

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors  
September 19, 2013  
Location: RCD Office**

Directors present: Barbara Kossy, Jim Reynolds, Dave Holland, TJ Glauthier, Neal Kramer

Staff present: RCD – Kellyx Nelson, Chelsea Moller, Alex Beakes, Brett Melone  
NRCS – Jim Howard

Guests: Victor Rabinovich, BJ Burns, Doniga Markegard, Samantha Arthur

**1 Call to Order**

- Glauthier called to order 6:33 pm

**2 Introduction of Guests and Staff**

- Everyone present introduced themselves.

**3 Public Comment**

- Howard announced that Bruce Quintana-Jones, NRCS engineer, will be leaving our Local Partnership Office. His wife, a Soil Conservationist with the NRCS in Santa Cruz, was offered a position as a District Conservationist in Michigan. He has been a tremendous asset to our office and will be sorely missed. Howard hopes he will be replaced by the new year.
- Glauthier noted the successful completion of the Bonde Weir project to improve access to over 40 miles of steelhead habitat.
- Glauthier asked about follow up from last month's meeting regarding the Granada Sanitary District (GSD) application for reorganization. Nelson said she thought there was an action item, but it wasn't in minutes so it didn't make this agenda. Nelson recommends removing the August minutes from this agenda to correct them with the appropriate action items related to the GSD application. If the comment period closes before the next Board meeting the Directors can't take action, so we would need a special meeting. Holland recommends that if the comment period ends before the regularly scheduled October 2013 Board meeting the RCD should hold a special meeting to ensure that comments make it in.
- Nelson informed the Board that BJ Burns was planning to attend and make public comment, but had not yet arrived. She requested that he be allowed to make his comment at an appropriate time once he arrived.

**4 Approval of Agenda**

- Item 5.2 was removed from the agenda for revision.

- Holland moved to approve the Agenda with noted changes, Kramer seconded. Agenda was approved unanimously with noted changes.

## 5 **Consent Agenda**

5.1 May 16, 2013 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes

~~5.2 August 15, 2013 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes~~

5.3 June 2013 Draft Financial Statement

5.4 July 2013 Draft Financial Statement

5.5 August 2013 Draft Financial Statement

## 6 **Discussion Items**

### 6.1 **Presentation on Pond Enhancement at Cloverdale Coastal Ranches – Chelsea Moller, RCD Conservation Project Coordinator**

- Moller gave the attached presentation (Attachment A)
- Nelson made an additional comment about the agricultural nexus of this project. The initial driver was San Francisco garter snake (SFGS) and California red-legged frog (CRLF), but the RCD worked with partners to ensure the mutual benefit to agriculture. The reason the ponds that provide the habitat exist on the property is because they were created for stock watering purposes.
- Markegard said it was great to work with the RCD. Nelson and Moller helped her look at agriculture as a benefit to wildlife, and they are starting to see how they can use cattle as a tool to promote habitat. Ongoing USGS research is looking at ponds where cattle has access and where they don't; they are excited to be a part of this cutting edge research.
- Nelson described an evolution in thinking among resource agencies, resource managers, and researchers about the compatibility of cattle ranching and habitat enhancement based on research and empirical data about such things as grassland response to carefully managed cattle. She provided examples of ponds that had been fenced to exclude cattle becoming overgrown and losing habitat benefit, while well-managed access improved habitat. The management strategies are very site specific.

### 6.2 **Introductions and conversation with new Agricultural Ombudsman – Brett Melone, San Mateo County Agricultural Ombudsman (RCD staff)**

- Melone has more than 15 years of experience working with farms, landowners, and regulators, including managing a 300+ acre property of crop, grazing, and conservation lands. His parents were involved in nursery and orchard production in Florida.
- As the Ag Ombudsman, he is working on a few projects that range from farm labor housing, to installing a pipeline in the Caltrans right of way, to securing a Coastal Development Permit exemption.
- In San Mateo County the Ag Ombudsman is an outgrowth of Supervisor Horsley's November 2012 agriculture workshop that the RCD helped coordinate. Supervisor Horsley has been very focused on what *the County* can do to support agriculture. The county funded this role for two years to help individual farmers with projects, help county staff understand agriculture, and help the county identify its own obstacles in permitting for agriculture.

### 3. Public Comment (this item is out of order because it had been postponed)

- BJ Burns serves on the Farm Bureau Board and Agriculture Advisory Committee. Something important to them is protecting and enforcing the Williamson Act, and possible different uses on Williamson Act land. He's hoping for support from the RCD when the time comes to keep agriculture strong here, because it's important. One thing they have been thinking about is getting a processing facility. It's another way to save agriculture so they can process and sell locally. New farmers and old farmers can all benefit from this.
- Nelson referenced the feasibility analysis by the SMFSA that could help with this effort.
- Burns thanked the RCD for not competing with the Farm Bureau for As Fresh As It Gets (Item 6.4 below), said that is great working with RCD and NRCS staff, thanked the Board for their service, and said to let him know if the Farm Bureau can ever help out with RCD efforts.

### 6.3 Ethics training for District directors – Kellyx Nelson, RCD Executive Director

- The training can be found online at <http://localethics.fppc.ca.gov/login.aspx>
- Reynolds, Kossy, and Kramer all completed the training prior to the meeting and turned in certificates. The RCD gets a break on liability insurance if everyone does it, and it is an important training for Directors to understand what is expected of public officials.
- Directors discussed thoughts and impressions from the training, such as the need to be careful and thoughtful about interactions with others, the need to avoid promoting an elected official in a mass mailing that is publicly funded, the need to balance that with providing information to the public about our work with public officials, the fact that the training underscores bare minimum requirements and the need to be conservative and go beyond the minimum sometimes, etc.
  - **ACTION ITEM: Nelson will ask CARCD for more guidance on the mass mailing restrictions and whether or not that extends to quotes about the RCD from elected officials on our website.**

### 6.4 San Mateo County Request for Proposals for “As Fresh as it Gets” – Kellyx Nelson

- As Fresh as it Gets (AFAIG) is a marketing campaign to encourage consumers to buy local produce and fish, and to work with local farmers and fishermen to get them involved with the program.
- The RCD was going to submit a proposal, but decided not to when we learned that the Farm Bureau and Visitors Center had submitted a joint proposal. They were the partners that originally developed the program.

### 6.5 Statewide Perspective – Samantha Arthur, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD)

- Arthur briefed the Board on the two main efforts that CARCD is working on right now. The first is an internal process to get RCDs across the state to become a stronger network, and elevate their performance to that of others such as San Mateo County and Santa Cruz County RCDs. The second is to promote RCDs as a statewide network with local relevance, particularly to state agencies that are looking to fund broader initiatives across the state – this effort is called “Planning for the Future”.

- Planning for the Future is a CARCD Board effort, which is made up of directors from across the state. Based on their strategic plan developed in 2012, they are looking at how to promote RCDs as state network. One strategy is to work with district managers, including Nelson. They are developing a vision for what we want RCDs to look like in the future, as far as 20 years down the line. This has been going on since early summer/last spring.
- Group 1 of District Managers (this group includes Nelson) has come up with a draft vision in which “RCDs are relevant, visible, excellent go-to hubs for conservation and agricultural priorities at local, regional, and state levels.” We have a big range of capabilities across the state. This is the vision to bring everyone up to the same level. The next step is to break out into small teams to talk about what these goals (relevance, excellence, etc.) mean, and come up with a strategic plan.
- Group 2: This group is looking at standards for RCDs. CARCD Board drafted standards based on legal requirements for RCDs. This includes basics like you must have a Board of Directors. District managers are going through and looking at different tiers of development. The effort to develop standards is going to be connected to looking at RCDs more closely, and seeing if there are opportunities for mergers (i.e. places where an RCD is there on paper, but is really not functional and has a functional neighbor that can absorb them). This is essentially a checklist. The long-term outcome for standards would be the potential to connect to statewide funding sources. We want to get base funding, but that is a challenge because that would come from the state’s general funding. A part of figuring out how to get the baseline funding is being able to show that we are functional across the board.
- Group 3: This group is demonstrating the current value of RCDs. They are highlighting the strength that we are a statewide network but that we work locally. District managers are meeting to come up with a core message. There needs to be a common clear way that people speak about themselves to emphasize that there is a connection between RCDs and that we are a network. Group 3 has drafted a two page document that has a common statewide message outlining the values of RCDs on one side, and highlights an individual RCD on the other. They highlight that:
  - RCDs are comprehensive – they evaluate and address resources comprehensively
  - RCDs are local – local board, local relationships
  - RCDs are non-regulatory – conservation outcomes in a non-regulatory approach, can help people meet regulatory mandates but we do not enforce
  - RCDs are accountable – we follow Brown act, participate in ethics training, are required to hold open meetings, complete audits, we are transparent and accountable
- The idea is to communicate in Sacramento more effectively. RCDs have not been as involved in state level policy as we should be
- Also looking at developing similar messaging about how RCDs work on resource issues of statewide significance like regulatory readiness, climate change, etc. The idea is relationship building for people to understand who we are so we can get to the next level of conversation
- Nelson introduced Arthur and Kossy. Kossy has agreed to help out with this effort as she has a marketing and public relations background. Nelson said this work is very important and is going to result in some really useful tools, more presence in Sacramento, etc.

- Kossy says the important thing about PR for an RCD is that it's very different from others like Sierra Club or Audobon Society, and these are the PR campaigns people are familiar. PR for a special district of CA with the functionality and goals that RCDs have is very different, and must be developed to show the uniqueness of this organization.
- Holland said it will be useful for funding
- Glauthier stated that when he met with Tom Wehri (former CARCD President) they talked about things that CARCD could do to help RCDs. Another issue he'd like to address at the state level is some of the contracting issues we've had with state agencies. CARCD could help broker a meeting with higher level staff to talk about these issues, because people at the higher levels are probably not aware of how difficult it is.
- Arthur noted the potential role of Conservation Strategies Group (CSG), CARCD's contracted political consulting group, to help address our issues. They are really involved with writing bonds working on the contracting issues for the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP).
- Arthur provided an update on legislative efforts. CARCD contracted with CSG in February 2013 and have been involved with two major efforts at state level:
  - ◆ Last spring they lobbied for auction revenue expenditures through A.B. 32, the climate change measure. Industry is required to purchase permits to emit carbon, and that money is meant to be spent on other projects or actions that reduce carbon emissions. There is a significant pool of funds that have been raised. By next fall it is expected to be at \$500 million. That is money that could be spent on greenhouse gas reduction projects. We are part of two groups advocating for those auction revenues to be spent on natural resource outcomes. One strategy is looking at planning to reduce vehicle miles traveled by keeping land in agriculture, thereby lowering carbon emissions. We would like for any sort of projects directly sequestering carbon, such as biochar, to be included.
  - ◆ We were successful in getting natural resource expenditures included in the Air Resource Board's (ARB's) scoping plan, but at the last moment the governor decided to loan the revenue back to the general fund. It is not clear when the loan will be paid back, but it is expected to be spent on green house gas outcomes.
  - ◆ Nelson gave kudos to three of the directors here who passed the resolution asking CARCD to work on climate change initiatives, enabling this work to be done.
  - ◆ Arthur said these working groups will be talked about extensively at the CARCD conference this year.
  - ◆ Arthur described the history and current legislative effort involved in redrafting the next water bond for the State of CA.
  - ◆ Our top requests for RCDs are \$20 million for the Watershed Coordinator program and \$50 million for agricultural water quality programs. The Watershed Coordinator program was funded in the last water bond (Proposition 84) for \$10 million. Currently neither of the bonds in the senate or assembly have watershed coordinator funding. Both of these programs would be through the DOC to keep the non-regulatory link. There is a real challenge with landowners taking funds for voluntary projects, and then being subject to regulation and enforcement. Special

districts and non-profits would be eligible for these programs. With our close relationship with the DOC, RCDs would be the preferred choice for these funds.

- ◆ Glauthier and Nelson suggested language that says others would be eligible where RCDs are not present or not applying.
- ◆ Holland said the state established RCDs for a reason, so they should use them.
- ◆ Kossy noted that RCDs are transparent and publicly accountable.
- ◆ Arthur says it is important to have special districts included in the definition of public agency in the bond to ensure eligibility for bond funding.
- ◆ They are going through the process of reconciling the two bills, Arthur is reaching out to local RCDs and encouraging them to contact their representatives

## 6.6 Executive Director Report – Kellyx Nelson

- Nelson followed up on several items from the May minutes
  - Nelson had committed to bringing the SMFSA feasibility analysis, but it is not yet ready to share. She will bring it when it's ready.
  - Holland talked with Adler about allowing the RCD to borrow base funding ahead of time, and he is looking into making it an annual event.
  - Holland asked Adler about changing audit terms to avoid the burden of using the County for audits if we want to establish a fund to help with working capital.
    - ◆ Nelson noted that we need for a \$100,000 fund to help with cash flow problems and to use as working capital.
    - ◆ **ACTION ITEM: Holland will pursue the possibility of changing audit terms.**
    - ◆ Glauthier will look into cash flow and county support with the finance committee after seeing where Holland's conversation goes.
- Nelson provided project updates which are summarized below:
  - Agbudsman
    - ◆ We do not yet have a contract with the County, but are doing the work in good faith based on community need for the services right away.
    - ◆ We requested to be paid up front (either all of it or quarterly) so that we would not always be in arrears.
  - Fitzgerald Pollution Reduction Program (FPR)
    - ◆ Nelson delineated challenges with the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB)- particularly one individual- in terms of the project selection and approval process, interpretation of the grant guidelines, threats to leverage grant funds for enforcement actions, and a lack of understanding for how RCDs and NRCS do work. Three of our programs or projects are being affected by this individual.

- ◆ The other set of difficulties is that the County Building Department is erring on the side of requiring building permits where there could be discretion and wants to leverage these voluntary conservation projects to require people to get permits for unpermitted structures that were not built through our program. This is a disincentive to voluntary conservation. We have also received conflicting information from staff about when a permit is and isn't required.
- ◆ We are writing a one page document about the challenges that we are facing to install BMPs to invite some creative problem solving with all parties.
  - **ACTION ITEM: Nelson will share the one page summary at the next board meeting.**
- Pescadero Integrated Flood Reduction and Habitat Enhancement Project
  - ◆ The first public workshop will be on October 1<sup>st</sup> to meet the consultant team and to share their ideas for solutions to flooding. We have gotten positive feedback from the community members who have already met the consultants.
  - ◆ It is taking 4-7 months for the State to make payments on approved invoices, and since we can only invoice quarterly that can result in a 10 month delay in payment for our work. This is a hardship for us.
  - ◆ Melone asked if there were any ideas about adding payment guidelines to the next bond.
  - ◆ Nelson said there were two primary challenges for us with funding through IRWMP – you have to pay to play to access the funds (it is very intensive and costly to participate in the process), and it is challenging to get paid once you have a grant.
- Bonde Weir Fish Passage Project
  - ◆ Bonde Weir was recently removed by the RCD. The project improved access to 40 miles of steelhead habitat in a high value watershed for the threatened species. It is a great project and went well with tremendous results.
  - ◆ There were some concerns with the PR. There were a number of articles where the RCD wasn't even mentioned even though we did the project. The conservation community and resource agencies know what we did, however. They have thanked us for responding to their request to take over the project, and for the Board allowing work outside our district boundaries.
- Accelerated Conservation Planning (ACP)
  - ◆ This project was funded through a cooperative agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide assistance to accelerate conservation programs. We provided service to over 20 properties, both ag and non-ag, addressing a wide variety of resource needs. We finished the project early and exceeded all deliverables.
- Press releases

- ◆ We will have three press releases – announcing the Ag Ombudsman, Cloverdale completion, and PPH completion – that will be coming out over the next month or so.
- Nelson has been participating as a community advisor to the vision plan for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD). She would like to see more explicit recognition of the RCD as a partner in the document and would generally like to see higher-level partnership between the two districts at the institutional level.
  - Holland noted the potential of the Peninsula Workgroup of large open space landowners as they look at how to share management responsibilities for open space on the peninsula.
  - Nelson asked the directors to attend the MROSD vision plan workshop on October 21, 2013, or any of the other upcoming workshops and provide input about the RCD as a partner to accomplishing their resource management goals as the entity created by the State for that purpose.
- Nelson reviewed some recent improvements to the RCD webpage and the need to hire professionals to revamp the site.

## 7 Adjourn

- Glauthier adjourned the meeting at 9:14 pm.

# Cloverdale Coastal Ranches Pond Restoration Project



San Mateo County RCD  
Board of Directors Meeting  
September 19, 2013



## Project Background



San Mateo County Resource Conservation District

## California red-legged frog



Photo Credit: CaliforniaHerps.com

## San Francisco garter snake



Photo Credit: CaliforniaHerps.com

## Resources of Concern

### Agriculture



Markegard Family

San Mateo County Resource Conservation District

# Attachment A



# Attachment A

