

## **MINUTES**

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

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 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  
Steven Chappell, SRCD  
Philip Choy, DWR  
Kevin Clark, DWR  
Tim Edmunds, SRCD  
John Eudy, SRCD Assoc. Director  
Mike Frost, Frost Ranch  
Melissa Riley, DFW  
Jamel Stewart, DWR  
John Takekawa, SRCD  
John Telfer, SRCD Assoc. Director  
Dick Vanderkous, SRCD Assoc. Director

**1. Call to Order** ~ Mr. Vaccarella 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. Vaccarella opened the September 13, 2023, Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Vaccarella asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the August 9, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes ~ Mr. Vaccarella asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 9, 2023 Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Waters and seconded by Mr. Hansen; all were in favor and the motion carried.

**4. Financial Reports** ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for August 2023 ~ Mr. Chappell reported the August 2023 SRCD General Fund vendor claims totaled \$199,321.12, which included claim #16 as PAI program club reimbursement for a pump in the amount of \$103,391.69 and claim #20 for \$18,000 for infrastructure work at DWR Mein's Landing property. The remaining claims were normal SRCD operational and salary expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the August 2023 Lower Joice Island vendor claims totaled \$8,709.06. All expenses were normal LJI operational expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the August 2023 Water Managers Program vendor claims totaled \$26,216.85. All expenses were normal Water Managers operational expenses. Mr. Chappell reported the August 2023 Special Revenue Department vendor claims for the portable pump program expenses, which totaled \$185.00. Mr. Waters moved to approve the vendor claim summaries as presented, Mr. Hansen seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

b) 2022-2023 Budget Summary Review ~Mr. Chappell presented the budget summary review for SRCD's 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of fiscal year 2022/23. Mr. Chappell handed out the recently approved FY 23/24 SRCD General Fund Budget and pointed out the significant amount of grant program revenues that off sets SRCD General Fund expenses. Mr. Chappell reviewed the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter Solano County Integrated Financial System Report provided to each Director. Mr. Chappell explained that this report included SRCD's annual equipment depreciated as a non-budgeted expenses for fixed assets. As a result, the fund balances in each Department will be offset by the depreciation amounts posted by the County. Mr. Chappell will point out in each Department the depreciation that was posted. Starting at page 1, the Lower Joice Island budget was discussed, and it was a balanced budget, the Delta Stewardship Council Phragmites grant showed a positive fund balance to reimburse SRCD for conducting grant work. The Water Managers Program was balanced. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant budget provided a positive fund balance to reimburse SRCD for conducting grant work. Pest-weed control showed a positive balance for program administration overhead. The DWR Support contract provided salary reimbursement for Chappell, Takekawa, and Ms. Collins. The PAI grant fund included project costs covered by DWR and 5% indirect

costs for administering the program. The Delta Conservancy grant had a small net revenue to the District, and the DWR Mein's Landing support contract included salary benefits for SRCD staff and contracting for vendors. The SFB Restoration Authority essential fish screen grant provided a small net revenue to the District. The DWR Fish Restoration Program contract provided support for technical assistance and contracting of vendors with a net to the District. The SRCD General fund salaries were at 91% and operations were at 110% of the projected budget. Earned interest on funds was higher than in previous years. The General Fund indicated an overall deficit for expenses, but when each department's revenue | the fund balances for each of the individual grant program departments are totaled, the SRCD overall operations showed a small positive balance for the year. The Special Revenue department had a net positive balance for future pump maintenance.

**5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report** ~ The DFW report was provided by Mr. Orlando Rocha and presented by Melissa Riley.

**Elk Season:** After 20 days of hunting, our auction tag hunter was able to harvest the elk she was going after, a nice 9x7 bull. It looks like it will be the new record tule elk taken with a muzzleloader. DFW has completed 3 periods of our general season with a 93% success rate so far and seen a total of 13 animals harvested to this point, with 18 left to fill throughout the rest of September.

**Grizzly Island:** Between elk hunt periods, DFW staff has continued mowing ponds across the wildlife area with focus on knocking back Salsola and phragmites in pond 11, 17s, 22s, Crescent Unit, Island Slough. The dredging project on the Montezuma has been completed and the new material will be instrumental in building the Montezuma levee. Weed management continues to be done in the upland fields in preparation for our nesting and pollinator project due to Salsola plants pushing their way back up. Swale work and interior levee repair around ponds 19 and 21 was completed by contractors. The levees around ponds 19 and 21 have not been drivable by a truck or large tractor in over 5 years, so having that ability to drive around the ponds again has been nice, and I'm sure our hunters will appreciate the easier access to their hunting spots.

**Island Slough:** The fishing pier at Island Slough has been completed, and contractors are now finishing up the new ADA compliant parking spot, compliant ramp, and fencing to segment off the parking lot. They hope to be finished with all work at Island Slough before the end of the month.

**Flood up:** Fall flood up continues as planned. With more dirt work completed this year in our pond 12 closed zone, water is moving efficiently across the ponds and flooding up very quickly. We've been seeing more pintail, migratory mallards, and Canada geese using the newly flooded ponds. At this point, we've flooded up approximately 1,700 acres on the main complex and plan to start flooding Island Slough this week.

**Joice Island:** A contractor has been selected for the Joice Island bridge project. They are currently working out insurance plans and ordering materials in preparation to begin the repair. The expected start date now looks closer to October 1<sup>st</sup>, with approximately a 60-day work window.

**Nutria:** 60 nutrias have been captured in the Suisun Marsh. The primary area of focus has been clubs south of Roaring River, but there was a recent detection near Island Slough.

**6. Department of Water Resources Report** ~ Mr. Jamel Stewart presented the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet and introduced the new Suisun Marsh coordinator, Mr. Philip Choy. For the month of August, there were no salinity standards in the Marsh. The Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities in the Marsh ranged from 4.0 to 10.9 mS/cm. At the end of August, the net Delta outflow was 7,624 cfs. As of September 6<sup>th</sup>, salinities ranged from 3.3 to 9.2 mS/cm with a salinity of 17.0 as MSCG operation trigger. Delta outflow was 12,956 cfs. The salinity station at Ibis Club is not in operation, but Cygnus will be used as a substitute station in the interim.

The Roaring River Distribution System levees continued to be monitored with extreme tides events. Both drains were opened on June 5<sup>th</sup>, but will be closed for flood up, and weekly flood up coordination meetings were initiated. The Morrow Island Distribution System routine maintenance was completed on July 11<sup>th</sup>. DWR continues working with Union Pacific Railroad and landowners to address Morrow Lane Road maintenance and access needs. Environmental staff attended a meeting on August 29<sup>th</sup> at Morrow Lane with DWR engineering and real estate staff, UPRR, and landowners. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) maintenance is ongoing. DWR is planning to dredge in front of the intakes, remove sediment from the pipes, and clear ditches to reduce sediment build up later in September. DWR received BCDC authorization for the work on August 24<sup>th</sup>, and environmental staff conducted a survey on the same date. The flashboards were installed on the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates, and tidal operations began to meet the 100,000-acre-foot block of water ITP requirement through October 20<sup>th</sup> or when the water is expended. 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. The Volanti station will be rehabilitated in the fall. Russian Thistle remains prevalent at several sites in the Marsh. Discussion ensued.

California reservoir capacity in August ranged from 57-89% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 73-97%. Most reservoirs are above historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 125% of normal in the northern Sierra and 162% 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. The AMAT meeting was held August 15<sup>th</sup>, and the quarterly ECAT on September 12<sup>th</sup>. 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. DWR approved the final 2 projects that had additional information provided. A few projects were not approved by the review panel and were not forwarded for approval. Water Managers are conducting project reviews, and they must be able to see the project after completion prior to flooding for approving payment.
- 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 August 10<sup>th</sup> and one tomorrow 14 September.
- d) USACE Permits – RGP 3 & LOP Permit Update ~ SRCD continued to administer the RGP 3 permit. SRCD had a large package on August 31<sup>st</sup> which was approved on September 5<sup>th</sup> by the USACE. On September 25<sup>th</sup>, there will be a USACE and BCDDC audit inspection and tour. The 2023 LOP dredging permit applications are now complete with a BCDC Marsh Development permit issued for this year's levee maintenance dredging on 11 September. Also, the State Lands Commission 10-year dredging lease is expiring, and SRCD has already begun the renewal process.
- e) Water Manager (WM) Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Water Manager program update. Mr. Taylor and the Water Managers prepared and submitted the monthly RGP 3 work applications for August and pursued completion of the dredging permit which was issued by BCDC on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

BCDC also finally sent approval of the 2021 and 2022 Individual Management Plan updates, and Ms. Collins printed new hard copies to distribute to the affected landowners. She completed 84% of the conversion to move club maps from ArcGIS to ArcPro. She completed updates of the SRCD website to add the Board meeting agenda and minutes, the upcoming landowner meeting, the Solano County Mosquito Abatement District cost share program.

Ms. Collins also assisted in organizing the fall landowner workshop in preparing the agenda, sending out the meeting invitation, and assisting with logistics. The Suisun RCD Fall Landowner Workshop is being held at Pete Smith's warehouse on Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. The workshop will include a special presentation by Mr. Bill Green from the water pump efficiency program at Fresno State University will set up a mobile demonstration trailer at the site to show efficiency techniques and answer landowner questions. We look forward to good landowner attendance at this unique opportunity to learn about water pump efficiency for wetland management.

The Water Managers completed the final pump projects in mid-August. Mr. Edmunds led efforts to complete repairs of the fish screens with assistance from ISI, and he used a power washer to clean the sediment and algae from the screens. The screens are being reinstalled this week prior to flood up. On August 11<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Collins and Mr. Edmunds used the survey drone to provide an updated image of parcel 506 for our Delta Conservancy improvement project.

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Edmunds worked with the helicopter vendor to complete aerial herbicide application for Phragmites control. Also in August, he organized the ordering and delivery of herbicide to landowners participating in the control program. On August 17<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Guzman began attending weekly DWR coordination meetings for flood up of Roaring River.

Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa developed a scope of work for repairs on DWR's eroded levee road at Arnold Slough that was distributed on August 23<sup>rd</sup> to SRCD's pre-qualified contractors. On August 31<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Takekawa led a job walk at the work site with DWR managers. On August 29<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and the water managers attended the annual coordination meeting with Solano County Mosquito Abatement District.

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a call with DWR to discuss assistance with weed control on their Decker Island property. On September 8<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Collins worked with Brett Harvey at DWR on developing a conceptual model for the manuscript on wetland drains and fish food production.

- 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 serviced the tractor, dozer, and mower including replacement of the mower blades. He replaced the clubhouse patio support structures and sills with new piers, and he installed new flooring with water manager assistance from Ms. Guzman and Mr. Edmunds. He replaced a nonworking washing machine, cleaned the solar panels, and pruned the overgrown palm trees at the front of the clubhouse. He completed coring of the middle levee with contracted help from Lee Deming and used the dozer

to repair some problem areas including ruts and holes on the levees. He worked with our boat mechanic to replace worn shifting cables on the caretaker boat and spark plug wires on the pontoon boat. He replaced a bad water pump on his work truck. Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa assisted Mr. Mouton in completing the cutting and installation of riser boards in the 6 new gate structures, patching the Spider blind with fiberglass, and removing the West Phrag blind that had popped. He completed mowing ponds in the South, cleaned ditches into the Spider, Harrison, and House ponds, and established fire breaks for the fall marsh burn permit, for which Mr. Takekawa submitted a smoke management plan to BAAQMD. Mr. Mouton also raised the level around the south boat dock area prior to flooding the south unit and mowed around blinds in the north unit.

- g) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ The Fall Landowner Workshop will be held on September 20<sup>th</sup> at Pete Smith's warehouse.

#### **8. Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports ~**

- a) Agency Committee ~ A meeting was held for the Morrow Lane area where the railroad has plans to install a yard track (650 feet long) for loading and unloading. The railroad needs 30 feet beyond their ownership to the east, which includes property on private ownerships, California Ridgway's Rail protected habitat, and includes areas within the primary management area of the Marsh. Their plan is to do this by 2024. Their proposal raises several conservation issues. The District has participated in responses to past development issues including the fill of jurisdictional wetlands, but a project must be formally proposed before the District can provide comment. Discussion ensued.
- 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. Waters, all were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 PM.