

MINUTES

SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, December 13th, 2023, AT 2:00 PM
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS
675 TEXAS STREET
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Jim Waters
Kent Hansen
Mike Lewis

OTHERS PRESENT: Kristin Brandon, SRCD
Steven Chappell, SRCD
Kevin Clark, DWR
Tim Edmunds, SRCD
John Eudy, SRCD Assoc. Director
Marina Guzman, SRCD
Kelli Perez, SRCD
Fred Riedel, Fleetside Duck Club
Melissa Riley, DFW
Orlando Rocha, DFW
Laureen Barthman Thompson, DFW
Jamel Stewart, DWR
John Takekawa, SRCD
Jeff Taylor, SRCD
John Telfer, SRCD Assoc. Director

1. Call to Order ~ Mr. Waters called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

2. Public Comments ~ There were no public comments.

3. Open Session ~ Mr. Waters opened the December 13, 2023, Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Waters asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the November 8, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Waters asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 8, 2023 Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Hansen; all were in favor and the motion carried.

4. Financial Reports ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for November 2023 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the November 2023 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$193,189.99. The claims were normal SRCD operational and salary expenses except for Claim #56 a levee erosion repair at DWR Mein's Landing (reimbursable under contract) and Claim #62 to Ag Air for 2023 Phragmites control program (to be billed to participating landowners). Mr. Chappell reported the November 2023 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$25,873.00. All expenses were normal LJI operational expenses except for Claim #25 for a new outboard motor for the pontoon boat. This outboard motor expenses will be split with the co-owner of the pontoon boat. Mr. Chappell reported the November 2023 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$23,346.06. All expenses were normal Water Managers operational expenses. Mr. Lewis moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Hansen seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report ~ Orlando Rocha provided the DFW report.

Joice Island: DFW has had 2 hunt days on Joice Island, since Dec. 1st. Opening Sunday saw a total of 101 ducks harvested between 23 hunters. The top duck was Mallard, followed by Northern Shoveler, then Cinnamon Teal. The average was 4.39 ducks per hunter. On Sunday the 10th, 48 ducks were harvested between 21 hunters. The average was 2.29 ducks per hunter. The top duck was Green-winged Teal, followed by Mallard, then Cinnamon Teal. This upcoming Sunday will be the last Joice hunt for a while due to construction on the Joice Island bridge commencing on Monday, December 18th. We plan to reopen Joice Island on January 21st if construction goes as planned.

Pheasant: Wild bird harvest continues to be poor on the wildlife area. To date, 20 wild pheasant have been harvested, which is 7 more than the prior year, and 8 more than 2021. We continue to move forward with major upland field improvements, with the goal

of improving the pheasant numbers by providing better nesting cover and food availability. So far, we have seeded approximately 245 acres in fields 14 K, L, O, and P. The final planting of native seed was completed in the 13 fields.

On November 18th, DFW held two planted bird pheasant hunts with junior hunters in the morning and a family hunt in the afternoon. Attendance was slightly poorer than previous years, likely due to wet weather. A total of 32 pheasant were taken among 37 hunters, and pheasant hunters had a great time. Staff have been collecting pheasant tissue samples on wild and planted birds to aid in data collection for a CDFW study on genetics in the state with the hopes of identifying distinct populations.

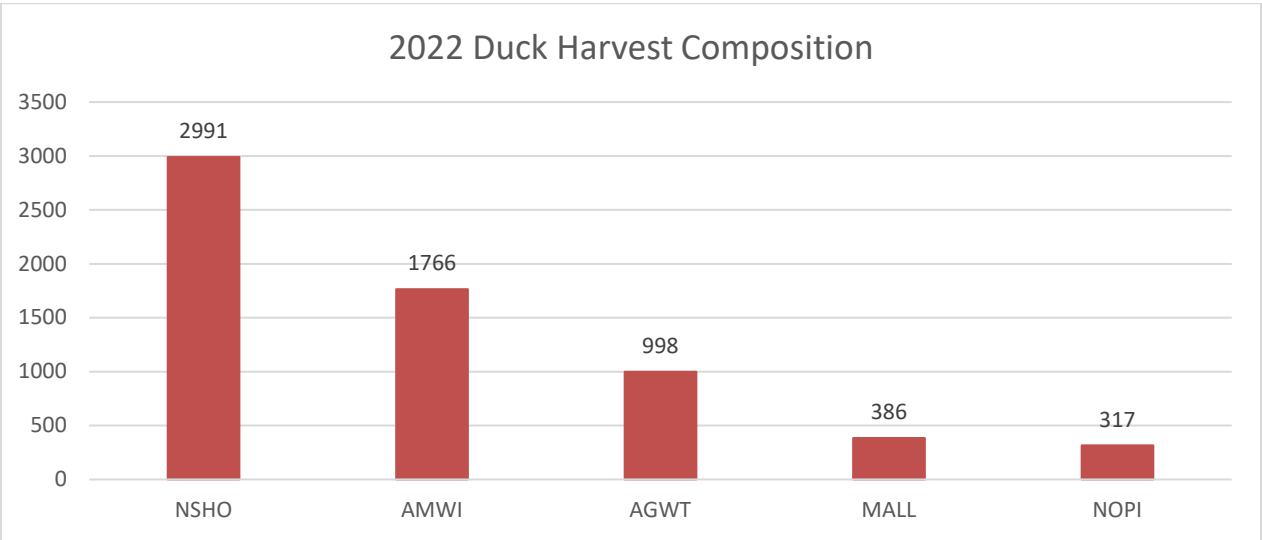
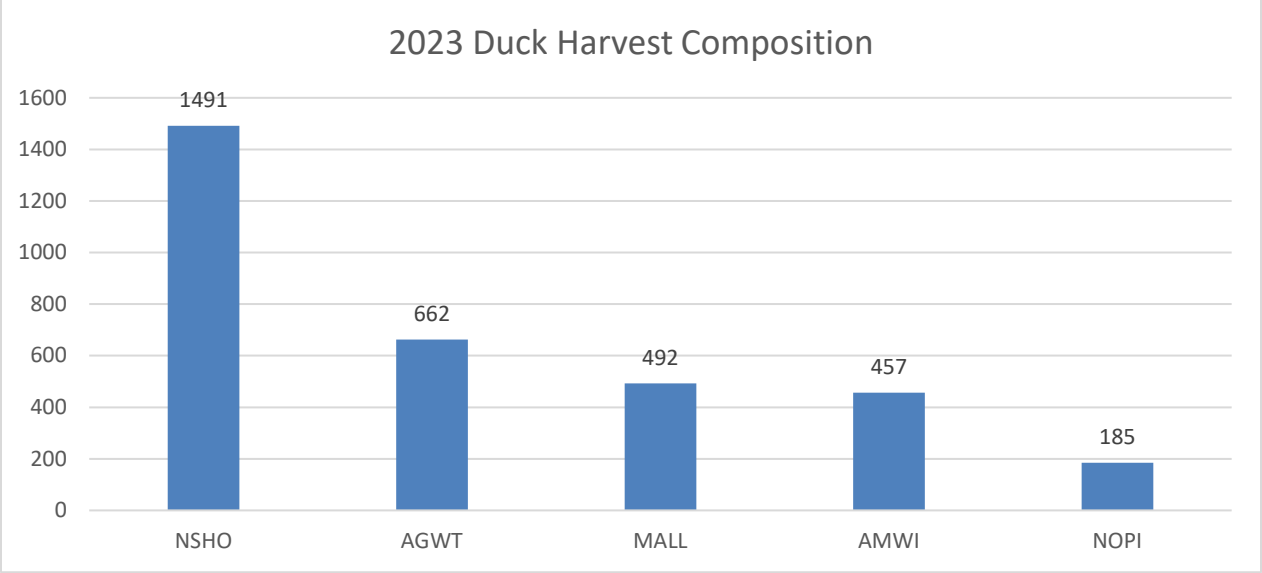
Wildlife Area: This time of year, most of our staff time is spent operating the hunter check station. The remaining time is spent checking water, picking up trash, reposting signage, and end of year permit reporting. DFW has hired a new Staff Services Analyst to replace Shirley Arrington, who retired earlier this year, and we are looking forward to having her join the wildlife area crew this upcoming Monday.

Comparison of number of waterflow harvested to date (week 8)

Date	# OF HUNTERS	# OF DUCKS	# OF GEESE	# OF WATERFOWL	AVERAGE DUCK	AVERAGE GEESE	#1 Species	#2 Species
12/6/2023	112	135	3	138	1.21	0.03	AGWT	AMWI
12/9/2023	136	177	0	177	1.30	0.00	NSHO	AGWT
12/10/2023	63	54	2	56	0.86	0.03	NSHO	AGWT
Stats to date	2682	3663	41	3704	1.37	0.02	NSHO	AGWT
12/7/2022	112	264	3	267	2.36	0.03	NSHO	AMWI
12/10/2022	185	583	4	587	3.15	0.02	NSHO	AGWT
12/11/2022	111	211	0	211	1.90	0.00	NSHO	AMWI
Stats to date	3406	7575	32	7607	2.22	0.01	NSHO	AMWI

2022		
1	NSHO	2991
2	AMWI	1766
3	AGWT	998
4	MALL	386
5	NOPI	317

2023		
1	NSHO	1491
2	AGWT	662
3	MALL	492
4	AMWI	457
5	NOPI	185



6. Department of Water Resources Report ~ Jamel Stewart and Kevin Clark presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of November, salinity standards were 15.5 mS/cm in the east and the west. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 7.1 to 16.3 mS/cm. At the end of November, net Delta outflow was 4,160 cfs. As of December 11th, salinities ranged from 7.4 to 15.2 mS/cm with Delta outflow of 4,072 cfs and a salinity standard of 15.5 mS/cm at the eastern stations and 16.5 mS/cm at the western stations. DWR installed a water quality collection buoy near the Volanti station, but no data was available outside of salinity. Ibis station remains offline with repairs being addressed. No drought response fund triggers were exceeded this month. Discussion ensued.

The Roaring River Distribution System water levels continue to be monitored following high tides, and both drains have remained closed since August. Environmental staff compiled and submitted RRDS RGP3 reporting. For the Morrow Island Distribution System, DWR continues waiting for updates from Union Pacific Railroad, and RGP3 reporting was completed. Discussion ensued. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) was surveyed on November 9th for dredging and maintenance work. Geotech surveys were conducted, and summer work and dredging was reported to SRCD in early December. At the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates, Gate 3 was reinstalled, and Gate 2 was swapped out for refurbishment, and the gates are in operation. There was no update for the Montezuma Day Use Area. Russian Thistle remains prevalent at several sites in the Marsh, but there are no new plans for combatting it. Discussion ensued.

California reservoir capacity in November ranged from 50-79% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 27-91%. For the new water year, precipitation year to date was 46% of average in the northern Sierra and 28% 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 Dean Messer including updates on monthly payment of SRCD contract expenses. The SMPA 5-year review has been completed, and BOR was compiling recommendations, and there was no Agency support for amending the agreement at this time. If it is determined that the 2015 SMPA needs to be revised, the SMPA Negotiators group will be convened and SRCD will engage SRCD counsel to assist in document and contract amendment review considerations. Discussion ensued.
- b) 2023 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the PAI Program cost share program. We are awaiting processing landowners 2023 receipts for completed projects. Water Managers have completed post project reviews as they are reported. The program will be reviewed in January to determine how we will proceed next year, including possible prioritization of certain types of projects for future funding. Discussion ensued.
- 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 next Principal's meeting is scheduled for December 14th. The November Adaptive Management Advisory Team meeting was cancelled due to lack of timely presentations. The next quarterly AMAT meeting will be February 2024.

- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continues to administer the RGP 3 permit. SRCD staff has begun compiling the 2023 landowners actual work completed information, for SRCD’s annual compliance reporting requirements. SRCD staff is also actively compiling the 2023 LOP dredging permit actual work completed information for the annual compliance reporting and BCDC Marsh Development permit requirements. The State Lands Commission 10-year dredging lease is expiring in 2024, and SRCD has initiated the lease renewal process for the marsh wide dredging program.

- e) Potrero Hills Landfill – Phase II Expansion Update ~Mr. Chappell provided an update on the Potrero Hills Landfill (PHL) expansion. In June 2023, SRCD was informed that the creation of Phase 1 Module 20 of the PHL, included a small portion of Phase 2 expansion area. This fact triggered the SRCD/ PHL Phase II Expansion Settlement Agreement. Since that time, Mr. Chappell has met with PHL staff, the Solano County Local Enforcement Officer, and the RWQCB staff who oversee the landfill operations and expansion permitting. The SRCD Board directed Mr. Chappell to hire an outside engineering firm (HDR Engineering) to review the Tetra Tech technical memorandum and calculations, to determine if PHL’s approach was reasonable. Mr. Chappell reported that HDR Engineering had completed their technical review and he recommended notifying PHL that the June 2023 calculation approach was acceptable to SRCD. A motion was made by Mr. Lewis to accept the HDR December 4th Memo and notify PHL that the calculation approach is acceptable to SRCD. Mr. Hansen seconded the motion; all were in favor, and the motion carried. Discussion ensued.

- f) Water Manager (WM) Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa completed job interviews for the full-time analyst biologist position that was advertised in October to assist SRCD in completing deliverables on our grant and contract projects. SRCD conducted panel interviews with the 3 finalists, and we were pleased to select Kristin Brandon for the position. Ms. Brandon has a bachelor’s degree from Oregon State University and a master’s degree from Rice University and extensive experience in GIS as well as working with data and conducting analyses including a focus on our salt marsh harvest mouse range wide survey. She began work with SRCD on November 27th, and she was able to attend her first Board meeting today.

The Water Managers continue to work on obtaining end-of-year reports through the month for the RGP3 maintenance permit for the clubs who conducted summer work. At the end of November, they obtained reports on dredging projects under the Letter of Permission. Mr. Taylor began preparation of the annual reports for the USACE, BCDC, Regional Water Board, and State Lands as well as the DFW Incidental Take Permit report. He also completed the seasonal water quality monitoring and pulled the sonde meters for the year and report preparation.

Mr. Edmunds worked with a mechanic from Howeco, Inc. to rebuild and reinstall a hydraulic pump on the boom truck. It now seems to be operating with full lifting capacity. Mr. Edmunds continued working on maintenance of the fish screens and solar systems. Ms. Guzman and the Water Managers demobilized the pumps at Van Sickle Island, and she downloaded water quality data for the Delta Conservancy infrastructure projects. She worked on boat and truck tire maintenance. The WMs also improved their office trailer by installing a new storage cabinet, computer desk, and new lights.

Ms. Collins continued working on the Suisun Marsh fish biomass study, but she began working on a separate paper on the unique methods derived for the study. She worked on the Phragmites Socioecological Study in helping to complete data management and stakeholder engagement plans. She also added updates on our fish screen projects to the SF Bay Wetland Tracker and the Delta Science Tracker websites, and she coordinated with the Water Managers to update new information for the annual Individual Management Plan updates.

The SRCD fall staff meeting and reviews were conducted on November 16th. The WMs completed gate monitoring on November 21st and December 12th. On November 20th, Steve and I met with DFW and Audubon staff involved in supporting the Bird Returns project that will provide grant funding for landowners to manage water on their properties in the spring and summer to benefit shorebirds and breeding waterfowl. On November 27th, I hosted a Phragmites Study Team meeting, and on November 30th, Steve and I attended the Delta Invasive Species Symposium in Sacramento. On December 4th, Steve and I were interviewed by a UCD PhD student studying wetland restoration governance issues, and on December 7th, we met with Steve Carroll and Tom Jackson from DU to discuss the fish screen rehabilitation project. Also on December 7th, we had a coordination meeting to schedule completion of the update of the Suisun Marsh vegetation guide for distribution at the spring workshop. It is now partially supported by a Solano County Fish and Wildlife Propagation fund grant. Finally, Kristin and I had a coordination meeting today with the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse team.

- g) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. Mr. Mouton continued maintaining the facilities and habitat on the island. He obtained another load of propane on December 4th. He pressure-washed the walkways, installed parts bins in a shed, and changed out lights in bathroom. He had help from Mr. Taylor in removing the coring bucket and attaching the large bucket to the excavator for the winter season. They finished clearing the debris resulting from removal of an old shed along the Suisun Slough levee and loaded it onto our barge. Staff will haul the debris to Pierce Harbor for disposal in a dumpster sometime in

January or February when there is a window of good weather.

Hunting continued to be successful from November to December for the Lower Joice Island Gun Club. The total harvest was 76 birds taken during 33 hunter days or 2.3 birds/hunter which was slightly lower than the 2.9 birds/hunter taken in the first 3 weeks. The species composition included 39 teal, 23 Northern Shoveler, 6 Northern Pintail, 3 American Wigeon, 4 Mallard, and 1 Ruddy Duck. The harvest was lower than the number taken in 2022 but was like the numbers in the harvest in 2021.

Last month, the 90hp outboard on the pontoon work boat that we share with Greg Daniel at the Miramonte Club began to run rough and leak oil. A mechanic's assessment indicated that it was time to replace the motor, so working with Mr. Daniel, we found that a new 115 hp Mercury outboard was available nearby and had it installed. The pontoon boat was brought to Martinez on December 5th for the installation and was back in the water on December 12th.

- h) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell reviewed DWR's response to SRCD's comment letter on the Delta Conveyance Project EIR. SRCD's letter was 612 of nearly 1,000 comment letters submitted. The DWR will likely be finalized EIR, without any modification to the project. Mr. Chappell also participated in a call to discuss the potential development of soccer fields near the Fairfield-Suisun Sewage Treatment plant. The development would be outside of the Marsh, but adjacent. Mr. Chappell expressed potential concerns about increased traffic, impacts of potential night lighting of the fields and significant concern about increased exposure of children and soccer mom's to biting mosquito exposure. The close proximity of the proposal to the Marsh could increase potential public health and safety concerns and could result in increased future vector control events and costs in the Suisun Marsh Managed wetlands. He recommended the City of Fairfield contact the Solano County Mosquito Abatement District to discuss their concerns in pursuing this as a future option for development. 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 Director's Committee ~ No report.

9. **Meeting Adjournment** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by M. Lewis and seconded by K. Hansen; all were in favor, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 PM.