

**PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Regular Meeting
August 16, 2005**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Placer County Resource Conservation District Board was called to order by RCD Board Chairman Tom Wehri at 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS AND OTHERS PRESENT

Directors Present: Stanley (Stan) MacDonald
Stewart Feldman
Chris Paull
Cherie Schiavone
Thomas (Tom) Wehri
Gregory (Greg) Nau
Robert (Bob) Wiswell, Jr.
Whitney Nicholas, Associate Director

Directors Absent: None

Others Present: Rich Gresham, RCD Manager
Paul Lake, NRCS Acting District Conservationist - Placer County
Katie Maloney, RCD Sr. Administrative Assistant
Bill Templin, American River Watershed Coordinator

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Tom Wehri requested an addition to the agenda to allow discussion regarding how to best honor Cliff Heitz's career in light of his retirement. Chris moved to approve the agenda with proposed addition. Greg Nau seconded, motion carried unanimously.

GUESTS

Jeff Darlington, Placer Land Trust Executive Director
Gregg Bates, Executive Director Dry Creek Conservancy
Robin Yonash, Ponderosa Fire Safe Council
Christian Carleton, Foothill Associates

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Stan McDonald moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of July 19, 2005 as presented. Stewart Feldman seconded; motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Katie Maloney presented the *Financial Statement for the Month Ended July 31, 2005* and *Schedule of Expenses and Warrants Issued for July 2005*.

Stewart Feldman moved to approve the *Financial Statement* and the *Schedule of Expenses and Warrants Issued for the Month ended July 31, 2005*. Chris Paull seconded; motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS

New Business:

a) *Update Re: Placer Land Trust Activities:*

Tom Wehri introduced Jeff Darlington Executive Director for the Placer Land Trust (PLT) since 2002. PLT literature and materials were distributed.

Jeff gave the board an overview of the privately funded, non-profit organization that is headquartered in Auburn. PLT works with willing landowners to protect open space and agricultural land. PLT provides an avenue for private landowners to preserve their land by placing the land or the development rights to that land in "trust" permanently. Tools used by PLT to protect open space and agricultural land include the use of conservation or agricultural easements or land acquisition.

Jeff briefly reviewed PLT projects both implemented and planned. In the past, most candidates for protection have been working farms or ranches. PLT is working closely with the Placer Legacy Program, municipalities, and environmental groups.

Per a recent agreement executed in conjunction with the Roseville West Specific Plan, PLT will be receiving future conveyance fees to fund land conservation in West Placer and instigating PLT's new *West Placer Habitat Protection Program* that led to the recent acquisition of the 427 acre Hofman Ranch and 469 acres of Swainson's Grassland Preserve. This agreement will, over time, provide \$80M for conservation easements and land acquisitions.

Jeff noted mutual areas of interest between the RCD and PLT and acknowledged the desire to become better acquainted in order to better explore potential areas of cooperation. He noted PLT's interest in working within the American River, Bear River, Coon Creek, and Pleasant Grove watersheds.

PLT's mission through land protection to ensure clean drinking water, provide diverse wildlife habitat, maintain working farms and ranches, preserve public recreation, and protect the rural way of life.

Board discussion revolved around PLT's relationship with Placer Legacy and how funders look in favor upon projects that have both public and private support. PLT recently acquired 1,450 acres in Cisco Grove and turned the property over to the Placer Legacy program reflecting the cooperative nature of the transaction.

Discussion revolved around the necessity of actively managing acquired lands and various funding options to provide for maintenance.

Jeff agreed land needs to be actively managed and that management is taken into consideration during the protection process.

Jeff also noted PLT is self sufficient in the area of technical expertise with pro-bono expertise available to them in response to a director's pointing out the RCD may be able to offer technical expertise to PLT efforts.

The RCD noted their expertise extends to land management planning and discussion followed that revolved around prospective projects and the potential for collaboration in the future.

Tom thanked Jeff for his time on behalf of the RCD Board.

b) *Update and Possible Action Re: Letters of Support for Proposed Legislation to replace HR2389 and Placer County Fire Safe Alliance Coordinator:*

Tom Wehri gave an historical overview of the HR 2389 and recommended the board review the proposed letters of support for reauthorization of legislation to renew HR2389 Title III funding. Currently HR 2389 funding through Placer County is being used to augment both the Placer County Chipper Program and Fire Safe Inspection Program.

After a brief discussion, Stewart Feldman moved to approve letters of support to reauthorize HR2389 funding. Chris Paull seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Rich Gresham reported the Placer County Board of Supervisors has approved funding to support a Placer County Fire Safe Coordinator and requested the board consider a letter of support and a request that the position being funded also serve as Coordinator for the Placer County Fire Safe Alliance.

After review of the proposed language, Robin Yonash requested the letter include language stressing the independent and collaborative nature of both local fire safe councils and the Placer County Fire Safe Alliance (Alliance).

After further discussion, Stewart Feldman moved the board approve a letter with additional language clarifying a request for assistance without any changes in organizational structure of local fire safe councils or the Alliance. Stan McDonald seconded, motion carried unanimously.

c) *Update and Possible Action Re: RCD Hosting CA Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) Forestry and Fuels Management Committee:*

Stewart Feldman reported the RCD will be hosting the CARCD Forestry and Fuels Management Committee and the CA Forestry Stewardship Coordinating Committee for their two day meeting and tour September 8th and 9th.

After a brief discussion, Chris Paull moved the board approve up to \$100 in miscellaneous expenditures associated with hosting the event. Bob Wiswell seconded, motion carried unanimously.

d) *Update and Possible Action Re: Placer Tree Partners/Placer County Planning Effort to Develop Tree Care Brochures and Booklet:*

Katie Maloney reviewed the proposal developed between the Placer Tree Partners and Placer County Planning Department to develop tree care literature for public education.

Katie noted the RCD currently serves the PTP as fiscal administrator and requested the board approve the RCD, include in that effort, the administration of \$31,170 in tree mitigation funding from Placer County Planning to the PTP for brochure development and printing.

Stewart Feldman moved to approve the fiscal management of funding from the county to PTP in conjunction with the development of tree care literature. Chris Paull seconded. Motion carried.

e) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Step Increase for RCD Resource Management Planner and Annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for RCD Personnel:*

Tom asked the board to consider awarding a step increase in grade for district employee Mark White.

Rich Gresham reviewed Marks' annual evaluation and noted Mark has spent three years at his current grade level and recommended the board approve the requested step increase.

Tom reviewed the federal system of step increases that will increase Mark's salary compensation by \$1.15 per hour.

Greg Nau asked that the board address the annually considered Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) before taking action on the step increase. He noted that although staff may be worth the money, the RCD must be able to afford the increase and associated expenses.

Rich and Katie both assured the board that the proposed RCD '05-'06 Budget allows the board flexibility in terms of increasing staff compensation and associated expenses like the PERS contribution of which the RCD pays both the employee and employer portion.

After further discussion, Chris Paull moved to approve both the step increase for Mark White and a COLA increase of 3.68% for both Rich Gresham and Mark White, RCD employees. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously.

- f) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Draft '05-'06 RCD Budget:*
Katie Maloney reviewed the *RCD Budget Variance Report for the Twelve Months Ending June 30, 2005* and the proposed *Draft RCD '05-'06 Budget*, then fielded questions from the board.

Rich noted the anticipated annual transfer from the Unreserved Fund to the Reserved Fund is usually considered along with the final Budget.

After board discussion, Stewart moved to approve the draft budget as presented. Cherie Schiavone seconded; motion carried unanimously. The final budget with any recommended fund transfers will be addressed next month.

- g) *Update Re: District Manager's Annual Performance Evaluation:*
Tom Wehri reported conducting District Manager Rich Gresham's annual performance evaluation that resulted in an overall *Superior* Rating. He reminded the board that Rich and the RCD have a two year compensation agreement that will be up for review at the end of this fiscal year in June 2006.

- h) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: CA Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) Annual Conference Attendance and Delegate Selection:*
The board discussed the upcoming CARCD Annual Conference and Meeting. Rich Gresham, Stan MacDonald, and Stewart Feldman committed to attend not only the CARCD conference, but also the CARCD forestry subcommittee meetings and tour taking place in advance of the conference. Tom Wehri, Chris Paull, and Whitney Nicholas committed to attend the conference in addition to Rich, Stan, and Stewart.

Katie Maloney will take care of registering the attendees for the conference and as usual, individuals will make their own transportation and lodging arrangements.

After further board discussion, Bob Wiswell moved to nominate Chris Paull as the RCD Delegate and Stewart Feldman as Alternate Delegate for the 2005 conference. Stan MacDonald seconded; motion carried unanimously.

- i) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Honoring the Career of Cliff Heitz*
The board discussed various options regarding how to best show the RCD's appreciation for the service Cliff Heitz has provided the RCD during his long career as NRCS District Conservationist for the Auburn field office. Tom suggested both a plaque of appreciation and a retirement gift. The board concurred and staff will take care of the details.

Paul Lake NRCS Acting District Conservationist reminded the board about the details of Cliff's retirement celebration slated to take place on September 17th at Regional Park off Dry Creek Road from 5-9 p.m.

It was noted the next RCD Newsletter will carry an article about Cliff, his career, and announcing his retirement.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- *Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator Selection Update:*
Tom Wehri gave an overview of the Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator selection process that has resulted in offering the position to Dry Creek Conservancy Executive Director Gregg Bates. Contracting is now in process. Tom introduced Gregg Bates to board members.

Gregg noted he has worked with the Dry Creek Conservancy for ten years as well as living within the Dry Creek watershed and is therefore familiar with both the Dry Creek Watershed Council and watershed issues. He is looking forward to providing coordination for the council and implementing the DOC Workplan and Dry Creek Watershed Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) developed by the council after several years of effort.

Gregg thanked the RCD for stepping up to host the coordinator in collaboration with the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) and provide a coordinator for the Dry Creek watershed.

- *Forestry & Fuel Management Committee:*
The committee met and discussed hosting the CARCD committee meetings and tour, the Colfax Shaded Fuel Break Project, Placer County Air Pollution Control District's Vegetation Management Visioning Project, the Spears/Didion Vegetation Management Planning effort, the PG&E Stewardship Council, Placer Legacy, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Ponderosa Fire Safe Council, and Placer Land Trust efforts, HR2389 Title Rules, projects and grants review, and explored Peer Court options for potential collaboration in a senior/disabled vegetation management assistance program.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Greg Nau:

- Greg reported meeting with Bill Templin, Rich Gresham, and Chris Paull regarding the potential formation of an North Fork American River Foundation modeled on the successful Henry's Fork Foundation as a way to address future sustainability challenges and continue watershed work. Greg noted he is impressed with Bill's effort to garner interest to push to effort forward.
- Greg reported his property was the subject of a 4291 Fire Safe Inspection recently and noted the expanded clearance requirement from 30 feet to 100 feet around structures. He suggested the RCD may have a role in increasing public awareness of the increased clearance requirements and requested future board discussion of the idea in order to help increase compliance with the updated law. CDF is using the first year of the new clearance requirements as an opportunity to educate landowners about the expanded requirement before actively enforcing the new standards.

Stewart noted the local fire safe councils and the Alliance can also serve as an educational arm to get the word out to communities about the increased requirements and noted the RCD's active involvement in the Alliance effort.

Bob Wiswell noted that although the Lincoln area is not the main focus of fire safe measures like the foothills, the community is also at risk and the 4291 Inspections may be helping increase awareness in the Lincoln community regarding fire risk and is encouraging community compliance.

Stewart Feldman:

- Stewart passed out copies of the updated Farmers Market brochure that included acknowledgement of the RCD's sponsorship of the updated brochure.
- Stewart noted he is working with Rich on the next RCD Newsletter.

Rich briefly reviewed potential materials for the newsletter in the process of being developed.

- Stewart reported this year's *Farm & Barn Tour* is slated for October 9th with 8-10 ranches and farms under consideration for the one day tour to view barns in Placer County.

Chris Paull:

- Chris reported attending the North Fork American River Foundation formation meeting with Greg, Rich, and Bill.

Cherie Schiavone:

- Cherie announced that after much consideration regarding her multiple ongoing activities, she will be submitting her resignation from the RCD Board by year end.

Tom Wehri:

- Tom reported participating in the Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator selection process.
- Tom represented the CARCD and RCD in assisting the Secretary of Agriculture in developing a presentation about development and agricultural community issues. He noted he recommended to the Secretary more funding to provide more technical assistance to more producers.

Stan MacDonald:

- Stan reported he will be unable to attend the September 30th CARCD Regional meeting as solicited a replacement for his representation.

Tom Wehri noted a search for a new Regional Chair to replace Bob Dolton is being conducted and solicited interest in the position from the board and removed himself from consideration.

STAFF REPORTS

RCD Report:

In addition to the written activity reports for the month of July submitted to the Board, the following points were discussed:

- Rich Gresham reported the \$30K Facility Services Agreement language is in the process of being developed and should be ready for formal board consideration next month.
- Katie Maloney reported she will continue to crunch the numbers for the '04-'05 Direct & Indirect Expenses Analysis as soon as she has the final year end numbers. She noted the analysis should be ready for board review next month.

Katie also reported her annual meeting with the RCD's Certified Public Accountant, Bill Myers will take place in the next month and she is getting prepared for the meeting that marks the beginning of the annual audit process.

- Bill Templin handed out copies of his monthly activity report dated August 16th and the agenda for the August 18th American River Watershed Group meeting.

Tom Wehri suggested the RCD might consider some kind of sponsorship of the foundation.

Bill noted he hopes the RCD will be active in both the discussions and formation of a foundation.

- Bill indicated the presence of Brown Trout in the watershed and the need to gather additional information about spawning and habitat conditions within the watershed and handed out copies of a PowerPoint presentation regarding the potential formation of a North Fork American River Foundation including fish photos.

AGENCY REPORTS

- Paul Lake reported he has been serving as Acting District Conservationist since Cliff's retirement and noted it will most likely take 2-3 months to find a permanent replacement.

Plans for Cliff's retirement party were discussed.

- Paul handed out his July activity report, reviewed progress on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), noted the increase in EQIP funding comes with increased management responsibilities, and reported completion checks are being conducted.
- Paul reported of the five Conservation Security Program (CSP) applications received only three are continuing the contracting process. He noted it is a complicated program and expects an additional fall sign-up for the program to be conducted.

Tom offered Paul RCD assistance while he is serving as Acting Conservationist.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Copy of letters of support dated August 9th to US Senators Feinstein and Boxer and US Representative Doolittle for reauthorization of HR2389 funding.
- US Forest Service invitation to the USFS Centennial Celebration and dedication of Robinson Flat Historic Guard Station & Campground slated for August 20th.
- Notice of 11th Annual Sierra Business Council Conference slated for October 21-22, 2005.
- Placer Land Trust Invitation to August 25th Placer Conservator Award Dinner to honor Fred Yeager.
- Notice of Preparation for the Vegetation Management Program Draft Environmental Report from CA Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection for review and comment.
- Placer County Tax Collector Notification of Tax-Defaulted Land Sale and list of properties.
- Notification of Great Valley Centers 6th Annual Sacramento Valley Forum slated for October 27th.
- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) notice of annual fund raising raffle.
- Copy of letter dated July 25th from the RCD to Weaver Auto and Truck Center accepting their lowest sealed bid for two tow vehicles for the Placer County Chipper Program.
- Cover letter from SAFCA dated July 28th regarding the RCD/SAFCA agreement to host a Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator with DOC funding.
- USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) flyer, *FSA Update*, for August 2005.
- US Dept. of Interior Fish & Wildlife Service notice re: Final Rule Is Published Designating Critical Habitat for 15 Vernal Pool Species.
- American River Authority August 8th meeting agenda.
- High Ranch Nursery newsletter, *HRN News*, for August 2005 and inventory sale catalog.
- Special District and Local Government Institute registration brochure for *Finance Seminar*.
- CA Special Districts Association (CSDA) Annual Conference & Exhibitor Showcase registration packet for September 27-29, 2005.

- USFS and The National Arbor Day Foundation educational program packet and booklet, *Backyard Woods*, with associated educational materials.
- CSDA newsletter, *CSDA News*, for June 2005.
- CA ReLeaf newsletter, *CA Trees*, for summer 2005.
- NACD Newsletter, *Forestry Notes* and *Buffer Notes*, for July 2005.
- Sacramento Municipal Utility District publication, *The Confluence*, for summer 2005.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Final RCD '05-'06 Budget
- RCD/Facility Services Agreement
- RCD '04-'05 Direct & Indirect Costs Analysis
- Potential RCD Outreach Efforts

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Cherie Schiavone moved to adjourn the meeting. Chris Paull seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Board Chair Tom Wehri adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.