete environmental survey and mark erosion areas. DWR continues working with Union Pacific Railroad and landowners to address Morrow Lane Road maintenance needs.

Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) maintenance will occur later in the summer. On May 17th, DWR staff met with SRCD staff at the facility to discuss options to remove sediment build-up. DWR is planning to dredge in front of the intakes, remove sediment from the pipes, and clear ditches to reduce sediment build up. Monthly debris removal was planned for twice a month, and levees continued to be monitored after high tides and rain events. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates flashboards were removed on June 11th, and Gate 1 remains out for refurbishment. It will be swapped with Gate 2 from November 8-17. Discussion ensued.

The Progressive Daily Means at the control stations were below drought trigger values at the end of May. California reservoir capacity in May ranged from 39-98% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 27-101%. Most reservoirs are above

historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 123% of normal in the northern Sierra and 161% 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. Edits were provided by the BOR for the SMPA 5-year report. If it is determined that the 2015 SMPA needs to be revised, the SMPA Negotiators group will be convened and SRCD will have to engage counsel to assist in document and contract review.
- b) 2023 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the PAI Program. Fifteen 2023 projects were received by SRCD and submitted to be reviewed on April 6th by the Technical Review Panel. The technical review panel recommended 8 projects for DWR for approval while 3 were approved today, with 2 needing more information, and 2 were still under revision. The final 2022 PAI project was recently submitted for reimbursement. The deadline for the 2nd 2023 application submittal is June 30th.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. Regular monthly meetings for the SMP Principals continue. The last Principal's meeting was June 8th, and the Applicant's Compliance Team meetings will now be the month before the ECAT meetings.
- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continued to administer the RGP 3 permit. SRCD processed all landowners RGP 3 applications and submitted them in the monthly May package. The 2023 LOP dredging permit applications resulted in 15 applications and ~50,000 cys of proposed. The marsh development permit was submitted to BCDC for dredging and a separate BCDC permit for all fish screens will be submitted this summer. Also, the State Lands Commission 10-year dredging lease is expiring, and SRCD has begun the renewal process.
- e) Water Manager (WM) Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Water Manager program update. Mr. Taylor prepared and submitted the monthly RGP 3 work applications at the end of May which were approved and returned on June 5th. The Water Managers continued meeting with clubs on water conditions and infrastructure work and tended to pumps on several clubs. Mr. Taylor completed the BCDC dredging application package with photos, maps, volumes and cross-sections, and he submitted an application to renew dredging permitting with State Lands. He informed the eligible landowners of the 2023 drought response funding by letter. The Water Managers conducted troubleshooting on the gate monitoring boat

outboard motor. Mr. Edmunds continued completing miscellaneous repairs on the fish screens, and Ms. Guzman continued work on organizing SRCD's archives in the shed as well as establishing water level data collection on 4 clubs in the Delta Conservancy project. She repaired the equipment in the fire cache and fixed a tire on her truck.

During the past month, Mr. Takekawa had several meetings to complete 2023 PAI project reviews and adjustments from the first round of proposals. He worked with Ms. Perez and NFWF program manager Anne Butterfield on the submittal of invoices for our work on our NFWF Mouse grant. He continued meeting with cooperators on development of a proposal to examine the value of wetland ecosystem services including zooplankton fish food and blue carbon sequestration in light of changing salinity conditions with climate change. With Mr. Hagani's imminent departure, we had a team meeting for the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse project. Also, Mr. Edmunds and Mr. Takekawa continued regular meetings with Krista Hoffmann to work on finalizing a formal Russian Thistle treatment plan.

In the past month, Ms. Collins completed BCDC Management Plan updates as well as updating Geomark, and she completed converting club maps from ArcMap to ArcPro. She worked with Mr. Taylor to prepare a dredging map layer to submit with permit applications. She worked on updating the website and set up a meeting with our webmaster to conduct site maintenance. She circulated a nutria notice to the clubs on mailchimp and posted it on SRCD's website. She worked on data transfers from Mr. Hagani. On May 18th and June 1st, Mr. Takekawa and Ms. Collins continued working with Brett Harvey (DWR) on analyses relating fish biomass with their proximity to managed wetland drains.

June will be the last month of work for Mr. Hagani who will be heading to the University of Michigan for a PhD program. He submitted the final manuscript on Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse habitat selection to Landscape Ecology for review, and the paper he led on examining the extent of Phragmites with remote sensing imagery was published in *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*. He worked on transferring information on GIS data to Ms. Collins, and he assisted Ms. Guzman with water logger installations and data collection. He worked with Mr. Edmunds on a test survey drone flight on Russian Thistle. Mr. Takekawa will be advertising for a replacement for his position.

On May 15th and June 12th, the Phragmites Socioeco Study Team held their monthly coordination meetings. On May 16th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a meeting to discuss work needs under the DWR Fish Restoration Program. On May 19th, Mr. Takekawa worked with Steve Andrews on initiating modeling assessments for the Delta Conservancy infrastructure improvement project.

On May 22nd, Mr. Chappell, Ms. Collins, Mr. Takekawa, and Mr. Dana attended a call for the transition of the manager of DWR's Mein's Landing from Randy Mager to Grayson Sandy, and the next week discussed the status of 2023 permits. Also on that May 22nd, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a call with DWR's Rosemary Hartman and John Durand (UCD) to discuss summer Montezuma Salinity Control Gate operations. On May 26th, Mr. Taylor completed and submitted a final gate monitoring inspection report.

On Friday June 2nd, Mr. Edmunds attended the annual meeting of the RD 2129 Reclamation District. On June 7th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with DFW's Brian Olson about a project with The Nature Conservancy and Audubon California to support semi-permanent wetland management in Suisun Marsh. They will be providing funding support to SRCD to serve as a liaison for the project implementation. On June 7th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with program coordinator Natasha Daniels on our essential fish screen Phase 2 contract. On June 9th, Ms. Guzman, Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Takekawa met to coordinate collection of water level logger data for the Delta Conservancy infrastructure project. On June 13th, Mr. Hagani conducted a levee survey of the Tule Red Restoration.

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. From May 12-15, he and the water managers completed hauling a dumpster load of trash from the island. The pontoon boat shared with Miramonte Club was given a major overhaul with 300 h service, scraping the bottom and painting the boat as well as repairing diamond plate on the top deck and re-installing pushers completed by Mr. Mouton with assistance from the Water Managers. He continued mowing the yard and outer levees, repaired the bumpers on the dock at Pierce Harbor, and landscaped the boat ramp and parking lot edge. He conducted another leach cycle. Mr. Mouton and the Water Managers also completed the installation of slide gates with flaps on 6 risers with assistance of the water managers as part of the blue carbon project.

g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell attended the Delta Conservancy Board meeting on May 24th, and priority projects were discussed for the Delta for an upcoming possible bond proposal. The Fun Shoot will be held at Bird's Landing on Friday, July 28th.

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.

- 10. Adjourn** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Hansen, all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 PM.