



**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 12, 2017 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 6:33PM April 12, 2017 at the District Office, 820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136, Capitola, CA 95010.

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| Directors Present: | Gordon Claassen
Howard Liebenberg
Mike Manfre, Vice President
Jim McKenna, President
Robert Ketley |
| Directors Absent: | John Ricker
Roberta Smith |
| Associate Directors Present: | Kathryn Tobisch |
| RCD Staff Present: | Chris Coburn, Executive Director
Tangi Chapman, Recorder |
| NRCS Staff Present: | Roger Tompkins, Acting District Conservationist |

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33PM. Jim McKenna chaired the meeting; there was a quorum present.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME

There were no introductions made.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board made no changes to the Agenda.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Gordon Claassen moved approval of the Consent Agenda items. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Consider adoption of a Public Records Request Policy for the District

Chris Coburn presented the Board with the second revision of the Public Records Request Policy. He pointed out two changes to the document, one of which was to insert language John Ricker had received from Santa Cruz County Counsel that gives the District some discretion in releasing documents that might compromise the District's voluntary relationship with landowners. The other change was a grammatical clarification suggested by Robert Ketley. Gordon Claassen moved approval of the Public Records Request Policy as presented. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Executive Director Report

Chris Coburn highlighted various items in the Executive Director Report that was circulated to the Board along with the agenda packet. Chris highlighted that Angie Gruys has been responding to requests for assistance from property owners who have suffered from recent storm damage. Roger Tompkins reported that he accompanied Angie on five site visits to assess whether the properties qualified for federal emergency cost-share funds; of the five only one qualified. To qualify there has to be a demonstrable threat to human life or structures and have a cost benefit ratio that supports implementation.

Chris reported that the Bechtel Foundation has been supporting capacity building of RCDs statewide, and that he was asked to fill out a survey on behalf of the Board, in part, to assess the level of interest in participating in leadership training. Chris gave the expected time commitment required of participants. The Board had a lively discussion about what they would be interested in learning and gaining from such training. Chris also shared that he attended training in Santa Barbara last year sponsored by Bechtel and thought it was worthwhile. The Board's most pressing request is that the training focuses on ideas for the Board and Staff to help foster new partnerships and identify new funding sources. Robert Ketley put it this way, "how can we as Board members generate better relationships with funders and repackage our District to attract more philanthropists?" Chris thanked the Board for their input and said that he would complete the survey with their ideas in mind.

Chris sadly reported that the RCD's Agronomist, Gerry Spinelli, has moved to Modesto and that "filling his shoes" will be hard.

Chris continues to make progress on revenue diversification. He is hopeful that several new sources of funding may come on line in the next fiscal year, including support from the County and local water districts. He continues to work on the Open Space effort that would fund stewardship across the County.

Chris further reported that he has worked over the past year to establish a county-wide fire safe council. Entitled Fire Safe Santa Cruz County, their first meeting will be held Wednesday the 19th April at 2PM at Simpkins Center. Related to fire preparedness efforts, Chris reports that the Monterey Bay Air Pollution Control District is interested in funding the RCD to assist property owners with chipping up downed wood that resulted from winter storms.

7.2. NRCS Report

Roger Tompkins circulated the NRCS report. He highlighted a recent Soil Quality Test Kit demonstration workshop that Sacha Lozano coordinated with NRCS and District staff. Ken Oster NRCS Soil Scientist demonstrated the use of the kits and will use the results to give the property owner valuable assessment and recommendations. Additionally, NRCS has been working on "batch 3" of funding for water conservation, erosion and RCPP projects through the EQIP program. He was happy to report the funding freeze is no longer in effect, but did not yet have any word on when the vacant positions would be filled.

7.2. Directors Reports

Gordon Claassen reported on a carbon farming training he attended at Cal Poly's Swanton Pacific Ranch. Chris pointed out that carbon farming has become an area of interest of the state, and there may be funding in the future from AB 32 to support these efforts. Gordon shared that controlled grazing is being studied as a successful means of carbon sequestration. Additionally, the Ranch has baseline carbon data from a project done a couple of years ago. He said that the Professional Soil Scientists Association, soil scientists, dug carbon pits and they can use the data collected then to compare to now. Finally, Gordon shared that he will be attending the Central Coast Rangeland Coalition meeting next week in San Luis Obispo.

Jim McKenna went to the International Erosion Control Conference in February; he shared a line from the meeting, "Prescribe for 5" which means the soil needs to have a minimum of 5% organic material for revegetation projects to succeed and for the plants to grow well.

Howard Liebenberg reported that he has been working on a restoration project in Carmel Valley in the aftermath of the Tassajara fire. He has been astonished at the regrowth of weeds which are now over five feet tall. The entire Valley burned and the annual grasses came back in full force.

8. ADJOURN

The next meeting of the RCD Board of Directors is scheduled for May 10, 2017. Gordon Claassen moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:59PM. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned.

Jim McKenna
President, Board of Directors



(TC:JM)