



**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 13, 2016 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 **6:30PM, January 13, 2016** at the District Office, 820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136, Capitola, CA 95010.

Directors Present: Gordon Claassen
Howard Liebenberg
Robert Ketley
Mike Manfre, Vice President
Jim McKenna, President
John Ricker
Roberta Smith

Associate Directors Present: Kathryn Tobisch

RCD Staff Present: Chris Coburn, Executive Director
Tangi Chapman, Recorder

NRCS Present: Rich Casale, District Conservationist

WELCOME - INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting opened at 6:30PM; Jim McKenna chaired the meeting.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

There were no Oral Communications from the public.

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the November 12, 2015 meeting minutes. Howard Liebenberg moved approval of the November 12, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

The Board reviewed the November 12, 2015 special meeting minutes. John Ricker moved approval of the November 12, 2015 special meeting minutes as presented. Howard Liebenberg noticed that Steve Butler was not on the list of attendees and requested he be added to the Associate Directors Present list. John Ricker accepted the amendment. Gordon Claassen seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

BUDGET & FINANCE

FY 2015-2016 Expenditures – The November 2015 Expenditures were reviewed by the Board. Robert Ketley moved approval of the November 2015 Expenditures as presented. Gordon Claassen seconded the motion. Gordon Claassen, Howard Liebenberg, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and Roberta Smith were in favor of the motion, John Ricker abstained; the motion carried.

FY 2015-2016 Expenditures – The December 2015 Expenditures were reviewed by the Board. Howard Liebenberg moved approval of the December 2015 Expenditures as presented; Mike Manfre seconded the motion. Gordon Claassen, Howard Liebenberg, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and Roberta Smith were in favor of the motion, John Ricker abstained; the motion carried.

REPORTS

NRCS Report

Rich Casale circulated the activity reports for November and December 2015. He highlighted that the local office has received four new EQIP applications and they will continue to receive more applications on a rolling basis until July. He reported that there is an intensified focus on water depletion and he reminded the Board that NRCS does not classify groundwater overdraft as a resource concern, a fact that limits NRCS resources to address the problem. The Board engaged in a lively discussion about the challenge and potential of groundwater recharge. Chris Coburn reminded the Board that the RCD is working with Dr. Andy Fisher of UCSC to map suitability areas for groundwater recharge throughout Santa Cruz County. That analysis, combined with a runoff model, will be used to identify potential areas to target for implementation of managed aquifer recharge projects. The RCD will likely use funds from the Coastal Conservancy grant to site locations and conduct additional, on-site analysis (push tests) to determine suitability. The RCD is also working on a complimentary project to develop a voluntary plan for rotational cover cropping in the Pajaro Valley. That work is funded under a grant from the Department of Conservation awarded to the County of Santa Cruz. Rich highlighted that an easement has just closed on a 22-acre property where agricultural land was taken out of production and restored near Harkin and Watsonville Sloughs. That easement was funded through the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program. Rich also reported that he has conducted 21 site visits around the county and has delivered several presentations to various audiences, including recently at the EcoFarm Conference. The NRCS Capitola office currently is hosting three new volunteers and is hoping that the NRCS will be able to fill the office's vacant Soil Conservationist position soon, although Rich reported that NRCS has yet to advertise the position.

ACTION ITEMS

Construction Bid Procedure – Chris Coburn reported that Kelli Camara has been in contact with the RCD's legal counsel regarding Construction Bid Procedures in light of changes to the Bonding requirements. To comply with these new requirements the project cost for each of the Tiers has been reduced. Tier I projects are defined as those projects less than \$25,000 (formerly \$30,000) and the Tier II projects are those projects between \$25,000-\$100,000. John Ricker moved approval of the amended Bidding Procedures Policy as presented. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion.

Staff Reports

Chris reported that the office closure allowed all staff to take a break and enjoy family and the holidays. He updated the Board regarding a task force, established by the County Board of Supervisors, to address cannabis cultivation in the County. The so-called Cannabis Cultivation Task Force (or C4 Task Force) was established to develop rules for the cultivation and distribution of cannabis in the County in such a manner that protects the environment and ensures public safety. The Consultant for the C4 Task Force requested that Chris meet with the group, informally, to discuss possible roles for the District. The Board stated that cultivation of marijuana should have to follow the same regulations and requirements that all agriculture must comply with. Mike Manfre pointed out that the infrastructure already exists to work with farmers. John Ricker pointed out that in December the County of Santa Cruz put into place a stop-gap ordinance and continues to work on creating local ordinance that is effective and enforceable.

Chris continues his participation, as requested by the Board of Supervisors, as part of the stakeholder group evaluating the needs and opportunities related to a possible open space district in the County. The stakeholder group, consisting of the RCD, Land Trust, County Parks, Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville, the Farm Bureau and Sempervirens Fund, has held two meetings to discuss needs, governance and possible revenue options. Chris continues to push for stewardship on existing lands. The group is exploring how to fund this effort.

Chris informed the Board that Lisa Lurie will be going on maternity leave at the beginning of February and will be out until July. Given existing workloads and needs, Chris is looking to establish contract employee relationships with former employees to fill in on specific projects during Lisa's absence. He said that Kelli Camara has been very busy and continues to build on Restoration Project Management, efforts are underway to continue her contract and then bring her on as staff. He mentioned that Gerry Spinelli has been an asset to the office and that the District is looking to sponsor his work visa in the near future. In an effort to reduce costs, the District will likely pursue consolidating operations into Suite 136, including folding in NRCS staff. This effort will require some office modifications and possible flexible desk sharing.

Chris is working with the Regional Transportation Commission, CalTrans, and CalPoly to develop designs and specifications for restoration of the Scotts Creek Lagoon and replacement of the CalTrans Highway 1 Bridge. Recently, the District received \$84,000 from CalTrans through a settlement related to impacts on San Pedro Creek (San Mateo County) to assist with project development. It also appears that the District will receive up to \$74,000 from a grant program entitled the Pacific Marine Estuarine Partnership to match the mitigation funds. Chris recently had a meeting with PG&E to discuss the \$3,000 Early Mitigation Program awarded to the District. PG&E is in the process of evaluating the condition of its force main natural gas transmission line, and, as part of that evaluation, is determining if vegetation is impacting its condition. An assessment of vegetation on top of or adjacent to the transmission line is required and vegetation may need to be cleared in the process. Ideally, vegetation removal will be minimized, but where necessary, it would be a benefit to have a coordinated process for mitigation.

Chris reported that there will be a county sponsored Open House entitled "Connecting the Drops" at New Brighton Middle School on January 28 at 6:30PM. Finally, Chris gave a big shout out to Bernadette Zavala and John Ricker for hosting the RCD/NRCS Holiday Party!

Director Reports

Howard Liebenberg commented on the new County Transportation Building and the requirement that builders rip out all of the new flooring when it was discovered that the flooring originated in Germany. New flooring from the USA was required to be installed instead.

Jim McKenna reported on the CARCD Conference he attended in November at the Tenaya Lodge in Yosemite. Kelli Camara, Sacha Lozano and Chris Coburn all presented at the Conference.

John Ricker attended a forum at UC Berkley where his daughter presented on the successful Branciforte Dam Removal.

CALENDAR DATES

- January 28, 2016 at 6:30, Connecting the Drops at New Brighton Middle School

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were no written communications.

NEXT MEETING

Date/ Agenda Items

The next meeting will be on February 10, 2016. Gordon Claassen moved to adjourn at 8:18PM.
Howard Liebenberg seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion.

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

