



**MINUTES OF THE MAY 13, 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, May 13, 2015** at the District Office, 820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136, Capitola, CA 95010.

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| Directors Present: | Gordon Claassen Robert Ketley Mike Manfre, Vice President John Ricker |
| Directors Absent: | Howard Liebenberg Jim McKenna, President Roberta Smith |
| RCD Staff Present: | Chris Coburn, Executive Director Sharon Corkrean, Director of Finance Tangi Chapman, Recorder |
| Member of the public: | Devii Rao, UC Coop-Extension Stuart Davis |

WELCOME - INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting opened at 6:30PM. Mike Manfre chaired the meeting. Introductions were made.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Devii Rao, the Livestock and Natural Resource Advisor with UC Cooperative Extension, introduced herself to the Board. She works in the Hollister office and services Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties. With a degree from UC Berkeley in Range Management, she explained that her interested programs that enhance outcomes of soil and rangeland health by working with livestock managers in the tri-county area. She worked for the Gold Ridge RCD in the past and is looking forward to coordinating with the RCD of Santa Cruz County in the future.

REPORT

NRCS Report

The NRCS Activity Summary for April was circulated. Chris highlighted an NRCS leadership tour that was hosted by the local office last month. The group toured several projects that the NRCS and RCD partnered on in the county.

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the April 8, 2015 meeting minutes. Robert Ketley moved approval of the April 8, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. Gordon Claassen seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

BUDGET & FINANCE

FY 2014-2015 Expenditures – The April 2015 expenditures were reviewed by the Board. Gordon Claassen moved approval of the April 2015 expenditures as presented. Robert Ketley seconded the

motion. The vote was called: John Ricker abstained; Gordon Claassen, Robert Ketley and Mike Manfre voted approval of the motion. The motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS

Resolution 2015-02 – Chris Coburn presented the Board with Resolution 2015-02 to enter into agreement with the California Coastal Commission for the Pajaro Valley Agricultural Climate Change Resiliency grant. Chris told the Board that the grant is for approximately \$175,000 and consists mostly of personnel hours to accelerate on-farm adaptability to climate changes. Additionally, the grant will provide technical services to address drought concerns and increasing conservation processes of soil health and erosion control. After questions were addressed John Ricker moved approval of Resolution 2015-02. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

Resolution 2015-03 – Chris presented the Board with Resolution 2015-03, a resolution for the RCD to enter into a grant agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for a habitat improvement project on Lower Scotts Creek. John Ricker moved approval of Resolution 2015-03. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

North Rispin Property Inspection – Chris circulated the North Rispin Property Inspection form submitted by Kelli Camara. There was nothing unusual about the property other than some trash in a couple of locations. Gordon Claassen moved approval of the inspection. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Staff Reports

Chris explained that Auditors from the State Department of Finance visited the District to conduct an audit of a grant for which the District is a sub-grantee under a Proposition 50 grant awarded to the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency. Chris was happy to report that while the audit has not been finalized, it appears that the auditors did not find any significant issues with the District's portion of the grant. Initial feedback from the auditors was that they were impressed with the District's records, timekeeping and financial protocols. The only concern raised was regarding internal controls surrounding the establishment of billable rates included in the grants. RCD staff was able to walk them through how that was done and were able to justify the rates. However, the auditors sought original rate documentation from when the proposal was submitted – nearly a decade ago. Chris praised the work that Finance Director Sharon Corkrean did to prepare for and conduct the audit. In turn, Sharon expressed her gratitude to Arianne Rettinger and Karl Fieberling for all their hard work to prepare for the audit. Sharon explained that the new Cost Allocation plan provides the District with the methodology and internal controls to establish rates going forward.

Chris told the Board that recruitment for the Agricultural Program Technical Specialist position has begun and that the committee has the list down to six candidates with whom interviews will be conducted. The position is funded for the next 2-3 years to assist with irrigation and nutrient management in the Pajaro and elsewhere in the county. The District is working closely with a number of partners for the recruitment and in the development of the scope of work for this position.

Chris and Kelli Camara will be traveling to Sacramento for a hearing by the California State Wildlife Conservation Board who will be considering a grant award to the District. The grant was written to fund three projects; unfortunately one project was dropped due to permitting and CEQA issues. This project will be included in subsequent grants. The two remaining projects will be on Soquel Creek and San Vicente Creek. The grant is for approximately half a million dollars.

Similarly, in June staff will attend a meeting of the State Coastal Conservancy Board who will be meeting to consider funding a fourth phase of the Integrated Watershed Resources Program, among other concerns.

Chris has continued to have conversations with a number of RCD partners regarding a potential open space district for the County. In particular, Chris is providing the perspective regarding the importance of stewardship and maintenance of existing open space, private lands and parks lands within the county.

The RCD has been notified of a grant award for the Livestock and Land Program. The award is a federal 319(h) grant in the Pajaro Watershed with a focus on the Upper Pajaro. The grant is for project implementation, personnel and administrative costs.

The Board asked what it will take for the Cost Allocation plan to be approved. Sharon responded that the plan needs to be approved by a federal agency having legal cognizance or jurisdiction. She has submitted the document to the USDA for approval. John Ricker requested a copy of the Cost Allocation plan.

Chris is working with the Local Agency Formation Commission on the District's service review.

Director Reports

Gordon Claassen attended the Central Coast Rangeland Conference Meeting about non-lethal means of predator control on grazing animals at the Santa Lucia Conservancy. They are using livestock to control the vegetation that has been absent of grazing for many years. They have been using camera traps to monitor the movement of predators before they bring in the livestock to an area. This gives them information on predator movements and how to decrease the predation on the livestock.

Additionally, Gordon reported that Swanton Pacific Ranch will be hosting a two week class on Sustainable Livestock and Rangeland Management on June 22 to July 2. This class includes methods of resource evaluation and management planning on the ranch.

CALENDAR DATES

- June 10 RCD Board meeting at 6:30PM at the District office
- TBD Blue Circle Meeting
- TBD RCD 75th Anniversary Celebration in 2016


WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were no written communications.

NEXT MEETING

Date/ Agenda Items

The next meeting will be on June 10, 2015. Gordon Claassen moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45PM. John Ricker seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carries



Mike Manfre
Vice President, Board of Directors
(TC:JM)