

**PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Regular Meeting
September 20, 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
Robert (Bob) Wiswell, Jr.
Whitney Nicholas, Associate Director

Directors Absent: Gregory (Greg) Nau

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
Gregg Bates, Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Stewart Feldman moved to approve the agenda as presented. Chris Paull seconded, motion carried unanimously.

GUESTS

Olen Zirkle, Agricultural Programs Director - Ducks Unlimited
Joe Navari, Real Estate Specialist - Ducks Unlimited
Christian Carleton, Foothill Associates

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Stan McDonald moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of August 16, 2005 as presented. Stewart Feldman seconded; motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

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

BUSINESS

New Business:

- a) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: RCD/Placer County Department of Facility Services(DFS) Agreement:*
Tom Wehri opened the floor to board discussion by noting the proposed agreement language has already been reviewed at prior meetings.

Stewart inquired if personnel time allocations needed to implement the proposed agreement have been taken into account.

Rich noted the time was allocated in the 2005-2006 Hourly Staff Allocation in anticipation of the agreement being executed.

Chris Paull asked about the indemnity language in the proposed agreement and Rich responded it is standard contract language when the county is involved.

Chris Paull moved to approve the agreement as presented. Stewart Feldman seconded; motion carried unanimously.

b) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Final '05-'06 RCD Budget:*

Katie Maloney reviewed the proposed final budget and noted it is the same as the draft budget approved by the board last month except that it reflects the most current figures for the expected property tax income for the next fiscal year.

Rich Gresham noted the budgeting process is done in tandem with the board's annual consideration regarding a potential transfer of funds from the unrestricted fund to the restricted fund in hopes of being able to provide funding for building or acquiring an RCD office that could provide office space for the RCD, the USDA Service Center, and potentially others. Rich noted he is recommending the board transfer \$20K from the unrestricted fund to the restricted fund and designate the funds for capital improvements.

Stewart Feldman moved to approve the budget and the transfer of \$20K as recommended.

Chris Paull asked for clarification of the point of RCD cash flow needs, then seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

Tom Wehri suggested it is time to get serious about exploring building options as five years will pass quickly.

Chris Paull closed budget discussion by bringing up Greg Nau's point about the potential to earn a higher rate of return on the RCD's restricted funds.

Katie Maloney reported meeting the RCD's Certified Public Accountant to begin the annual audit process. She has turned over all pertinent financial documents and audit information requested.

Katie also reported discussing methodology in determining indirect expenses in order to complete the expense analysis for the '04-'05 fiscal year as requested by the board.

After a brief discussion, the board directed Katie to use the CPA's methodology to complete her analysis and Katie indicated the analysis will be ready for review next month.

c) *Update: RCD Hosted CA Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) Forestry and Fuels Management Committee and CA Forestry Stewardship Coordinating Committee:*
Rich Gresham reported the CARCD Forestry and Fuels Management Committee and the CA Forestry Stewardship Coordinating Committee two day meeting and tour was a success and briefly reviewed the attendees that included Placer County Supervisors Holmes and Kranz.

Stewart Feldman added the review of post fire issues instigated discussion regarding funding needs and was a good way to demonstrate how different entities relate to healthy forest/watershed concepts.

Board discussion revolved around the need for expanded funding of healthy forest/watershed concepts beyond the Tahoe Basin.

- d) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Potential Partnership between Placer County, Sutter County RCDs, Ducks Unlimited, and Sutter and Placer Counties:*
Rich Gresham introduced Olen Zirkle Agricultural Programs Director for Ducks Unlimited (DU).

Olen introduced Joe Navari Real Estate Specialist for DU while Joe handed out informational materials.

Olen noted DU has maintained a regional focus over the last three years and reviewed their efforts to promote working landscapes in the state that will be viable into perpetuity.

Olen indicated he has discovered local watershed groups have done a tremendous amount of planning in their development of resource management plans, but for the most part they do not have the capacity or funding to implement projects identified in those plans.

Olen noted this situation presents an opportunity to develop partnerships between entities with common goals and objectives. DU has been focused on the American Basin in terms of implementing a Waterfowl Management Plan. The American Basin is located on the west side of the Sacramento Valley and is experiencing tremendous growth pressures that threaten the agricultural (Ag) community. DU has taken note that there are no protected wetlands in the basin and is looking to develop a funding proposal to help address these issues. He noted \$20M in Prop 50 funding has been earmarked for the CALFED service area in which the American Basin is located.

DU is currently exploring partnership options in this endeavor and has already acquired \$5M in Fish & Wildlife funding to implement land protection strategies including conservation easements that will promote the concept of working landscapes and make use of buffers around these types of landscapes. It was noted the \$5M will serve as match for a new funding proposal.

Olen referred the board to the handout that summarizes the Ecosystem Restoration Program's 2005 Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP). He noted that not less than \$20M shall be allocated to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration. This focus also fits with Sutter County's effort, in partnership with several western Placer watershed groups, that resulted in the development of a funding proposal to implement restoration activities along Coon Creek and includes three landowners along the Coon Creek willing to implement the demonstration projects.

Tom Wehri stressed the RCD is totally committed to the voluntary approach and getting landowners directly involved in resource conservation.

Rich Gresham indicated he has held discussions with Placer County Planning staff and the concept fits with *Placer County Conservation Plan* goals and objectives.

Olen expressed the hope of gathering landowners together to develop specific strategies for an area. He stressed the importance of building broad-based support for the proposal.

Olen indicated the appropriate scale of a wetland complex and buffer system would include 160K acres in western Placer County and eastern Sutter County. DU is committed to building locally based partnerships to benefit local landowners with multiple objectives. DU has the capacity and is willing to contribute to the grant writing effort.

Rich reported he has met with Sutter County and Yolo County RCDs and discussed the concept of a partnership. He noted a past relationship between RCDs and indicated the Sutter RCD has requested the Placer RCD act as an applicant for the concept proposal on behalf of all the partners and asked for board feedback regarding the concept proposal.

Tom suggested the board approve the RCD pursuing partnerships in regards to the development of the concept proposal. Tom also suggested the formation of some kind of

working group to guide the RCD's involvement. He noted this is a great opportunity to get work on the ground.

Rich briefly reviewed the Coon Creek Watershed Rehabilitation Demonstration Project proposal developed by the Sutter County Watershed Coordinator in conjunction with three landowners with property on the creek willing to implement demonstration projects that promote restoration activities.

After Olen and Rich fielded several questions from the board, Tom recommended the board move to support the concept and authorize Rich to continue to work on developing the broad-based partnership.

Olen proposed DU craft the proposal in partnership and come back and present it to the board for further consideration and possible approval for submission at that time. He noted the RCD's importance to the effort as RCDs are eligible applicants for the funding. He noted next steps will include development of one or more Memorandum(s) of Understanding (MOU)s to cement partnerships and the focus of the effort that is shaping up to be a bi-county, bi-RCD, DU, and multiple landowner effort.

Stewart Feldman moved to approve concept proposal development and authorize Rich to pursue appropriate documentation for the developing partnership. Chris Paull seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Olen thanked the board for their time and consideration and expressed his pleasure at their action.

The board urged the immediate development of the MOU(s) and asked DU to keep the RCD in mind for other projects.

Tom Wehri offered his assistance with the effort.

e) *Discussion Re: RCD Outreach Effort:*

It was noted this discussion was instigated at Greg Nau's suggestion. As Greg was unable to attend the meeting, the board suggested the item be deferred to next month.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- *Information & Education Committee:*

Stewart Feldman reported working to develop the RCD newsletter in conjunction with staff and copies of the draft were distributed to board members.

Katie Maloney is working to gather the mailing list from several sources suggested by the board including the Farm Services Agency's Placer County contacts and the Placer County Farm Bureau in addition to the RCD Annual Report mailing list.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Bob Wiswell:

- Bob participated in the Local Working Group and indicated this year is shaping up to be a good program year.

Paul Lake noted increasing the cap for irrigation assistance. He noted that updating the cost rate structure will simplify the payment procedure for producers. The breakdown for this year's program funds is as follows: fuel load reduction and healthy forest practices 40%, rangeland assistance 20%, irrigated crop lands assistance 20%, and irrigated pastureland assistance 20%.

Chris Paull:

- Chris reported attending the Gold Country Fair where both his girls took awards for turkeys they each raised. He acknowledged Dan Macon's assistance with the design of a mobile turkey coup.
- Chris reported enthusiasm for the Franklin School pumpkin patch, but indicated an agriculture education program has yet to be incorporated into the curriculum. He noted the challenges that presents including having a dedicated school staff member to sustain a program over the long term.

Bob Wiswell noted the Farm Bureau has sponsored programs in middle schools in the past.

Cherie Schiavone:

- Cherie reported attending Cliff Heitz' great retirement party.

Stan MacDonald:

- Stan reported attending Cliff's party as well.
- Stan reported attending the CARCD Board Meeting and taking pictures at the CARCD committees meeting and tour the RCD hosted last month.

Stewart Feldman:

- Stewart reported also attending the CARCD Board meeting where Executive Director Brian Leahy reported dealing with staff changes and outreach to RCDs.
- Stewart noted he is considering running for the CARCD Board Treasurer position. Board discussion revolved around both CARCD regional and board positions that are vacant and need to be filled. The Central Sierra Regional President seat is also vacant since Bob Dolton moved out of the region.
- Stewart also attended the CARCD committees meeting and tour and expressed his hope that the CARCD Annual Meeting and Conference will be a big success.
- Stewart gave a brief update of the CARCD Leadership Academy currently under development and expected to be introduced in stages. The focus of the Academy effort is to reach, teach, and serve.
- Stewart spent two hours hosting the USDA/RCD booth at the Gold County Fair.
- Stewart briefly updated the board on the efforts of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the results of their forum that he attended. He handed out additional materials for board perusal. He added that half of the forum attendees were from the Ag community.
- Stewart reminded the board this year's *Farm & Barn Tour* is slated for October 9th.

Tom Wehri:

- Tom reported on additional changes at the CARCD state level including the loss of Watershed CRMP Coordinator, Ben Wallace and briefly reviewed current CARCD activities.
- Tom reported Bob Beegle is running for position of CARCD Central Sierra Regional President and has requested the board's support for his effort. Tom polled interest from board members in running for the same position.

Chris Paull noted he will consider running for the position and let the board know next meeting.

Stewart Feldman noted he will step up if Chris is not interested. It was noted that Stewart can not serve as both CARCD Board Treasurer and Regional President.

The board deferred formally supporting any candidate until they know if they know the interests of their own board members.

Whitney Nicholas:

- Whitney reported he will be unable to attend the CARCD Annual Meeting and Conference after all.

Katie Maloney took the opportunity to confirm who will be attending and how many meals need to be reserved for the annual meeting.

STAFF REPORTS

RCD Report:

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

- Rich Gresham reported that in addition to the grants already talked about, it has recently been suggested that BLM funds for the Interstate 80 Vegetation Management Project be moved through the RCD vs. the High Sierra RC&D as the RCD already administers the Chipper Program. He noted he has prepared an amendment to the current agreement between the RCD/HSRC&D to allow for a potential transfer of funds.

Stan MacDonald moved to approve the amendment. Chris Paull seconded; motion carried unanimously.

- Rich requested the board consider next month increasing the RCD mileage reimbursement rate to match the IRS rate of 48.5 cents per mile. The board concurred the item could be placed on next month's agenda.
- Rich also noted the Gulf Coast disaster resulted in Mark White noting the possibility of his requesting administrative leave to volunteer in the relief effort and highlighting the need for an RCD policy review and possible update to address potential future requests. The board agreed to place the item on the next agenda.
- Katie reported working to get the RCD Newsletter out and has met with the webmaster about the development of an RCD website.
- Katie reported hosting the USDA/RCD booth at the Gold County Fair for six hours.
- Bill Templin handed out copies of his monthly activity report and reviewed his activities and handed out a presentation he developed about the Rainbow trout genetics study being conducted on the Middle Fork of the American River by CA Fish & Game.
- Bill reported the September 20th American River Watershed Group meeting will revolve around the idea of forming a watershed foundation modeled after the Henry's Fork Foundation as suggested by RCD Director Greg Nau. Bill noted he has already garnered quite a bit of interest in the idea.

Tom Wehri congratulated Bill on his efforts.

- Bill volunteered to provide a poster for the CARCD Annual Poster Contest on behalf of the RCD.
- Bill noted he has toured the American River Watershed with several directors and solicited interest from those that have not yet toured the watershed with him.

AGENCY REPORTS

- Paul handed out the August activity report and reviewed progress on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) completion checks being conducted and the subsequent process of granting extensions where appropriate as about 50% of the contracts have been delayed in terms of implementation.
- Paul reported the first Conservation Security Program (CSP) payments on the contracts in place have been completed.
- Paul noted the new District Conservationist should be in place soon as they are expecting official word soon.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Letter dated September 1st from the Placer County Grand Jury Foreman Paul Ridgeway requesting RCD information for their Special Districts Committee's review of policies and procedures involving selected districts located within Placer County.

Katie Maloney noted the package of information being requested, including the RCD '05-'06 Budget just approved, an organizational chart, and board agendas, minutes, and activity reports for the past three meetings, is slated to be mailed mid-week.

- Copy of RCD letter dated August 19th to Placer County Assistant Chief Executive Officer Mike Boyle, as requested at the last board meeting, about the need for a Placer County Fire Safe Alliance Coordinator and stressing the need for retaining the Alliance's open, collaborative, broad partnership based nature.
- Copy of RCD letter dated August 24th to Pacific Gas & Electric's Bob Fratini inviting him on behalf of the CARCD to attend the CARCD committees meeting and tour slated for September as well as the CARCD Annual Meeting and Conference.
- Sutter County RCD Monthly Board Meeting Agenda for September 12th reflecting Rich Gresham as a guest speaker to review the Coon Creek Watershed Rehabilitation Demonstration Project and the minutes of the last board meeting.
- Copy of letter dated September 16th from Placer County to Placer County Water Agency General Manager Dave Breninger regarding the potential annexation to the City of Lincoln.
- Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Agenda for September 12th.
- Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Technical Advisory Committee Agenda for September 1st and minutes of the July 7th meeting.
- US Dept. of Interior Fish & Wildlife Service notice re: Final Rule Published Designating Critical Habitat for Central Population of CA Tiger Salamander.
- Placer County Agricultural Commission Agenda for September 12th and minutes of the July 11th meeting.
- CARCD 2005 Annual Meeting flyer reviewing expected meeting contents.
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District 2005-2006 Burn Season Registration package.
- Placer County Agricultural Crop Report 2004.
- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) newsletter, *NACD News & Views*, for July/August 2005.
- International Erosion Control Association newsletter, *News to Use*, for August 2005.

- CA Forestry Association publication, *CA Forests*, for summer 2005.
- 2005 CA Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution Conference registration materials.
- 2005 Woody Biomass Regional Conference registration materials.
- NACD Newsletters, *Forestry Notes* and *Buffer Notes*, for August 2005.
- Riverside-Corona RCD newsletter, *Resources Update*, for summer 2005.
- US Forest Service publication, *Wildland Waters*, for summer 2005.
- Dept. of Water Resources publication, *Water Conservation*, for spring/summer 2005.
- Truckee River Watershed Council newsletter, *Truckee River Currents*, for summer 2005.
- 2005 CA Small Farm Conference registration packet.
- CA Interagency Noxious Weed Coordinating Committee publication, *Noxious Times*, for summer 2005.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- RCD '04-'05 Direct & Indirect Costs Analysis
- RCD Outreach Efforts
- RCD Mileage Allowance Update
- Administrative Leave Policy Update
- CARCD Annual Meeting Resolutions

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Stewart Feldman moved to adjourn the meeting. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Board Chair Tom Wehri adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.