San Mateo County Resource Conservation District

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Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
April 25, 2013
Location: RCD Office

Directors present: TJ Glauthier, Barbara Kossy, Dave Holland

Staff present: RCD – Kellyx Nelson, Renee Moldovan, Irina Kogan, Karissa Anderson, Chelsea Moller

NRCS – Bruce Quintana-Jones

Guests: Susie Bennett

1 Call to Order

- Glauthier called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

2 Introduction of Guests and Staff

3 Public Comment

- No public comment.

4 Approval of Agenda

- Item 6.2 was removed because the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District requested to postpone the item.
- Holland moved to approve the agenda, Kossy seconded. The agenda was approved unanimously.

5 Consent Agenda

5.1 March 2013 Draft Financial Statement

- Holland moved to approve the consent agenda, Kossy seconded. The consent agenda was approved unanimously.

6 Discussion Items

6.1 Presentation on Rural Roads Program – Irina Kogan

- General conversation about need for permit streamlining.
- Nelson added that we've also done workshops and reached more landowners than reflected in the numbers in the presentation.
- This presentation highlights the need for more implementation funding. We have been very successful in planning efforts, but need funding for implementation.
- The presentation is included as Attachment A.

~~6.2 Community Conversation with Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District~~

6.3 RCD Technical Needs

- Item 6.3 was covered in the Executive Director report.

6.4 Mid-year Budget Review

- Glauthier stated that financially we are in good shape, but cash flow is still a problem.
- $77,000 was budgeted for discretionary spending; we have only spent about $23,000. There is room to do some of the things that have been put off, and we should spend some of that money in the next few months.
- A lot of contracts, particularly State contracts, will only pay us once a quarter. We operate almost entirely on soft money. Our budget is roughly $300-350,000 for our staff, and contractors are in addition to that. If our total budget is about $500,000 and we are only getting paid quarterly, then we need about $250,000 as a working capital base.
- Nelson thinks we should consider raising this kind of base through private individuals who value the type of work the RCD does and have a more sophisticated understanding of the need for cash flow for operating when the net is fine.
- Holland asked if we would need a marketing strategy.
- Nelson said yes, and that she and Kossy have been strategizing about this so that we can use an appropriate message for various audiences. We need a website and a brochure, and the capacity to continue our yearly appeal. We have our project list and list of accomplishments, but Kossy may help us pull some of these things together.
- Nelson also noted the "chicken and egg" issue that we have not had the unrestricted funds for staff time to quantify the benefits of our work to help tell the story about the RCD's successes to be able to raise unrestricted funds. Chelsea is able to do some of this work now as part of work she is doing for Jim Howard under a cooperative agreement with the NRCS. It will have the double benefit of helping the RCD tell our story of conservation on the coast.
- Glauthier asked Holland if the County may be able to play a role in this.
  - Holland mentioned money from Measure A, and he thinks that the County Supervisor may be supportive of this effort. It is a good opportunity. Rich Gordon may also be helpful now that Fishnet4C is over. Fishnet4C brought together counties along the coast to look at fish restoration along the coast.
- Nelson expressed concerns that excessive tracking of billing to cost centers is hard on staff morale. We have competent, hardworking staff members who are mired in maintaining and tracking their billing requirements and who have to stop good work because we don't have cash to pay for it until payments come in.
- Glauthier said we will look at all this while developing the budget for next year. This last year has been more stable, so it's a good place to start for planning. We should look at our billing rates as well.
- Nelson noted that the dependence on grants for staffing results in primarily part-time staff. There are more moving parts to manage, and it is harder for them to understand developing the budget or feel that they are a part of a cohesive team.

- Kossy asked if RCDs could own land. Nelson responded that we don't currently, but it is allowable under law.
- There was some general discussion about counties funding RCDs and the effects of Proposition 13.
- Glauthier wants an update about this on the agenda for next month, just a check in.
- ***ACTION ITEMS:***
  - ***Nelson will follow up with Martha Poyatos and Sarah Rosendahl and look into meeting with Supervisory Horsley***
  - ***Nelson will email Glauthier and Holland about her idea for a multi-pronged approach for County funding***
  - ***Nelson will work with Kossy on messaging for fundraising***
  - ***Moller will continue working to quantify the RCD's work***

6.5 Statewide Capacity Building and Strategic Positioning – Kellyx Nelson

- The Department of Finance (DOF) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) released the draft AB 32 Cap and Trade Proceeds Investment Plan. This was the greenhouse cap and trade law that included carbon credit auctions and investments. These agencies had to produce a plan outlining how proceeds will be spent, and it was very transportation focused. Many RCDs, including ours, submitted comments. As a result of this advocacy CARB added the following practices: Williamson Act, sustainable agriculture, and conservation easements. A number of our practices will now be eligible for these funds. Before this advocacy the only practice listed was reducing mileage.
- AB 416 sponsored by Rich Gordon and SB 511 by Ted Lieu are currently moving through various committees. Both aim to direct auction money to the local level, and each are linked in some way to the practices we recommended. (Attachment B)
- California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCan) asked Nelson and others to meet with Gordon and other key legislators. California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) has been working with Conservation Strategies Group (CSG) to identify which RCDs have legislators on key committees, and are advising them to make phone calls. Glauthier and Holland might be good fit for this kind of advocacy.

6.6 Executive Director Report – Kellyx Nelson

- Nelson announced a title change for Moldovan – she is now the Finance Director which recognizes the much greater role that she plays in our organization. It will help people recognize her as the appropriate point of contact for financial issues
- **Bonde Weir Fish Passage Improvement Project**
  - Moller played a short video created by a Stanford Journalism graduate student about the project. The video can be found online at http://youtu.be/pXO5N4pCX2E
- **Pescadero IRWMP**
  - We received proposals from 8 consultant groups. The selection committee met last week and chose 2 teams to go to next round. On May 7th the committee will meet, and those 2 teams will give presentations. The Directors are invited to attend.

- ***ACTION ITEM: Kogan will send an agenda for the May 7th meeting to Directors so they can determine whether they will attend***

- At the May Board meeting we will have action item to approve the selected team. Nelson will then work with the chosen team to execute a contract by June.

- **Coastal Commission meeting**
  - On May 8-9, 2013 there will be an "Agriculture in the Coastal Zone" workshop in San Rafael. Nelson distributed the agenda and will be attending the meeting.
  - Nelson submitted a letter (Attachment C) to the Coastal Commission regarding permit streamlining opportunities. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has a programmatic biological opinion (BO) for salmonid recovery actions in our region. Nelson has made a statement to Sustainable Conservation about some of the nightmare stories of trying to get permits for conservation work. Nelson wants to work toward having a Coastal Commission permit exemption if there is a federal consistency determination. Their BO should have a federal consistency determination.
- **NOAA grant proposal**
  - Our proposal to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) did not make it past technical review. 140+ proposals were submitted, and only 37 made it past the technical review. We don't know why we were scored low yet. The Coastal Conservancy has said if NOAA doesn't consider coho restoration a priority here, then why should they? That means the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (IWRP) could go away. NOAA staff has been telling us that we may be funded in the next several years. We are in the pipeline for future consideration since we have already submitted a proposal, and no other proposals will be accepted for subsequent years.
- **Brainstorm on pro bono assistance needs**
  - We need assistance from an attorney, an accountant, and a web designer.
  - Re: the attorney, we have questions from time to time about liability, contracts, labor compliance, Brown Act compliance, internal policies, etc. We need representation for dealing with other agencies at times.
    - Holland suggested seeing if we could include use of County counsel in an agreement for assistance from the county.
    - Glauthier said there are also lawyers in the community who have environmental backgrounds and may be able to help.
    - Kossy asked for estimate of time commitment
    - Nelson and Moldovan estimated about 10 hours per year
  - We also need an accountant. Moldovan stated that she is not always sure that things we put together will stand up to an audit by a funding agency. Nelson stated we sometimes have questions about what can be in our billing rates, particularly for certain grant proposals.
    - Glauthier said it sounds like we need an accountant that has exposure to some our types of programs

- Moldovan said that accountants that are soliciting us generally have some experience working with RCDs, or at least special districts. We can only use an accountant for 2 audits before switching.
- Bennett asked if we could coordinate with other RCDs to use the same people. Nelson said that we do where we can. We all use the same labor compliance firm, but they aren't looking for probono work – they are trying to make a niche for themselves. We have made use of the network but didn't find any pro bono opportunities for this need.

- We need web design or maintenance. We have money in the budget to do our website, but have never had the cash flow to do it.
- There was discussion of our technical needs. This is in the approved budget but we have not had the cash flow to make the necessary upgrades.

- **Project updates**
  - *Hedgerows* – We have done planning for 6 sites this year: 4 are on farms, 1 is a private residence, and 1 is a farm residential boundary with a springtail bug issue. 5 hedgerows will be completed by May 15th, and 1 will be completed next year. These projects have really integrated resource benefits, no permitting, and are aesthetically pleasing. Demand outstripped cost share funds this year, and our plant list was been developed more fully during the planning of these hedgerows.
    - ***ACTION ITEM- Share plant list with Kossy when it is ready for distribution.***
  - *SFPUC Vegetation Monitoring* – We have entered into contract with Alameda Co. RCD (ACRCD) to assist them with a vegetation monitoring mitigation project they are doing on San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) land. This is neat because it is ACRCD paying for our staff development to learn about native and invasive plants as well as monitoring techniques. Howard and Nelson feel that weed management is one of the biggest resource issues that is largely unfunded, so we are trying to get it done.
  - *Pillar Point Harbor* – Our draft final report will be submitted in mid-May, a public meeting will be held June 8, and then the project is done. The location and time have not been determined yet, but it will be on June 8, a Saturday, to be accessible to community members. Glauthier offered to work with Anderson on this plan moving forward.
    - ***ACTION ITEM – Anderson will contact Board to determine if we want to have a special meeting for this***
  - *CARCD conference* –This year it is in Sacramento, the week before Thanksgiving. We will probably budget for registration, and depending on cash flow for next year we may not be able to pay for travel.
  - Nelson extended her thanks to Holland and Kossy for jumping right in as new directors and really helping out, right off the bat. They have been here for a very brief time, and they have been really engaged.
  - Kossy informed the room she will be away for most of June.
  - Glauthier reminded staff to add committee selection to our next Board meeting agenda

- ***ACTION ITEM: Nelson will look into whether we have to have a vice president***

7 **Adjourn**

- Glauthier adjourned the meeting at 8:44.

Rural Roads Program

Presented to
San Mateo County RCD
Board of Directors
April 25, 2013

Program Purpose

Protect and recover steelhead trout, coho salmon, and other native aquatic and riparian species through road work designed to reduce *human-induced* sources of sediment and pollutants

Need for the Program

Strategies to address excess sediment and/or road–related erosion are prioritized in federal, state, local plans

- Pilarcitos watershed
- San Gregorio watershed
- Pescadero watershed
- Butano watershed
- Gazos watershed

Summary of Accomplishments

Provided technical assistance on over 50 miles of rural roads to 30 landowners in 8 watersheds through:

- Site visits (~50 miles)
- Geotechnical assessments/road logs (~48 miles)
- Engineered designs (~13 miles)
- Implementation/construction (~5 miles)

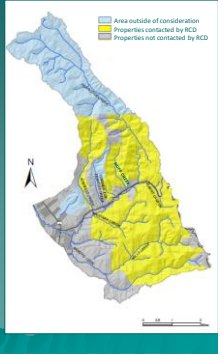
Highlight: Pilarcitos Watershed

Dedicated funding (3 phases) for rural road assessments

75% of watershed area considered

- 50% of area on properties contacted by RCD
- 25% outside of consideration

37 miles of rural roads assessed, prioritized for treatment



Funding status

- Integrated Watershed Restoration Program-Rural Roads (IWRP/RR): expire June 2013
- San Gregorio Watershed Enhancement Program (includes funds for rural road assessments): expire March 2015
- Fitzgerald Pollution Reduction funds: expire December 2014
- Applied for Fisheries Restoration Grant Program funding for Gazos Creek watershed (decommissioning 0.24 miles, improving 1.7 miles): TBD Feb 2014

Next steps

- Complete IWRP/RR contract:
  - Assessment for ~2 miles in Pescadero watershed
  - Design for ~3 miles in San Gregorio watershed
- Pursue implementation for 0.1 mi in Kanoff watershed (Montara)
- Work with landowners in San Gregorio and Pilarcitos watersheds toward implementation
- Pursue funding sources

Summary

- Rural Roads program has been successful in landowner outreach and there is landowner interest/need.
- Implementation is expensive and public funds for landowner financial assistance are limited.
- Technical assistance has been provided to over 30 landowners in 8 watersheds and RCD/NRCS will continue to provide support as funding allows.

Attachment B

Kellyx Nelson

From: Brett Melone <brett.melone@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2013 9:28 AM
To: Kellyx Nelson
Subject: updates

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Kellyx,

I hope all is well.

I am writing to give you a few updates on the CalCAN issues we discussed a few weeks ago.

It is looking like AB 823 will become a two-year bill, although we probably won't know for sure until the bill is heard in the Natural Resources Committee next week. The original hearing was pushed back at the request of Eggman (the author), to provide time to work out some issues that have come up with stakeholders. If you'd like more detail or want to get involved, please let me know and I can bring you up to speed.

On cap-and-trade there have been some interesting developments.

First, the draft investment plan has just been released and includes a number of our priorities. Here's the link http://www.arb.ca.gov/regact/nonreg/2013/ghgreductfund13.pdf

AB 416 sponsored by Rich Gordon and SB 511 sponsored by Ted Lieu are moving through committees. Are you following these? Both aim to direct auction revenues to the local level to benefit community-led efforts that will reduce GHG emissions. Each are linked in some way to the priorities we recommended to CARB in our comment letter. So now we have the chance to move closer to securing funding for those programs, such as RCDs, Williamson Act, Statewide Watershed Program, FMMP, Farmland Conservancy Program, etc. This is something we'll want to discuss with Gordon's staff when we meet.

I am just trying to get a couple of possible dates from his aide before putting it out to the small group that is interested in attending. We'll want to make a little time for a prep call before the meeting, too. Are there any dates in the first couple of weeks of May that don't work for you?

I am working on contacting some of the farmers that you recommended I speak with. On a related note, Renata mentioned that we may want to invite TJ Glauthier from your board, and that his participation may help get a meeting with Gordon himself. What do you think about that?

I look forward to your thoughts.

Best,
Brett

Attachment C

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Charles Lester, Executive Director
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco CA 94105-2219

April 17, 2013

Dear Dr. Lester:

On behalf of the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District, I would like to express strong support for the federal consistency determination made by the NOAA Restoration Center for its Community-based Restoration Program. The cooperative habitat restoration projects for which the CRP provides funding and technical assistance bring important restoration work to coastal locations throughout California, including Pescadero, San Gregorio, Pilarcitos, and other salmonid watersheds in coastal San Mateo County. The permitting assistance provided by the CRP is a key step in helping ensure that these environmentally beneficial projects are successful.

For nearly 75 years, the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District has partnered with landowners, community organizations, restoration scientists and regulatory agencies to plan, design and implement habitat restoration and erosion control projects.

In this county, the NOAA RC has funded and otherwise supported multiple restoration projects for coho salmon, steelhead trout, and other sensitive or protected species that were implemented with environmental sensitivity. In San Mateo County, coho calmon are on the imminent brink of local extirpation. We hope to see more habitat projects funded and implemented in the coming years with minimal roadblocks or delays.

Obtaining Coastal Development Permits (CDPs) for habitat restoration projects has limited our opportunities for restoration in the Coastal Zone, as the CDP permitting process can be complex, time-consuming, expensive, redundant with some other protective efforts, and can affect our chances to obtain grant funding and disrupt project timing and tight project budgets. The NOAA RC's consistency determination is an appropriate way to improve CRP implementation with local partners while ensuring the highest levels of resource protection in the Coastal Zone.

The NOAA RC is an important environmental partner in coastal San Mateo County. This consistency determination will encourage greater funding and technical assistance from the CRP to restoration advocates. We urge your concurrence with the NOAA RC's decision.

Sincerely,

Kellyx Nelson
Executive Director