

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2022, AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

DIRECTORS PRESENT: **Terry Connolly**
Mike Lewis
Jim Waters

OTHERS PRESENT: Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW
Dennis Becker, SRCD Associate Director
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Mike Frost
Marina Guzman, SRCD
Nita McHugh, DFW
Loren Roman-Nunez, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
John Takekawa, SRCD
Richard Vanderkous, SRCD Associate Director

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Connolly called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:01 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Connolly opened the October 12, 2022, Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the September 14, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the September 14, 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 September 2022 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the September 2022 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$127,276.18. Most of these claims were normal SRCD operational expenses except for claim #29 for the fish screen grant, claim #30 for Ag-Air for Phragmites aerial spraying, and claim #32 for DWR Meins Landing Support Contract. Mr. Chappell reported the vendor claims total for September 2022 Water Managers Program as \$35,136.75 except for claim #24 to Boat Specialists for a new 25 hp outboard motor for the gate monitoring boat. Mr. Chappell also reported the September 2022 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$7,986.99 all normal operational expenses. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

b) Board Consideration of current District's Conflict of Interest Code ~ Mr. Chappell requested a postponement of this item to the November Board meeting. The Board previous motion included a request to clarify that the SRCD Conflict of Interest Code applies only to the Suisun Marsh. However, County Counsel reviewed the Form 700 filing requirement, and determined the sphere of influence includes a 2-miles radius around the boundary. This will be brought back to the Board for consideration at the November Board meeting.

c) Board Consideration of Fixed Asset Disposal: Mercury 25 hp outboard motor ~ Mr. Chappell presented a request to dispose of the Mercury 25 hp outboard motor (ID # OOT285869). The outboard motor is not cost effective to repair and must be replaced. Mr. Waters made a motion to approve the disposal of the fixed asset, Mr. Lewis seconded it, all were in favor and the motion passed.

5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~ The DFW GIWA report was provided by Nita McHugh.

Elk Season

After the last Board meeting, DFW began the 2nd half of our Tule Elk hunts, with 15 tags

left to fill through September. We finished the season with an 100% success rate across all hunt periods. The last group of hunters harvested their cows on September 27th giving us a little extra time to complete some field work before starting to flood up.

Grizzly Island

With little time remaining until opening weekend of waterfowl season, GIWA staff has been focused on completing as much last-minute pond mowing as possible. We've targeted our efforts on the northern side of the wildlife area using both of our mowers to knock down Russian Thistle to better show water in our ponds. Moving forward we'll continue to mow levee roads and parking lots across the wildlife area. Additionally, we completed a pipe replacement in 17B unit and conducted levee repairs out of parking lots 12 and 8. We reset blind #17 in Crescent Unit and will be resetting blind #1 in Laughing Mallard later this week before starting the water. At Goodyear Slough, we repaired hunter crossings and mowed the levee roads and completed ditch cleaning at West Family Unit. Later this week, we'll finish preparing the waterfowl check station for opening weekend and conduct training to ready new staff members for waterfowl season.

Flood up

Flood up is going as planned, and we are still anticipating being fully flooded by opening weekend of waterfowl season. Island Slough and West Family are at shoot level and circulating. On Joice Island, C Pond is almost fully flooded, and D pond was started last week. We started water on Goodyear Slough on Monday, and it should be at shoot level by the opener. Most ponds on Grizzly Island are fully flooded to shoot level at this point. Freitas 1 and 2 of our Crescent Unit and Crescent Family Unit were started on Monday and should finish near the end of this week. Ponds 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 7B, 8B, 12B, 18B, 20, and 23A all have water on them but are still coming up the last few inches. The remaining ponds, 12C, 12E, 17C, 18A, 22D, 23B, 23C, 23D, as well as Bent Barrel and Laughing Mallard will begin receiving water later on this week with the last ponds starting by Friday.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Jamel Stewart provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of September, there are no salinity standards for the Marsh. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 11.1 to 18.1 mS/cm. At the end of September, net Delta outflow was 3,532 cfs. The October 6th salinities ranged from 11.9 to 19.6 mS/cm with a salinity standard of 19.0 mS/cm. Delta outflow was 4,534 cfs. The SMSCG operations were triggered in September.

The Roaring River Distribution System maintenance activity plans for 2022 are ongoing including ditch clearing and dredging and at the Hammond Pond intake pond for 2025 or later requiring multiple seasons and significant funding to complete. Levees are being

monitored after high tides. Levee maintenance was initiated in October. Roaring River intake Gate #4 failed with a damaged drive nut which was machined by Delta Field Division with a target for repair by October 14th. Gate #8 remained out of service with a damaged actuator – a new part is on backorder. DWR and SRCD conducted a levee inspection on September 15th. Morrow Island Distribution System routine maintenance planning for 2022 is ongoing. Levee monitoring continues after high tides. Planning is ongoing for repairs of a potential leak on the M-line levee. Goodyear Slough Outfall operations continued with removing debris at the intake as needed. Planning for dredging sediment, potentially in 2023, is ongoing. Levees continued to be monitored after high tides. The Regional Water Quality Control Board sent a letter to DWR stating their need to increase clean-up of the GYSO to remove sediment blocking the outfall. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates tidal operations began on September 1st, and Gate 1 has been removed for refurbishment. Russian Thistle is prevalent at RRDS, MDS, and the surrounding areas. DWR has been removing it when possible. Phragmites treatment at Blacklock has been delayed until next year. A vegetation monitoring work plan is in development.

California reservoir capacity ranged from 24-68% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 14-63%. All reservoirs are below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 81% of normal in the northern Sierra and 63% 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 contract expenses. The 5-year review of the SMPA is progressing with regular meetings including September 15th and mid-October.
- b) 2022 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the 2022 PAI Program. We have obtained signatures on the last of the landowner agreements, a few projects have been completed with invoices and receipts submitted to SRCD for reimbursement. Post-construction inspections are occurring as projects are finished prior to flood up. Discussion ensued.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. We are on task for the plan. Measurements were completed by Mr. Takekawa and Mr. Hagani for the Arnold and Hill Slough Tidal Restoration Projects to measure the habitat created at high tide level plus 2 feet. The process to measure the area was documented and approved by the SMP Principal agencies. DWR is moving forward with the Chipps Island tidal restoration design. In addition,

DWR met with Van Sickle Island Reclamation District. The RD requested that DWR include reduced boat speed to prevent erosion on their exterior levees in their project plan.

- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continued to administer the 2022 RGP 3 permit. The Regional General Permit renewal is ongoing and BCDC provided a comment letter after closure of the public comment period. SRCD will be working with BCDC to address their comments and hopefully the permit can be issued around the first of the new year. The Letter of Permission Dredging Permit authorization was obtained in late September, although it was coming very close to the end of the 2022 work season. The 10 landowners were required to sign the BCDC permit individually, which resulted in further delays in starting work. Discussion ensued.
- e) Water Manager (WM) Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Water Manager program update. The Water Managers received the August RGP3 approvals on September 12th. Jeff handled the mailing of invoices and contractor agreements for 2022 proposed dredging projects. Jeff continued to work on water quality monitoring for flood-up including Goodyear and Boynton Sloughs. Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, and Ms. Guzman attended weekly Roaring River coordination flood-up calls on every Thursday. On September 15th, we participated in a tour of the Roaring River system with DWR staff. Mr. Edmunds focused on final repairs to the fish screen solar systems. Ms. Guzman assisted with fish screen installations.

Mr. Hagani continued to work on completing Phragmites and Mouse habitat papers, and he cleaned and organized gear from the 2022 range wide survey. On September 16th, Mr. Hagani conducted a RTK GPS survey at Hidden Cove. Ms. Collins continued working on DWR fish biomass and location related to managed wetland drains.

On September 11-15th, former Water Manager Phelan McKinney (now with Ducks Unlimited), returned to the Marsh to assist Ms. Guzman in learning about her assigned properties in Marsh. On September 15th, Mr. Chappell, Ms. Collins, and Mr. Takekawa met with Mr. Randy Mager to discuss their flood-up management and their efforts to control Russian Thistle at Mein's Landing. We also met with him on October 4th to consider nationwide Corps permit requirements for extensive repairs needed on their Montezuma Slough levee.

On September 20th, Dr. Judit Barroso provided her expert advice on Russian Thistle in the Suisun Marsh during an afternoon fieldtrip. On September 21st, we hosted the hybrid Fall Landowner Workshop that was attended by about 125 people either in

person or online. Mr. Hagani collected Russian Thistle samples which were sent to an agriculture lab for genetic analyses that confirmed the species was *Salsola soda*.

On September 22nd, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Hagani, and Mr. Takekawa met with SFEI to discuss the Suisun Marsh Landscape Tool project. This is the first meeting of a project funded by the Delta Stewardship Council to gather Suisun Marsh information and make it more easily available in a map form for future planning. We are hoping to enlist a few SRCD Associate Directors to participate in this process.

Starting the week of September 26th, the Water Managers worked with excavator and boom truck contractors to reinstall the fish screens for flood-up. On September 26th, Mr. Hagani and Mr. Takekawa met with our Utah State colleagues on Phragmites Ecosocial Project work, and Mr. Hagani assisted in fieldwork on September 27th which they conducted through the week and completed on Friday, September 30th. On September 28th, Ms. Collins helped Mr. Takekawa to submit a revised budget for the DSC Ecosocial Phragmites Control Project. Ms. Collins also helped us develop a guide for use of the newly implemented Docusign. On September 29th, I talked with Dr. Krista Hofmann DFW a certified California Pest Control Advisor has agreed to work with us on developing a Russian Thistle control plan for Suisun Marsh.

On October 3rd, Ms. Collins and Mr. Edmunds developed a coordination map and table for flood-up along Solano Cut. On October 4th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended the interagency drought meeting for an update on state wetland conditions. Also on October 4th, Mr. Chappell, Ms. Guzman, and Mr. Takekawa installed 2 enclosures at Gum Tree Farms on a summer burn site where Russian Thistle was present to see if burning, control the plant invasion without regrowth.

On October 6th, Mr. Takekawa attended the Delta National Heritage Area Advisory Committee meeting. On October 11th, Mr. Takekawa and Mr. Hagani completed the High Tide Line Report providing estimates of tidal wetland acreage for Arnold and Hill Slough Restoration Projects. Today Mr. Edmunds went to Richmond to Boat Specialists to pick up a new Yamaha 25 hp 4-stroke long-shaft outboard for our gate monitoring boat. Also, Ms. Guzman is working on a draft of the October newsletter.

- 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. He completed mowing of the south unit and mowing and disking of the north unit. On September 30th, Mr. Takekawa worked with Mr. Mouton to install the new electric refrigerator to the clubhouse kitchen and installed it on the new circuit that electrician Mr. Russ Dorsey installed a week earlier.

Phragmites revegetation studies work continued with weed control the last week of September. On September 23rd, Mr. Takekawa met with the blue carbon team to work on scheduling the final sampling before flood-up. On the week of September 26th, Mr. Mouton mowed and disked specific areas in the north with plots for the blue carbon projects. He then flooded the north starting on September 29th.

On Saturday October 1st and October 3rd with Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa worked with Mr. Mouton in cleaning the clubhouse prior to turning it over to the Hunt Group. Also on October 3rd, Mr. Mouton drained the north unit to avoid mosquito production. The blue carbon team set plots and measured gas exchange in the South Unit from October 5-7. On October 7th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa conducted the annual Lower Joice clubhouse walkthrough with hunt group President Mr. Wynne Herron. Mr. Mouton reflooded the north unit on the island. On Saturday October 8th, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Edmunds, and consultant Mr. Ramar worked on the clubhouse solar system and calibrated the fish screen solar system.

- g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell reported on our meetings. Mr. Chappell attended the SFBRA meeting in late September. Our fish screen grant resubmittal that was completed on July 29th was recommended for funding by the staff. The grant may be contracted to Ducks Unlimited or SRCD, but the grant requires payment of contractors in advance, so DU may be better positioned financially to do that. The SRCD Fall Landowner Workshop was attended by about 125 people and the event and meal were sponsored by the Suisun Conservation Fund. Mr. Chappell noted that longfin smelt has been proposed for listing on October 6th by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and although they are more marine, if listed it may affect water diversions in the Suisun Marsh. 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 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the auditor is scheduling the SRCD Annual Audit for FY 2021-2022 to begin on November 14th.
- e) Associate Directors Committee ~ Mr. Chappell introduced new SRCD Associate Director Mr. Dick Vanderkous.

- 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 2:54 PM.