

## **Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**November 21, 2013**

**Location: RCD Office**

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

Staff present: RCD – Kellyx Nelson, Joe Issel

NRCS – Jim Howard

### **1 Call to Order**

- Kossy called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.

### **2 Introduction of Guests and Staff**

- No guests were present.

### **3 Public Comment**

- Jim Howard provided some updates from the NRCS:
  - NRCS is rolling out Program Year 2014 Farm Bill programs. There are 6 or 7 signups this year- aquaponics, organic farming, grassfed beef, a variety of different projects
  - It is challenging not having an engineer. In the interim, they are bringing in the Central Coast team engineer from Templeton as needed. The new engineer position will soon close. We expect a hire in early 2014. It is hard to get people in and keep them here because the cost of living here is so high. It is a shared position with Santa Cruz, usually 3 days there, 2 here. It is a tough job because there are a lot of different customers, it involves a lot of dealing with people remotely, two different Local Partnership Offices that you have to integrate with, and the need to be efficient and juggle a lot. Bruce was exceptional.
  - Carlos Suarez, NRCS State Conservationist, was planning to be here in December. He just postponed that visit.
  - Working a lot with Nelson and John Klochak on a lot of different project ideas with a focus on Pescadero and San Gregorio watersheds.
  - Excited about Fitzgerald Marine Reserve upland BMPs work.
- Kossy reported on the last meeting of the Weed Management Area. Ray Kwan from Caltrans presented. The challenges he faces are huge. He's restricted in what he can do given danger of working on highway, lack of funds, and the lack of priority in the organization for doing weed management work. If you see a weed of concern along the highway, you should email him to complain about it because public comments bump up the priority for treatment. Caltrans can provide herbicide if you have a crew, as it helps address their limited staff.

### **4 Approval of Agenda**

- Reynolds moved and Kramer seconded. The agenda, including Consent Agenda, passed unanimously.

## 5 Consent Agenda

5.1 August 15, 2013 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes

5.2 September 19, 2013 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes

5.3 September 2013 Draft Financial Statement

5.4 October 2013 Draft Financial Statement

5.5 Correspondence – Letters from EPA & Coastal Conservancy thanking RCD for completion of Bonde Weir Fish Passage project

## 6 Discussion Items

### 6.1 Presentation on Bonde Weir Fish Passage Improvement Project – Joe Issel, RCD Conservation Project Coordinator

- Issel presented the attached PowerPoint about the Bonde Weir Fish Passage Project that was recently completed to improve access to approximately 40 miles of habitat for threatened steelhead trout in San Francisquito Creek on the boundary of Menlo Park and Palo Alto. He described the purpose and benefits of the project, history of the weir, and construction details- including access, complications, unexpected findings, and outcomes.

### 6.2 Statewide Perspective – Kellyx Nelson, RCD Executive Director

- There are now 98 RCDs. Sotoyome RCD and Southern Sonoma RCD consolidated to become “Sonoma RCD,” although Gold Ridge is another RCD in Sonoma County as well.
- Nelson and Karen Buhr, CARCD Executive Director, met with representatives from the Bechtel Foundation about their initiative to spend down their assets and their interest in work on private lands. Bechtel staff came to the conversation with an understanding of the value of RCDs that came in part from their conversations with partners (SusCon) and the leadership of the Department of Conservation.
- CARCD conference was great! There was a lot of buzz and momentum around the statewide strategic planning and visioning and capacity building that has been going on. It was also a great opportunity for our partners to get a better sense of what RCDs are about and capable of. SusCon, POST, American Rivers were among our partners there. Nelson presented with POST [see below]. There were opportunities to talk to Mark Nechodom (Director of Department of Conservation), Chuck Bonham (Director of CA Department of Fish and Wildlife), and Felicia Marcus (Chair of State Water Resources Control Board) about our interests and concerns.
- Nelson distributed a draft summary of challenges to implementing small-scale voluntary actions to improve water quality in the Fitzgerald Area of Special Biological Significance, including barriers at the state and county level. Discussion ensued.
  - **ACTION: Dave Holland will help convene a meeting with County staff to address County-level barriers.**

### 6.3 Executive Director Report – Kellyx Nelson

- Ag Ombudsman: There has been a strong demand already for his services. He is working on 11 requests for assistance from 10 different customers. There has been a very positive response to the Ombudsman. People are appreciative that there is someone to talk to and to help them troubleshoot. The County has been a great partner, in addition to being the

funder. County staffs from different departments are providing helpful assistance while honoring the confidentiality.

- Biochar: The second year of data collection was just completed. The harvest took two days, involving 5 staff members, 4 volunteers (including Director Kramer), and 2 farm laborers.
- IWRP Updates: Several IWRP projects are moving forward. There is a big focus on streamflow enhancement in lower Pescadero watershed and riparian habitat improvements in Pescadero and San Gregorio watersheds.
  - Of particular note is the potential acquisition of the property in Pescadero that has been discussed in previous meetings. If the IWRP TAC approves allocation of resources for a feasibility analysis of the property, we will need to move quickly to consider the RCD's interest in making an offer. Nelson requested a Board committee to consider emerging issues pertaining to the potential acquisition.
  - **ACTION: Holland (chair) and Kramer will serve as the ad hoc Acquisition Committee.**
- Rural Roads Maintenance Guide: Nelson distributed the newly completed and printed Rural Roads Maintenance Guide, a partnership of the RCDs of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Mateo counties funded through IWRP (Coastal Conservancy) for directors to share. There was general appreciation of the value and quality of the guide. Kossy asked about providing the guide online.
  - **ACTION: RCD staff will investigate the possibility of posting the Rural Roads Maintenance Guide online.**
- Community Meeting About Pescadero Flooding: The community meeting regarding the flooding in Pescadero was held on October 1<sup>st</sup> and went very well. Approximately 50 people attended, including directors Holland, Kramer, and Reynolds. As a result of the meeting and other efforts to elicit community input into developing solutions to the flooding, there are now 13 alternatives to analyze. Funding was sufficient for 8 proposed solutions. The Advisory Committee opted to do a preliminary analysis of all proposed solutions (running them through the model) and conducting more in-depth analysis on those that the model indicates have the highest likelihood of reducing flooding.
- Distribution Center Feasibility Analysis: Kossy asked about the status of the feasibility analysis of a centralized agricultural distribution center. Nelson and Howard summarized the findings that were presented by Jennifer Gross from County Public Health, the project manager, including a lack of sufficient demand for a distribution center.
  - **ACTION: Nelson will invite Gross to present the findings of the analysis to the RCD Board.**
- GSD Expansion: Nelson reported on the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of LAFCo to consider expansion of the Granada Sanitary District, about which the RCD submitted comments. The RCD's comments were included in the staff report and noted by the LAFCo Chair (Supervisor Horsley).
- Annual Appeal: Nelson is working with Holly Van Houten on the annual appeal letter and asks that each director personalize and send letters to at least five of their personal contacts.
  - **ACTION: Share annual appeal with Kossy for input before it goes to a designer.**

- 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: There was discussion and brainstorming about what a celebration might include for the RCD's upcoming 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014, such as: a banner on the website and letterhead for the year; a bus tour "Day in the District" with staff who can interpret geology, natural resources, and highlight a history of conservation projects; State and County resolutions honoring the RCD's anniversary and being the first in the state; partnering with the San Mateo County Historical Association, local universities, or others on an oral history project to elicit the stories and knowledge of people on the coast who have stories about the RCD or important history to capture; creating a timeline of RCD history that people can add to; a big event or celebration around the time of the actual anniversary date with donations leveraged by the Board; etc.
  - It is particularly timely in light of the statewide effort around messaging RCDs and that we were the first RCD in the state, now celebrating our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
  - Kossy noted the importance of identifying the audience for each event, that this is an opportunity to integrate with other PR efforts, and opportunities to include social media.
  - Nelson asked that the Board form an ad hoc committee to help plan for the RCD's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014.
  - **ACTION: Kossy (chair) and Reynolds will form an ad hoc 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.**
  - **ACTION: Holland will introduce Nelson to Mitch Postel, Executive Director of SMC Historical Association.**
- Special District Board Member Handbook: Nelson distributed copies of the handbook provided by the California Special Districts Association.
- Presentation about POST/ RCD Partnership: Nelson presented the attached PowerPoint about the partnership between POST and RCD that she and Paul Ringgold (POST) presented at the CARCD conference and that they will present at the March conference of the California Council of Land Trusts.
  - Holland discussed his work with the land trust community to determine their future role in stewardship of lands that are not being transferred to public agencies.
- Sustainable San Mateo County Award: Supervisor Horsley is nominating the RCD for the 2014 Sustainability Award that will be presented by Sustainable San Mateo County. If awarded, it will be a great way to honor 75 years of our work and kick off our anniversary year.
- Slender False Brome: Kossy and three RCD staff kayaked the San Gregorio lagoon to look for slender false brome (an invasive weed) that staff has been mapping in the riparian corridor. They found none and will go back when the sandbar breaches and water is lower. Kayaks were donated by California Canoe and Kayak.
  - **ACTION: RCD staff will send thank you letter to CCK for donating kayaks.**

## 7 Action Items

### 7.1 Consideration of Resolution 2013-5 authorizing RCD to submit a proposal to Whale Tail grant program

- Holland moved to approve the resolution. Kramer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**7.2 Consideration of Resolution 2013-6 for advance of property tax revenue funds from the San Mateo County Controller's Office**

- Kramer moved to approve the resolution. Reynolds seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**8 Adjourn**

- Holland moved to adjourn. Reynolds seconded. The motion passed unanimously.