

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2021, AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW
Dennis Becker, SRCD Assoc. Dir.
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
Dan Lehman, SRCD Assoc. Dir.
Edwin Limanto, DWR
Kelli Perez, SRCD
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Dajanne Stitts, DFW
John Takekawa, SRCD
Jeff Taylor, SRCD
Larry Wyckoff, DFW

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Vaccarella called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:06 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Vaccarella opened the September 8, 2021, Board of Directors meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the August 11, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2021, 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 August 2021 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the August 2021 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$58,114.51. These claims included normal expenses. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the claim summaries as presented, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried. Mr. Chappell reported the August 2021 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$4,886.41. All expenses were 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. Mr. Chappell reported the August 2021 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$23,946.88. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the claim summaries as presented, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried. Finally, Mr. Chappell reported the August 2021 Special Revenue claim of \$2,897.64 for diesel under the pumping program. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the claim summaries as presented, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

b) Board Approval of SRCD FY 19/20 Draft Audit ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update of the status of the SRCD FY 19/20 draft audit completion. After the August Board meeting, Mr. Connolly (Financial Committee chair), reviewed the draft audit and prepared a letter to the auditor addressing some needed adjustments. These adjustments were made, and the revised draft audit was presented for Board approval. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the draft audit as presented, 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. Dajanna Stitts.

Elk Season: After the raffle tag holder harvested his elk, DFW used the following week to complete general field work, particularly mowing. Once general hunts resumed on August 17th, all 8 hunters were successful in harvesting their elk, 4 cows and 4 spike bulls. DFW had a second break between hunts and used the time between August 23rd and September 9th to complete more field work prior to flood up. Over Labor Day weekend, DFW saw a lot of elk hunters scouting in preparation for their upcoming

hunts. September 9th will be the beginning of the second half of elk season. The hunters have another 24 tags to fill throughout the rest of September. During the elk hunts, DFW will switch our efforts to prepare for waterfowl season to other units, particularly the Crescent units, Joice Island, and the west side.

Grizzly Island: Phase 1 of work in Pond 12 and Field 13 was completed via a WCB Grant, and efforts have now moved to Crescent Family Unit, all new water control structures, and swales to improve water management. All the *Phragmites* has been mowed, so next season, we will be able to spray and control it better. Ditch cleaning has been going on in Grizzly Ditch to allow better water movement, though this has been slightly hindered by fuel pump issues with our excavator. Thankfully though, it was able to get fixed fairly quickly. Our crew replaced a leaky screw gate from Grizzly Ditch into Pond 20, which will give us better control of water in that pond. Mowing has continued on the island, with focus on the 17 Ponds, and *Phragmites* in the Crescent Units. We also were able to get Pump 4 replaced which will allow us to pump out and circulate water in the southern half of the wildlife area.

Flood Up: Flood up has been going as planned and we are still expecting to be fully flooded by opening weekend of waterfowl season. This week we began flooding Ponds 23A through D off of Grizzly Ditch. Ponds 17E, 19, 21, and 22A-D ponds are at shoot level, and we began circulating them now that we have appropriate draining capabilities. We plan to continue flooding the southern half of the wildlife area, moving onto 17A-D, the 16s, and the 18s. We will begin flooding our closed zone, pond 12, as well as one of our blind units, Pond 11. We have been seeing a lot of Northern Shovelers, Wigeon, and Teal, with a few Pintail here and there. We are still waiting to see the White-Fronts return, though local Canada's have made use of the area in the meantime.

Hill Slough Restoration: Construction is underway and must be completed by November 30th. Marshrat is the contractor completing the levee breaching work.

6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Mr. Edwin Limanto provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of August, there are no salinity standards in the Marsh. The Progressive Daily Mean Salinities in the Marsh ranged from 11.8 to 22.3 mS/cm. At the end of August, net Delta outflow was 3,545. Salinity values for September 6th ranged from 9.8 to 21.6 mS/cm, and Delta outflow was 3,556 cfs. The SMSCG operations began on September 1st.

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 including mowing, spraying, grading, and levee repairs that will continue into the fall. Additional levee maintenance will occur in early October.

Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) routine maintenance planning is ongoing. Levee monitoring continues after high tides. Seepage was detected at two sections of the M-Line levee. They are being repaired with completion in early September. Invasive Russian Thistle has become more prevalent and will be pulled or sprayed again in the next 1-2 months. The levees will be sprayed again within the next 1-2 months. 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, planning for 2021 routine maintenance is ongoing, and fixing the sheet piles around the inlet with improved debris removal will be started on September 20th that will continue for 1-2 weeks. Levees continued to be monitored after high tides. Routine maintenance will start in the first 2 weeks of September before the intake repairs. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG) had repairs including repairing the gearbox for Gate 1 and refurbishing (Gate 3), with its scheduled return in the Fall. Flashboards have been installed in August to be ready for September operations.

Reservoir capacity ranged from 22-37% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 18-86%. All but one reservoir remains below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 45% 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 5-year review of the SMPA is continuing. On September 2nd and 23rd, there were SMPA 5-review meetings scheduled. A draft final report is in preparation. August 12th and September 9th were Suisun Marsh Principal's meetings.
- 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 other projects are currently under construction. DWR suggested that a check had been issued for the first reimbursement. DWR has informed SRCD that funds are budgeted for the 2022 PAI cost share program.
- c) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There was a SMP Principal's meeting and AMAT meeting in August that SRCD participated. The ECAT and Applicants Compliance Team meeting will be on September 14th. The Pacific Flyway Center provided an update last month to the AMAT group. Groundbreaking may occur in the spring of 2022.

- d) USACE Permits - RGP3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continues to work on the 2021 permit application administration. The August package was submitted to the USACE and approved. The Letter of Permission for the dredging program applications was submitted in August. The dredging window opened August 1st. Staff is drafting the BCDC Marsh Development Permit for signature. The 2022 work season is the last year of this current 5-year RGP 3. SRCD will be submitting a permit renewal application in early 2022 for a renewal of the RGP3.
- 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. Our office siding and windows will be renovated as part of the work, we will have to move out of the main office for several days or weeks later this fall. A schedule has not yet been set.

Work is continuing on RGP3 exterior work reports. The boom truck hydraulic hoses were repaired at North Bay Trucking, allowing SRCD to complete annual fish screen removal. However, the boom truck was unable to lift some of the largest screens, so mechanic Mr. Eric Wylie came for an inspection. He repaired a throttle cable linkage and then suggested replacing the existing becket and adding a hook block for greater leverage, and he began a search for those parts to improve the operational efficiency of the Boom Truck.

The 124 Individual Management Plan updates were approved by a Board resolution at the August Board meeting, and following that approval, Ms. Collins and the water managers continued to correspond with BCDC to provide final submittal details. Mr. Chappell and Ms. Collins met with BCDC on August 12th to discuss next steps and the CEQA Notice of Exemption was posted to the State Clearinghouse on the 20th. BCDC was provided an outreach summary to address the Bay Plan's Environmental Justice and Social Equity Policy on the 23rd, supporting documents were provided on August 27th, and Steve provided detailed explanation of habitat management areas on September 7th.

On August 18th, Ms. Collins sent out notice on the Suisun Marsh Fall Landowner Science Workshop, and as of today, 86 people have indicated they will attend with 17 maybe answers. Also, Mr. Takekawa met with Mr. Steve Andrews and Ms. Richelle Tanner to continue analyses for the levee breach and salinity paper. On August 19th, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, and Mr. Edmunds met with Mr. Brett Williams of Ducks Unlimited to discuss progress on the Essential Fish Screen assessment. Mr. Edmunds continued to work on finalization of fish screen solar installations. On August 20th, Mr. Takekawa attended a kick-off meeting for a decision support tool being developed for fish food export from managed wetlands

by Mr. Cliff Feldheim with Cal Trout and Mr. Mark Petrie at Ducks Unlimited. Also on August 20th, Mr. Takekawa and Mr. Edmunds met with Dead Duck Country Club owners who agreed to participate in the Delta Conservancy infrastructure grant proposal. On August 23rd, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, and Ms. Collins met with County Counsel Ryan FitzGerald to discuss details on the management plan certification process with BCDC. On August 24th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa joined Mr. Orlando Rocha of DFW and Mr. Chris Milam from Dutra Group to look at levees on Joice Island and Lower Joice Island as potential sites to receive dredged sediments from the Valero docks in Benicia.

On August 25th and September 8th, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended the interagency drought coordination meetings. Ms. Collins worked with Mr. Taylor installing water quality monitoring sondes. Mr. Takekawa met on Zoom with the Phragmites Ecosocial Study team and discussed their visit and fieldtrip on September 13th. Mr. Takekawa, Mr. Chappell, and Mr. McKinney continued to attend weekly DWR Roaring River Distribution System flood-up calls. On August 27th, Mr. Takekawa met with Dr. John Eadie at UCD to finalize the agenda for the Fall Landowner Workshop. Also on August 27th, Mr. Takekawa and Ms. Collins met with Mr. Dylan Chapple at the Delta Stewardship Council and Mr. Todd Hallenbeck of BCDC to discuss Suisun Marsh GIS coverages and Geomارش. On August 30th, Mr. Takekawa had a monthly coordination call on the NFWF Belden's Landing project.

On August 31st, Ms. Collins assisted Mr. Takekawa in submitting a Delta Conservancy concept proposal for drainage infrastructure improvements, and Mr. Takekawa attended a zoom workshop on Covid vaccination in the workplace. On September 1st, Ms. Collins finished setting up her new GIS laptop, and she worked with Ms. Perez to start some administration tasks as part of her duties. On September 2nd, she worked with Mr. Edmunds to survey water staff gauges at Pintail Ranch 625, Frost Lake, and Solano Cut. On September 2nd, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, and Mr. McKinney went to Greenhead Club to discuss wetland management with Mr. Peter Wilson. On September 3rd, Mr. Takekawa, Mr. McKinney, and Ms. Collins began a weekly meeting on updating content on the SRCD website.

- g) 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. He worked steadily on the NAWCA improvement project, working on ditches and swales to improve circulation in the North Unit. Mr. Mouton completed most of the work roughing out the ditches on August 27th, starting on August 30th, CWA came out with the survey equipment to check elevation levels, and Howard from Marshrat Tractor spent a week completing the finish work on the ditch improvements. Mr. Mouton began mowing the habitat in the North Unit in early

September to prepare for the hunting season. He also brought out 5 barrels of diesel to replenish fuel supplies, changed the oil in equipment, and filled and equalized the solar system. On August 26th, Mr. Takekawa brought Dr. Karen Thorne and Dr. Scott Jones to Lower Joice Island to discuss the infrastructure improvement and carbon sequestration project, and all joined Mr. Robert Eddings on a project coordination call on September 1st.

- h) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell completed a tour on September 1st with Solano County Supervisor Mitch Mashburn, his staff, and Staff from the County Administrators office to look at fish screen facilities in the Marsh. On September 10th, Mr. Chappell will attend the SF Bay Restoration Authority (SFBRA) advisory committee. Phase 2 fish screen grant application to SFBRA Measure AA will be submitted on October 7th. The final revenue from the 2021 SCF Fun Shoot and Social was \$22,061.34. Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa continued to participate in the statewide drought call for state wildlife area managers. On August 26th, SRCD met to coordinate with SCMAD staff for 2021 fall flood up. On August 19th, Mr. Chappell participated with BCDC on a Pacific Flyway Center meeting. The next big event is the Fall Landowner Workshop on September 15th. Discussion ensued.

9. Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports ~

- a) Agency Committee ~ No report.
- b) Legal Committee ~ No report.
- c) Personnel Committee ~ For Board Consideration ~ Update SRCD Existing Water Manager Positions Pay Scale. Mr. Lewis provided a memorandum to the full board and recommended an update of the SRCD Water Managers Program Position Pay Scales. These Water Manager position descriptions and pay scales were originally adopted in May of 2015 and have not been updated since that date. The 2015 SMPA contract states that the SRCD Water Managers and Water Managers Supervisor salaries shall be commensurate with the California State Personnel Board specifications for Environmental Scientist (ES) and Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor (ES Sup.) series. Since 20015 the ES and ES Sup. Salary classification have changed and SRCD needs to update our SRCD Water Managers Program Position Pay Scales be commensurate with the California State Personnel Board specifications. Mr. Chappell requested a motion from the Board to update the SRCD Water Managers Program Position Pay Scales. Discussion ensued. Mr. Lewis made a motion that the Board update the pay scale to be consistent with the California State Personnel Board specifications and 2015 SMPA contract conditions, Mr. Waters seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

- d) Finance Committee ~ Mr. Connolly provided the Board an update from the Lower Joice Island Assessment Committee. The committee is comprised of Board Members Lenk and Connolly. SRCD and the LJI Assessment Committee has been approached by a mitigation bank company, requesting SRCD consider a tidal restoration project on a portion of Lower Joice Island. Mr. Connolly requested a Closed Session at the next SRCD Board meeting to update the Board on initial proposals. Since the discussions involves contracting and real property negotiations a Closed Session is required. Discussion ensued.
 - e) Associate Directors Committee ~ No report.
- 9. 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 3:01 PM.