

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors  
February 15, 2018  
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm  
Location: RCD Office**

Directors present: Barbara Kossy, Neal Kramer, TJ Glauthier, Jim Reynolds, Kevin Watt  
Staff present: Kellyx Nelson, Lau Hodges, Jim Howard (NRCS), Joe Issel, Jarrad Fisher  
Guests: N/A

**1 Call to Order**

- Meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

**2 Introduction of Guests and Staff**

- Lau Hodges, new RCD Administrative Officer, is introduced. Bryanna Whitney, new RCD Conservation Project Assistant, is introduced in absentia.

**3 Public Comment**

- Ron Sturgeon announces that he is a recent member of the San Mateo County Agriculture Advisory Committee. He is interested in the RCD's Executive Director or Agricultural Ombudsman filling one of the vacant seats. Kossy asks that the Board of Directors send a letter to the County requesting RCD representation on the Committee.

**4 Approval of Agenda**

- Nelson explains that there are no financial statements on the agenda because at present they do not reflect current information. Glauthier requests that they be brought back next month even if they are in their current form; and notes that he is aware RCD finances are in good shape.
- Kramer moves to approve the agenda, Reynolds seconds. Approval of the agenda passes unanimously.

**5 Consent Agenda**

5.1 December 21, 2017 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes

**6 Regular Agenda**

6.1 Executive Director report – full report is attached (correction to the report: the correct dates for the CARCD Advocacy Academy are March 5 & 6, 2018.)

- Discussion includes the Butano Channel Reconnection Project timeline and outreach, permitting coordination, and increased scrutiny on federal funding agreements.. Kramer compliments the community outreach (including: emailing stakeholders, attending PMAC meetings and posting on NextDoor) regarding the project. Glauthier requests Nelson resend the map of the 65% Design to the Directors.

- Nelson mentions that John Klochak, Coastal Program Manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will be taking another position and it is unlikely the SF Bay Area Coastal Program will continue as it has.

## 6.2 Directors' reports

- Watt reports on his role as the CARCD Central Coastal Chair. He is arranging to visit each of the Central Coast RCDs. Glauthier asks Watt to give the Board a report on his visits to other RCDs.
- Watt mentions the two water bonds coming up; 1) on the June Ballot, which the CARCD supports and 2) on the November Ballot which the CARCD is currently holding off on supporting. The Directors request a copy of the water bonds be sent to them.
- Watt says the Department of Conservation has gotten good feedback from RCDs and is making improvements in their process as a result.
- Kossy offers to attend the CARCD Advocacy Academy in Sacramento. She requests the information be resent to her.
- Glauthier reports on the slow payment of invoices from the State of California. Glauthier and Nelson have met with Senator Jerry Hill about this and asks that the RCD follow up.
- Howard reports on the U.S. Office of Management & Budget's new direction of; 1) filling positions with interns while lowering the staffing ceiling to approximately 350 employees and 2) positioning the Farm Bill to focus on production and international markets.
- Howard states that Carlos Suarez, CA State Conservationist, is supportive of the RCD/NRCS partnership.
- Glauthier reports the meeting between the RCD and the Sierra Club, scheduled for January was canceled. He will reach out and reschedule.
- Glauthier reports on running into Mark Hylkema, archeologist with CA State Parks, at the Pescadero Marsh.
- Glauthier gives an update on the RCD's search for a new office. Shoreline Station is still a possibility but having recently visited Stone Pine, it seemed like a better option. Nelson agrees and comments on the benefits. After discussion, Glauthier would like a closed session item at the next Board meeting to negotiate a lease.
- Reynolds discusses POST's recent Coastal Community Update and his concern that the public perception would be that POST solely led several RCD/POST partner projects. Directors discuss ideas for partnership communications.

## 6.3 Report out about 2017 CARCD conference.

- Kossy reports that the CARCD conference was filled with nice people and great networking opportunities. She found it to be a good opportunity to see what other RCDs are doing and what was successful for them.

## 6.4 Request for potential Special Meeting to approve contract with Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to manage vegetation in Quiroste Valley.

- Nelson explains that this permit will be going to the Coastal Commission in March or April and that the RCD would be the fiscal agent for this project. Nelson has not brought this contract to the Board yet, as the RCD is not finished contracting with the CA State Parks. The Amah Mutsun plan to move forward in whatever capacity is possible, but would like a contract in place ASAP, possibly before the next Regularly Scheduled RCD Board Meeting. The contract will, likely, be for \$180K, through 2019, to sole source the Amah Mutsun to practice their vegetation management.

**6.5 Board will Consider Contracting with Waterways Consulting for Green Oaks Creek Habitat Enhancement Project.**

- After Board discussion, Reynolds moves to approve the contract, Kramer seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

**6.6 Board will consider authorizing Executive Director to negotiate with PG&E for RCD to hold an easement on a PG&E owned property in Millbrae as mitigation to offset impacts from two PG&E projects.**

- Directors and staff discuss considerations for holding an easement on a PG&E owned property in Millbrae
- Glauthier and Watt would like a clause outlining an exit strategy; for example, should the RCD give notice to terminate, onus will fall on PG&E to find the next party to take over the easement.
- Watt moves to allow the Executive Director to negotiate with PG&E to hold an easement, Reynolds seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

**7 Adjourn**

- Meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.
- The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will not be held on March 15, 2018 due to schedule conflicts. Date and time to be determined.

## Executive Director Report

♥ February 14, 2018 ♥

### Some Highlighted Projects

#### *Carbon Farm Planning*

The RCD has begun helping farmers and ranchers to develop comprehensive conservation plans that also evaluate the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon from the atmosphere into soils and vegetation. We have completed one carbon farm plan, three are underway, and two other landowners have expressed interest in our services. We have also been engaging with many other RCDs and NGOs across the State to scale these efforts to share best practices and mitigate the effects of climate change.

#### *Streamflow Protection*

Staff is preparing for the 2018 construction season which will include projects at 4 locations to benefit streamflow for coho salmon, steelhead trout, and creek health by reducing withdrawals from Pescadero and San Gregorio Creeks during times of low flow: (1) construction of a 14.9 acre-foot pond at POST-owned Butano Farms in Pescadero, (2) construction of a 15.2 acre-foot pond on Carpy Ranch in Pescadero, (3) repair of a 15 acre-foot reservoir at Cuesta La Honda Guild in La Honda, and (4) construction of a 30 acre-foot pond at Blue House Farms in San Gregorio.

#### *Permitting Coordination*

Members of the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network formed a team to address some of the barriers to effective land stewardship posed by permitting requirements. Jim Robins of *Alnus Ecological* and I have facilitated two workshops on the topic, attended by many of the twenty-one Network member organizations. The workshops explored the barriers as well as possible pathways around those barriers, Network members' specific needs for stewardship permits, what the Network might accomplish better than individual members working separately, and which barriers the Network might be most effective in addressing. We are moving forward with two pathways: (1) development of a template Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement ("1600 permit") with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and (2) development of a Programmatic Biological Opinion with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

#### *Butano Channel Reconnection Project*

The project team has determined that construction may require four months, beyond the allowable work window (generally after potential impacts to nesting birds and before potential impacts to California red-legged frogs). The project team has also been exploring various operational considerations regarding what type of equipment to use, in which circumstances (wet conditions, dry conditions, lagoon mouth opened versus closed, etc.), and associated measures to minimize impacts to protected natural and cultural resources. As a result, the 65% designs will be revised and the CEQA Initial Study will be completed in March rather than February. Construction will be phased over two seasons, beginning this summer as planned and concluding in 2019.

### Scrutiny of Federal Funding Agreements

*February 2018 Minutes*

We have been notified by the NRCS that the Office of Management and Budget is moving forward with their presidential directive to reduce government. One prong of their approach is to scrutinize agreement obligations one by one. We are working with Jim Howard, our NRCS District Conservationist, to ensure that our agreements are administratively sound and to demonstrate the value and results of their local investment.

#### Updates from California Association of RCDs

- CARCD has been presenting at meetings and working with the legislature on funding for RCDs, fire prevention funding, invasive species, a potential California Farm Bill, healthy soils programs, CDFW grant programs, technical assistance funding, as well as other issues.
- CARCD is offering an Advocacy Academy in Sacramento in which I will be participating March 6-7. Among other benefits of the Academy, RCD staff and directors will be better prepared to participate in crucial legislative efforts in the coming year, including our push for a continued or expanded allocation from the General Fund for statewide RCD capacity building.
- CARCD is offering Board Leadership “Boot Camps.” I sent information about this last fall, but there is still space and directors are welcome to participate. The program designed to meet the specific needs of RCD leaders. Participants will:
  - Learn about best practices for boards of directors—how to be a great board and a great board member
  - Gain confidence in how to bring their own individual skills and capacities to the table to help ensure the RCD’s success
  - Build community and form statewide connections with other board leaders
- CARCD is in a holding pattern until Congress decides to take up the Farm Bill and recommends that this is a good time for RCD directors to meet with federal representatives about why the Farm Bill is so important to California agriculture and resource conservation. The Conservation Title accounts for approximately 45% of the NRCS California budget including offices, computers, and staff. We are welcome to ask CARCD to help us with talking points and making sure that we do not violate laws regarding advocacy.

#### River Restoration Northwest 2018 Symposium (<http://www.rrnw.org/program/>)

Jarrad Fisher, RCD staff, co-authored and co-presented in Oregon on the monitoring and results of the Butano Floodplain Restoration Project with John Klochak of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Jarrad reports that conference participants were interested in the work we are doing in San Mateo County, particularly noting the complexity of and restrictions on our projects due to regulations and land ownership. Many of the projects that were presented from the northwest are on large properties owned by a single landowner, with substantially less regulation of restoration. Many of them take place on US Forest Service land, paid for by the Forest Service, and are not dependent on grant funds. They also have resources for the type of ongoing monitoring that is desirable and sometimes required, yet rarely funded in our area.

#### New Staff

Lau Hodges is the RCD's Administrative Officer, a new position at the RCD. In this capacity she will be a clerk for the Board of Directors, an office manager, assist with some bookkeeping, oversee benefits and some HR functions, and provide other administrative assistance. She will wear many hats in our organization! Most recently, Lau worked as a Policy Analyst at the San Mateo County Harbor District and before that worked for 10 years at the Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park. She is a resident of Half Moon Bay.

Bryanna Whitney is our new Conservation Project Assistant. In her new role she will assist provide support to our Drought Relief Program, Slender False Brome Eradication Program, and other programs as needed. She has a degree in Environmental Studies with honors from UC Santa Cruz and most recently worked for nature, farm and environmental education programs, such as Vida Verde, as well as having served as a backcountry guide.