



**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 11, 2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OF THE
 RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

The Regular Meeting of the Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Santa Cruz County Board of Directors was called to order at **6:30 PM, March 11, 2015** at the District Office, 820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136, Capitola, CA 95010.

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| Directors Present: | Gordon Claassen
Robert Ketley
Jim McKenna, President
Howard Liebenberg
Mike Manfre, Vice President
Roberta Smith |
| Directors Absent: | John Ricker |
| Associate Director Present: | Kathryn Tobisch |
| RCD Staff Present: | Chris Coburn, Executive Director
Sharon Corkrean, Director of Finance
Tangi Chapman, Recorder |
| NRCS Staff Present | Rich Casale, District Conservationist
Whitney Haraguchi, Soil Conservationist NRCS Ventura |

WELCOME - INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting opened at 6:30PM. Jim McKenna chaired the meeting. Chris Coburn requested that the staff updates be moved up on the agenda to follow after the NRCS reports. The Board made introductions to Whitney Haraguchi, the NRCS Soil Conservationist from Ventura who is visiting the District and shadowing Rich Casale as part of the NRCS leadership program.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

There were no oral communications.

REPORT

NRCS Report

Rich Casale circulated his NRCS Activity Summary for February. Highlights include the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant received by the RCD for \$638,000 to support the Community Water Dialogue efforts in the Pajaro Valley, including irrigation and nutrient management, managed aquifer recharge, and other related activities. Rich mentioned an article he wrote for the RCD annual report, and also he continues writing the NRCS column in the Farm Bureau newsletter. Rich attended the 75th anniversary of the San Mateo RCD with over 150 people in attendance.

Staff Reports

Chris Coburn reminded the Board that the lease for the two District offices will be up in July and that the Board and staff are looking at whether it is necessary to maintain two separate office suites or if it would be better to downsize into one suite in order to reduce overhead costs. Staff will need to decide whether it is best to look for a new office space, combine the two offices into one location or to keep the two offices. Rich said he spoke with Kay Joy-Barge, the Area Conservationist, and Carlos Suarez, the State Conservationist. They mentioned that there is still no funding for an NRCS office space here. However, Rich did mention that the RCD could take advantage of the vehicle use, supply ordering, and printer/computer maintenance as outlined in the Operation Agreement between the RCD and NRCS. Additionally, Rich said that if the offices did consolidate the NRCS would likely be able to pay to move the server room from Suite 128 into Suite 136. Chris said that if the two offices were combined there would still be one extra workstation available, including moving all of the NRCS staff. The Board encouraged staff to forecast future staffing needs and be reasonably sure that there is capacity for expansion. It was mentioned that staff could share workstations, and or use the conference room when not in use for meetings.

Chris reported that the District is putting together a job description and announcement for an Irrigation Specialist for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant; Chris anticipates the process of hiring to take a couple of months. Staff has been busy working on grant proposals, with many round two submissions or concept proposals. Rich mentioned a new NRCS contribution agreement. Chris attended a Community Water Dialogue meeting that was also attended by Karen Ross, California Food and Agriculture Secretary, Charles Lester, the Executive Director of the Coastal Commission, as well as CERES a Public Relations firm that advocates for sustainable business leadership. Lisa Lurie, along with Emily Paddock from Driscoll's gave a presentation to the group that provided an overview of the CWD. CERES is initiating a program entitled "Connect the Drops", to promote Corporate sustainability and water conservation. Chris and Kelli Camara attended the San Mateo RCD 75th anniversary celebration; the event was well attended by state and local legislatures as well as past and present San Mateo RCD staff, and partners. Chris reported that a number of grants have been awarded to the RCD of Santa Cruz County including a Climate Ready grant from the California Coastal Conservancy to accelerate the adoption of practices by farmers to build soil health and sequester carbon. Building off of the Nature's Value in Santa Cruz County report (i.e., ecosystem services) the Coastal Conservancy is funding a final case study that will look at the alternative management approaches of the Watsonville Slough Farms project. The analysis will be conducted in partnership with the Land Trust, and will evaluate services provided by alternative management approaches (i.e. organic agriculture versus traditional agriculture versus open space).

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the February 11, 2015 meeting minutes. Gordon Claassen moved approval of the February 11, 2015 minutes with the date corrected to read February 11, 2015 in the first paragraph. Roberta Smith seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

BUDGET & FINANCE

FY 2014-2015 Expenditures – The February 2015 expenditures were reviewed by the Board. Sharon Corkrean gave highlights of expenditures from February; the Board looked at specific line items. Mike Manfre moved approval of the expenditures as presented. Gordon Claassen seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

Sharon Corkrean updated the Board regarding the FY 2013-2014 audit; she has completed the final review and the auditor is finalizing the audit report. Sharon reports that the audit will be submitted before the deadline. It was mentioned that due to new legislation the District will need to switch auditors or audit personnel every six years. Sharon will bring the cost allocation plan to either the April or May Board meeting for review. Sharon noted that she received a reimbursement from the state in a timely fashion and is optimistic that reimbursements will continue to turn around faster in the future. Roberta Smith voiced her appreciation for Sharon's financial prowess.

ACTION ITEMS

Program Discussion Items

Resolution 2014-14R – The Board reviewed the proposed changes to the Working Lands Resolution that was passed in December of last year. Chris reported that the former Conservation Blue Print committee members reconvened to revise the resolution. The committee included the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, the Santa Cruz Farm Bureau, the County of Santa Cruz and Betsy Herbert as well as the RCD. The committee met twice. Chris feels that the changes improve the document; LTSCC and the Farm Bureau have already adopted the revised resolution. The Board felt that the revisions strengthened the document. Roberta Smith moved approval of the revised Working Lands Resolution, 2014-14R. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. All were in the favor. The motion carried.

Resolution 2015-01 – Chris reported that Alicia Moss and Kelli Camara have prepared a grant proposal to the Wildlife Conservation Board to fund three IWRP projects for the 2015 construction season. The grant is for \$715,000 and includes sediment removal on San Vicente Creek, and a partnership project with LTSCC on the Bryant-Habert property that will include habitat features for Santa Cruz Long Toed and Santa Cruz Tiger Salamanders; in addition, a restoration project on Soquel Creek near Olive Springs Quarry. Robert Ketley moved approval of Resolution 2015-01 for the District to submit a grant proposal to the Wildlife Conservation Board. Gordon Claassen seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carries.

REPORTS

Director Reports

Robert Ketley noticed that NRCS has been working with a landowner on Pioneer Road in Watsonville to fix an erosion problem.

Jim McKenna reported on the International Erosion Control Association Conference he attended in Portland, Oregon. He attended a breakout class on slope mechanics that was very interesting.

Gordon attended a talk by Allan Savory of the Savory Institute in Mt View. The talk was on the use of grazing as a major tool for the revitalization of grasslands.

Howard Liebenberg reported on a TV show he was watching where high school kids were working on restoration and weed management projects. He suggested that the shovels they were using could be replaced by more appropriate tools that make weed management much easier and a sponsorship by a tool company such as Corona could reduce costs and be more effective.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Tangi circulated a letter from the Special District Risk Management Authority announcing that property, liability and workers compensation rates will remain the same for the sixth year in a row.

NEXT MEETING

Date/ Agenda Items

The next meeting will be on April 8, 2015. Gordon Claassen moved to adjourn the meeting. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15PM.

Jim McKenna
President, Board of Directors
(TC:JM)

