

**PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Regular Meeting
January 15, 2008**

CALL TO ORDER

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

MEMBERS AND OTHERS PRESENT

Directors Present: Thomas (Tom) Wehri
Robert (Bob) Wiswell, Jr.
Stanley (Stan) MacDonald
Claudia Smith
Steven (Steve) Garcia
Chris Paull
Scott Harvey

Directors Absent: None

Others Present: Mike Brenner, NRCS District Conservationist-Auburn Field Office
Rich Gresham, District Manager
Katie Maloney, Programs Manager

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Chris Paull moved to approve the agenda as presented. Scott Harvey seconded; motion carried unanimously.

GUESTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Claudia Smith commented she saw former RCD Director Greg Nau and that he sends the Board his regards.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Scott Harvey moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of December 11, 2007 with a correction to Chris Paull's Directors Report. Chris Paull seconded; motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Katie Maloney presented the Financial Statements, Grants, and Programs Summaries for the months of October, November, and December and a Six Month Budget Variance Report.

After Katie fielded inquiries and made a note to double check the Payroll Tax allocation and expenditure, Chris Paull moved to approve the financial statements as presented. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS

New Business:

- a) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: RCD Board Resolution #08-01:*
Rich Gresham briefly reviewed the 2008 CA Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Grant Program proposal to provide continuing coordination for the American River Watershed Group encompassing the North and Middle Fork American River watersheds. He reviewed program parameters that provide funding for coordination activities only and no project implementation funding. The proposal will continue coordination with surrounding watershed efforts including the Cosumnes-American-Bear-Yuba (CABY) effort.

The proposed workplan includes the continued development of partnerships and projects, education and outreach, and a GIS component. The RCD proposed providing a cash match in terms of providing rented office space at the Auburn Recreation District's Canyon View Community Center.

Tom Wehri reported he has reviewed the proposal in depth and confirmed DOC restrictions in terms of directly funding on the ground projects within the Watershed Coordinator Program.

Rich noted it is expected there will be a quick turn around in terms of funding awards and requested the Board approve the proposed RCD Board Resolution #08-01. After Board discussion and wordsmithing to restrict the Resolution to approving the submittal of the funding proposal, with the authority to execute contracts and submit invoices to be revisited should the proposal be awarded funding.

Bob Wiswell moved to approve RCD Board Resolution #08-01 as amended by the Board. Scott Harvey seconded; motion carried unanimously.

b) Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: GIS Coordinator Position:

Rich Gresham reported Leah Phillips has submitted her resignation for personal reasons and given two weeks notice. He requested the Board formally accept Leah's resignation.

Rich noted Ryan was vetted by the GIS Coordinator Selection Committee along with Leah when the position was last vacant two months ago. Rich requested Board approval to hire Ryan immediately as GIS Coordinator to avoid a gap in GIS services and to allow time for Leah to bring Ryan up to speed while she is still available to answer questions in terms of workload progress.

After Board discussion, Chris Paull moved to formally accept Leah Phillips' resignation and approve the hiring of Ryan Bellanca as GIS Coordinator. Steve Garcia seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

c) Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Conservation/Mitigation Easements Opportunities Update:

Rich Gresham reported he continues to pursue discussions with CalTrans in terms of potential District roles in the management of Conservation and/or Mitigation Easements. He reported Placer County is not interested in serving as the landowner of easements. The Dept of Fish & Game has agreed to serve as landowner and is waiting for the development of a management plan. Rich continues to hold discussions about an District role as Easement Management.

Tom Wehri followed with a report regarding a potential District easement management opportunity related to the Kemper Woods subdivision located in an oak woodland with Army Corps of Engineers (COE) easement standards to meet. He noted the subdivision consists of four homes and a defined conservation easement. The developer wants to pass off the easement to a third party. Conditions have been set by the COE and a preserve management plan has been developed. The COE requires an easement inspection twice a year to identify any actions needed to maintain the easement within defined COE standards.

The developer has proposed providing the Kemper Woods Homeowners Association with an endowment to maintain the easement and to pay a third party to conduct the twice yearly inspections and serve as the easement landowner. The Kemper Woods' Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) will serve as the governing document for the Homeowners Association endowment for easement management and maintenance.

Board discussion revolved around the identification of the elements necessary to achieve successful easement management in terms of financials needs, risk management, and the need to keep the District's mission and objectives foremost in terms of implementing any easement management plan. Another issue raised pertained to the RCD's historical role of serving the public as an impartial party outside of any regulatory responsibility. Discussed was the potential of the RCD being viewed as a regulatory body in terms of management and maintenance of easements and the importance of developing agreements that support the role of the RCD as an impartial party.

Discussion highlighted the Board's desire to be the holder of all endowment funds, that funds be adequate in terms of management needs, to be involved in the development of management plans, and the need for an escape clause under appropriate circumstances.

Rich invited Board members interested, to participate in upcoming discussions in the continued exploration of RCD opportunities to manage conservation/mitigation easements.

d) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: RCD Clothing Update:*

Rich Gresham reviewed a written proposal outlining needs resulting from discussions between staff and Director Claudia Smith in terms of RCD clothing items, hats, and identification badges to identify RCD personnel at events and in the field.

After review, the Board requested Claudia continue to work with staff to complete cost estimates and move forward with the purchase of the proposed items.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Forestry & Fuels Management Committee: Stan MacDonald reported the committee met and discussed the Governor's proposed surcharge to Homeowners Insurance to provide funding for fire protection. The committee recommends the RCD Board support the Governor's proposal with the caveat that the proposal includes funding for on-the-ground fuel load reduction efforts within State Responsibility Areas. The Board agreed to consider a draft Board Resolution at the next Board meeting.

Rich Gresham reported the committee has identified the need to update the Healthy Forest/Defensible Space Handbook to reflect the increase in defensible space parameters from 30 feet to 100 feet around structures. He indicated the Board should expect a formal request for funding to update the Handbook once funding needs have been identified.

Steve Garcia stressed the need to have the handbook available in a digital format.

Rich noted RCD Board Committees should begin to assess their budgetary needs for the '08-'09 Fiscal Year in the next few months.

- Legislative Committee: No meeting was held, but Tom Wehri reported the Governor's Proposed Budget is out for review.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Tom Wehri:

- Tom reported that he and Rich met with Placer County Dept. of Facility Services (DFS) pertaining to the possibility of developing an Ag Resource Center. DFS requested a short summary of space needs for the proposed center so they can explore the concept in concert with the upcoming DeWitt Center Facilities Update. Tom noted county response was perceived as being positive with the potential for the RCD to lease land for a small annual fee on which to build a building that could house appropriate agencies to provide county residents with a one stop Agricultural Resources Center.

Tom and Rich will continue to pursue the development of the concept including the identification of potential financial assistance. Tom will submit a written report to the Board summarizing his findings to date.

- Tom reported he has registered for the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Annual Conference.

Claudia Smith:

- Claudia reported meeting with staff to discuss RCD clothing needs.
- Claudia indicated the RCD has an opportunity to link the District website to the CA Certified Organic Farmers' website.
- Claudia reported she will be attending the Small Farm Conference in Visalia next month.
- Claudia continues with farming activities and participation in the Future Farmers of America program.

Bob Wiswell

- Bob updated the Board on the upcoming High Sierra Resource Conservation & Development Council meeting slated for January 18th, handed out the agenda, and invited interested RCD Directors to attend.

Chris Paull:

- Chris reported assisting with the Franklin School pumpkin patch, reviewed their activities, and future opportunities.
- Chris announced the CA Special Districts Association meeting slated for January 24th where potential impacts from the Governors Proposed Budget will be a subject of discussion.

Scott Harvey:

- Scott reported he and Rich are pursuing, per the CA Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) Resolution, the potential re-activation of the State Resources Commission. He noted alternative options are also being discussed in light of the projected \$14B State Budget deficit. Another meeting on the subject is being pursued with the Department of Conservation Director. The Board will be kept up to date regarding on-going efforts.

Steve Garcia:

- Steve reviewed CalFire's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) workplan in relation to the State Budget Change Proposal.

Rich Gresham added there is an opportunity for the District to play a role in defining watershed health indicators while improving accessibility to FRAP data.

STAFF REPORTS

RCD Report:

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

- Rich Gresham reviewed Leah Phillips' GIS mapping efforts that includes the mapping of fuel load reduction projects for Nevada and Placer Counties.
- Rich reported outreach efforts focused on fuel load reduction activities are being planned for both Placer and Nevada Counties and will include cost share programs like NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and CA Forest Improvement Plan (CFIP), the proper use and application of herbicides, and other options for vegetation management.
- Katie Maloney reported the field work with the RCD's new Certified Public Accountant has been conducted for the annual audit and she awaits the draft report for review.
- Katie reported she continues to fiscally manage RCD programs.

AGENCY REPORTS

Mike Brenner handed out a written activity report for December-January and briefly reviewed the report.

- Mike reported seventeen EQIP contracts are expected to be executed tomorrow. He noted all applicants were funded this years with an average of \$15K per project that ranged from \$500 to \$31K with project size ranging from .7 to 35-40 acres per project.

COMMUNICATION

- Thank you letter from Nevada County Land Trust, Sierra Nevada Small Farm Progress Days, Steering Committee Chair Dan Macon for District support of the 2007 event
- American River Authority agenda for December 17th meeting and minutes of the June 18th meeting
- Placer Arts magazine, *Perspectives*, January/February 2008
- Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) publication, *A Heritage of Water* in acknowledgement of the Agency's Golden Anniversary
- PCWA Middle Fork American River Project FERC Project #2079, *Notice of Intent and Pre-Application Document*, with CD
- National Association of Conservation Districts publications, *Forestry Notes*, December 2007 and January 2008 and *NACD News & Views*, for November/December 2007
- CA Interagency Noxious and Invasive Plant Committee quarterly, *Noxious Times*, Fall 2007

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following items will be on the February agenda.

- Conservation Easement Update
- Draft RCD Board Resolution to Support Governors Proposed Fire Protection Surcharge
- Funds Request to Update Healthy Forest/Defensible Space Handbook
- Resources Management Technician Trainee Proposal
- Ag Resource Center Report Review

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Claudia Smith moved for adjournment. Steve Garcia seconded; motion carried unanimously. Tom Wehri adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.