

## **MINUTES**

### **SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING**

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, AT 2:00 PM  
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S CHAMBERS  
675 TEXAS STREET  
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Kent Hansen  
Mike Lewis  
Jim Waters

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW  
Dennis Becker, SRCD Assoc. Director  
Steven Chappell, SRCD  
Tim Edmunds, SRCD  
John Eudy, SRCD Assoc. Director  
Jamel Stewart, DWR  
Kelli Perez, SRCD  
Marina Guzman, SRCD  
Matt Stretch, Van Sickle Reclamation District 1607  
John Takekawa, SRCD  
Jeff Taylor, SRCD

**1. Call to Order** ~ Jim 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** ~ Jim Waters opened the October 11, 2023, Board of Directors meeting. He asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the September 13, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes ~ Waters asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 13, 2023 Board meeting. A motion was made by Mike Lewis and seconded by Kent Hansen; all were in favor and the motion carried.

**4. Financial Reports** ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for September 2023 ~ Steve Chappell reported the September 2023 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$60,896.64. These claims were normal SRCD operational and salary expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the September 2023 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$10,359.80. All expenses were normal LJI operational expenses including replenishing diesel and propane and clubhouse porch repairs. Mr. Chappell reported the September 2023 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$19,593.89. All expenses were normal Water Managers operational expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the September 2023 Special Revenue Department vendor claims for the portable pump program expenses, which totaled \$1,542.75. 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** ~ The DFW report was provided by Dajanae Stitts and presented by Lauren Barthman-Thompson.

**Elk Season:** Elk season has come to an end. Seven bulls, 14 cows, and 10 spike bulls were successfully harvested, resulting in a 94% success rate across the season. The last period of hunters harvested their animals after only two days of hunting, so DFW were able to get back into the fields for the remaining waterfowl season preparations a little early.

**Grizzly Island:** In the last few weeks before waterfowl season, the crew has been focused on completing the most pertinent remaining fieldwork, mostly consisting of mowing. After the completion of elk season, they opened back up for fishing from parking lot 6 to the salinity gates, and many anglers are taking advantage of the opportunity. Weed control continues in the upland fields in preparation for the planting project. Contractors have been working in various parts of the island, preparing to install a new flood pump near the shop, installing a new pipe to improve drainage in the upland fields, and dirt work at DFW's Long Point property to improve water movement. Pump 7 continues to be rebuilt.

**Island Slough:** All work at Island Slough has been completed, to include the new fishing pier, ADA compliant ramp, parking spot, and light. A new fence and gate have been installed to partition hunting and fishing parking during waterfowl season.

**Flood up:** Flood up continues to go as planned, and we are seeing more ducks utilizing freshly flooded ponds. We expect to be fully flooded by opener on the main complex, West Family Unit, and Goodyear Slough. The last pond to be flooded at Island Slough is pond 4, which we plan to start this week. With the intake ditch cleared out, it's our hope that it will flood quickly, and in time for the opener.

**6. Department of Water Resources Report** ~ Jamel Stewart presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of September, there were no salinity standards in the Marsh. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 1.9 to 8.0 mS/cm. At the end of September, net Delta outflow was 8,991 cfs. As of October 8<sup>th</sup>, salinities ranged from 3.1 to 9.1 mS/cm with a salinity standard of 19.0 mS/cm for October. Delta outflow was 8,619 cfs. DWR has installed a buoy salinity monitoring station while Volanti station is under repair.

The Roaring River Distribution System weekly flood-up coordination meetings are ongoing. Stages have decreased as expected with increased water demand. Fish screen cleaning was increased to handle increased channel debris. Levees continued to be monitored with extreme tides events. For the Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS), DWR continues working with Union Pacific Railroad and landowners to address Morrow Lane Road maintenance needs. MIDS intakes were closed on September 22<sup>nd</sup> to increase drainage outflow to Suisun Slough. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) maintenance was completed on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. DWR started dredging in front of the intakes, removing sediment from the pipes, and clearing ditches that was completed September 28. At the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates, tidal operations were in effect at latest through October 20<sup>th</sup>. Gate 1 is out for refurbishment and will be swapped with Gate 2 from November 8-17. There was no update for the Montezuma Day Use Area. Russian Thistle remains prevalent at several sites in the Marsh. Discussion ensued.

California reservoir capacity in August ranged from 54-88% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 73-94%. For the new water year beginning on October 1<sup>st</sup>, precipitation year to date was 19% of average in the northern Sierra and 33% 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 and staff including updates on monthly payment of SRCD contract

expenses. The quarterly ECAT meeting was held on September 12<sup>th</sup>; an update call was held to discuss the DWR/BOR cost share for projects under the agreement. The cost discussion included consideration of the *Phragmites* treatment costs for Blacklock Restoration site, but the agreements available funding is for infrastructure and not for maintenance. The SMPA 5-year review remains in review with DFW. 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.

- b) 2023 PAI Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell provided an update for the PAI Program cost share program. We are awaiting completion of 2023 projects, and Water Managers are conducting post project reviews, and they must be able to see the project after completion prior to flooding to approve payments. The program may have reduced funds available in 2024, because the fund amount is depleting. At the end of this year, SRCD will reconcile available funding with completed project amounts, this may require prioritization of project types for funding in the 2024 program year.
- 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 14 September and there is a call on October 12th.
- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continued to administer the RGP 3 permit. On September 25<sup>th</sup>, an audit inspection was completed during a boat tour with USACE and RWQCB staff. The USACE would like to have a field trip in the spring for additional staff. The 2023 BCDC Marsh Development permit for the Dredging Program was issued on September 11<sup>th</sup> for this year's levee maintenance dredging. Also, the State Lands Commission 10-year dredging lease is expiring, and SRCD has already begun the renewal process.
- e) Water Manager Program Update ~ John Takekawa provided the Water Manager program update. All of the Water Managers worked on flood-up coordination for their clubs, and Marina Guzman continued to attend the weekly DWR flood-up coordination call for Roaring River as well as checking the progress of flood-up of associated landowners. Jeff Taylor provided coordination for water quality monitoring and led maintenance and downloads of water quality sondes. The Water Manager's began inspecting completed 2023 PAI cost-share projects, documenting work conducted under the USACE RGP #3, and provided support for landowner submittal of mosquito waivers. The Water Managers also completed final demobilization of all of the pump assistance projects.

Mr. Chappell, Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Takekawa worked on developing a plan for applying herbicide with a spray drone to control invasive Phragmites in the Blacklock restored tidal marsh at the request of the DWR Fish Restoration Program. However, the permitting was not completed in time for treatment by the Agencies. So, this project has been delayed until next spring. Mr. Edmunds also submitted a grant application to the Solano County Fish and Wildlife Propagation fund to cost share efforts to make an updated vegetation guide for Suisun Marsh landowners and the general public. Mr. Edmunds also worked with a mechanic to improve the boom truck lifting capacity.

Ms. Guzman worked on developing the draft of the SRCD October newsletter. She also initiated installation and reading of water loggers at 3 clubs participating in the Delta Conservancy infrastructure improvement project. She assisted a landowner with his habitat improvement by loaning the District's seed spreader.

Ms. Jesirae Collins finalized the printing and distribution of hard copies and digital copies of the updated Individual Management Plans. She also finished migrating all club maps from ArcGIS to ArcPro. She completed website updates, and she assisted Chapman University in distribution of a survey for the Phragmites control study. She continued working on analyses for the wetland drainage fish biomass study analysis with DWR. She also handled updating of the software for the District's RTK GPS unit.

The Fall Landowner Workshop was held at Pete Smith's warehouse on September 20<sup>th</sup>, SRCD staff handled most of the preparations on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Attendance was good with about 75 people in person and another 40 participants online.

Mr. Chappell discussed use of the SRCD portable pumps to assist the Van Sickle landowners with drainage of water following repair of their levee breach. The Board members agreed the landowners request was warranted and authorized this special circumstance for the use of SRCD portable pumps in October. Discussion ensued.

- 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 handled standard facility maintenance in preparation for the hunting season including obtaining a delivery of propane, pressure-washing the clubhouse, and cleaning the clubhouse and the yard. One of the bigger jobs of the summer was close to completion with repairs to the clubhouse screened porch. Work on the island's habitat included moving diesel to the island, mowing the ponds in the north unit after servicing the mower and tractor and changing the mower blades, cutting new riser boards, improvements to the north and south boat slip launches, and cleaning Phragmites in interior boat ditches. On October 10<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell, the Water

Managers, Mr. Mouton, and Kail Antonio (USGS) conducted a marsh burn on the south unit of Lower Joice Island. The burn was successful in clearing a buildup of litter and sprayed Phragmites to improve the habitat conditions. Also on October 10<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa completed the walkthrough checkout of the clubhouse with the hunt group president, MR. Wynne Herron.

- g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ The landowner workshop was completed on 20 September, and the USACE audit tour was completed on September 25th. 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 Directors Committee ~ No report.

- 9. **Meeting Adjournment** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Hansen, all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 PM.