

**CARCD CENTRAL SIERRA REGION
SPRING MINUTES
APRIL 10, 2008**

Welcome: Lesa Osterholm, Manager of the Nevada County RCD, greeted members to the CARCD Central Sierra Regional Spring Meeting. The event was held at the historic Miners Foundry in Nevada City, and its Executive Director gave a brief description of its history. Built in 1859, the Foundry is currently used as a meeting place and event venue for all to enjoy.

Call to Order: Tom Wehri, President of the Board of the Placer County Resource Conservation District (PCRCD), called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m. He explained that Chris Paull has stepped down as President and that Stan MacDonald, the Vice President, will not be running for re-election. Tom made a few changes to the agenda as follows:

Approval of 2007 Fall Central Sierra Region Meeting Minutes: A motion was made for the approval of the minutes as presented. The vote was unanimous and the minutes were approved.

Approval of Financial Statement: The report was reviewed by attendees and a motion was made and seconded to approve it as submitted. The financial statement was approved.

Nomination/Election of Regional Chair and Vice Chair: Tom Wehri asked for nominations from the floor for the position of President. John James of the El Dorado County RCD was nominated and in a unanimous vote, John was voted in as the President. Tom Wehri was nominated and voted in as the Vice President. John presided over the meeting beginning at 9:25 a.m.

Roll Call: John James asked the approximately 25 people in attendance to introduce themselves. The following groups were represented at the spring meeting. NRCS staff from numerous area offices, CARCD, Department of Conservation, Mariposa RCD, Nevada County RCD, El Dorado County RCD, Georgetown Divide RCD, Placer County RCD, Tahoe RCD and the Tuolumne RCD.

Set Date For Fall 2008 Regional Meeting- Mariposa County: The Mariposa County RCD will host the fall meeting and various recommendations were made about a date selection. The decision was made that the fall meeting will be held during the first two weeks in October and the spring event during the first two weeks of April. There were no volunteers to host the spring 2009 meeting. We will hear more later about the fall meeting in Yosemite.

CARCD Report- Tacy Currey: Tacy announced the 2008 CARCD Conference will be held November 19-22, 2008 in Riverside, California. Accommodations will be at the Mission Inn and The Marriott. Tacy needs presenters for workshops and for any ideas. She also needs someone to help with the food menu selection.

In other news, Trinity RCD has been recognized for putting together a Fire Plan that the NACD developed. The Governor's Award Applications have come out for this year and Tacy will post

the application on the website. This is a great avenue for cross-selling our projects to the public.

A workshop on Working Landscapes will be held from April 30 to May 1, 2008. This workshop is open to the public and various agencies will be attending.

Everyone hopes the Farm Bill will be finalized soon. It is constantly changing and has had numerous extensions. Tacy traveled to Washington D.C. and explained to our representatives the importance of having CTA funds available right away after a fire. Senator Feinstein is interested in working with us to establish these funds.

Weed management is overseen by the RCDS and they will receive 1.5 million for the project. Other funding for other weed management will target smaller and more specialized projects.

The watershed funding went through the House and now goes to the Senate. We need to send our letters of support as soon as possible.

AB2992 Update- This is a bill for the inclusion of Conservation Districts and the Prompt Payment Act. There is no opposition to this. Tacy will be speaking to the committee next week about a "prevailing wage."

AB1235 Update- Re: Restoration Projects- formerly our projects were considered public works projects and that left our volunteers out due to wage requirements. This could hinder volunteer workers from helping on our projects.

Tacy asks for volunteers to work on a statewide committee so we can show the depth of our experience at the local RCD level. The suggestion was made to partner the RCDS with the NRCS to accomplish projects at the state level.

Some of the upcoming events include the CARCD Board meeting on May 20, 2008 and a "Day at the Capital" on May 21 2008.

Tacy has been working on finding a cost effective legal assistance program and she is also gathering information on retirement/healthcare group plans that can be offered to all RCDs. (John James mentioned CalPERS may allow RCDs to participate in plans.)

She encourages everyone to look into the use of the CalCard. It is a State credit card offering a lot of flexibility and no interest is charged!

To contact Tacy, call her on her cell phone at 916-524-2100 or e-mail her. She invites everyone to a barbeque on July 12, 2008 at her family home in Dixon.

RCD Activity Reports:

El Dorado RCD- El Dorado continues to work on the general plan and met with Georgetown and El Dorado County to conduct strategic planning. They continue to assist with fuel load management and to support the watershed groups. Subdivision reviews for erosion control, the EQIP program and CFIP projects are their primary focus.

Florin RCD- The RCD owns and operates the local water districts and their projects focus on outreach in the schools and community. They are participants in Earth Day, offer a toilet rebate program and just started a student intern program.

Placer County RCD- Primary projects include interfacing with fire safe programs and offering a chipper program. The RCD has been working to remove Red Sesbania from the local area. They also are working with the forestry department in local areas.

Mariposa RCD- The RCD recently held a tree sale and has also had native wild seeds for sale. They are still administering grading permits for the county but they will be losing this task and the money that goes with it. They are also in partnership with the SNC to provide employees to them. They have received two grants; one will be for a demo garden and the other for rebuilding the Merced River Center. They participated as judges in an "Environthon" in Yosemite National Park.

They continue to work on the EQIP Program and offer a lot of diversity in forestry and farming. They ask that everyone planning to attend the fall meeting pay in advance since they don't have funds available.

Tahoe RCD- They continue their backyard conservation program utilizing best fire practices and are also involved in a residential water quality program. They have received Prop 50 funds and are working on an invasive species program. They are also working on preventing a kind of mussel from populating Lake Tahoe.

Nevada County RCD- Lesa Osterholme said they are waiting to hear about DOC grants. They have received \$68,000 to prepare a video on grazing. Another grant for \$406,000 was approved to complete a shaded fuel break. They are also completing riparian efforts. Hillary Drucker is working on an invasive weeds program to eradicate Scotch Broom. Partnering with the local fire safe group and over 20 other volunteer groups, they are having a terrific impact in the local area.

Sloughouse RCD- This group is working on a ground water project in south Sacramento County as well has smaller projects in the area. One grant just completed in January made improvements on their local watershed.

Amador RCD- The primary focus currently is working on necessary fuel breaks.

Tuolumne RCD- This is a new RCD. They will be working on water monitoring and fuel breaks using the Kennedy Meadows as their primary test site.

Other Reports:

NRCS Report- Some staffing changes include that Paul Lake is now in Grass Valley; Curtis is the Acting State Conservationist for Sierra Nevada. The current plan is to increase partnerships with the local RCDs. If you have ideas, please make suggestions.

The Farm Bill continues to be extended. The President wants it extended through the fall.

In reference to the budget, money is tight. The NRCS has gone through \$3 million for the EQUIP program having negotiated 280 contracts.

Department of Conservation: Tom Campbell reported there is no news on the State budget. All departments have been asked to cut 10% across the board. The DOC is going through transition in the way of staffing/management.

Grant review committees have made their recommendations on the grant approvals and now the decision is with the director. Once decisions are announced, there will be a public comment period with funding around two months from that time.

The DOC can assist the RCDs with training, grant writing, grant review, public relations and policy making. He passed out a "California Resource Conservation District, Director's Handbook" for our review and use. They will also be publishing a DOC Newsletter in the near future.

RC & D: Information was handed out about the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Council. The RCD continues educational outreach to the local community and schools. They have submitted two grants for a chipping program geared to train unemployed residents how to clear defensible space. They also are working with the local Native American groups in the area to make sure native plants are not eradicated.

(A video was shown about the RC& Ds. The Sierra Nevada Coalition of RC& Ds is a group of 7 RC& Ds working at the grass roots level, to oversee a land stewardship program and to recognize with the increase in population in the High Sierras, more fuel management is needed. Local achievements of the RC & Ds were highlighted.)

Strategic Planning for Central Sierra Region:

Lunch

Video: The group viewed a video about land preservation that can be checked out to show at our local events. We broke into smaller groups and were given three minutes to brainstorm on the use of this video for local events. Each group shared their ideas.

Current Tasks: Tacy is charged with creating the CARCD Statewide Strategic Plan. She called for participants to brainstorm the top three things the CARCD **currently does** for the groups represented here. The result of the brainstorming included: *Lobbying, advocacy, annual conference, website information, continued training, local assistance and partnering.*

Things CARCD Should Do: The group was asked to identify the top three things CARCD **should do**. The result was: *Develop a wider variety of grants; re-draw boundaries for watersheds; develop and provide more training sessions; enter into intra-district mediation; have more authority over districts; focus on NRCS/RCD relationships; have ice cream socials, act as a clearing house for best management practices ideas, etc.; communication via e-mail with meeting information; additional support for outreach/education and employee retention.*

The Top Three Management Issues: *Fuel Load Management, Water Quality, Invasive Species, Grazing/Oak Woodland, Water Quality/Quantity, /Working Landscapes and Ground Water.*

The Operational Needs as a District: *Regulatory Compliance Updates, Assistance with Personnel Benefits, Legal Assistance, IT help, Year Round Funding, Educational Outreach at the District Level, Director Recruitment, Fundraising and District Growth Guidance, possible \$10 surcharge at events, pay directors a mileage fee.*

Summarization: Tacy will summarize the information gathered today and send it to all regions. She will also be reviewing our respective strategic plans to make sure our needs are met.

John James discussed the effectiveness of our planning. He also urged that we develop a good relationship with the California Department of Agriculture. It's important to get the word out to the public that we exist and are here to assist them.

Member Announcements: Claudia Smith, a Director from the Placer County RCD, suggested adding a \$10 surcharge per attendee per meeting so we can have funds available for necessary deposits when planning our meetings.

A motion was made by Mariposa RCD to authorize a \$500 deposit advance for the RCD who will be holding either the spring or fall events. The motion was seconded by Placer County RCD and the motion carried.

Next Agenda Items: An addition to the agenda should be "how to increase funding."

Ending and Adjournment: John James thanked Nevada County RCD for their hosting of the event and all participants were thanked for their participation. A closing video was shown about agriculture in Nevada County. The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.