

**PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Regular Meeting  
March 18, 2008**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Placer County Resource Conservation District (RCD) Board was called to order by RCD Board Chair Tom Wehri at 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS AND OTHERS PRESENT

Directors Present:

Thomas (Tom) Wehri  
Robert (Bob) Wiswell, Jr.  
Stanley (Stan) MacDonald  
Claudia Smith  
Steven (Steve) Garcia  
Scott Harvey

Directors Absent:           None – One Vacancy

Others Present:

Mike Brenner, NRCS District Conservationist-Auburn Field Office  
Rich Gresham, RCD Manager  
Katie Maloney, RCD Programs Manager  
Ryan Bellanca, RCD/NRCS GIS Coordinator

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Claudia Smith moved to approve the agenda as presented. Scott Harvey seconded; motion carried unanimously.

GUESTS

Barry Anderson, North Fork Associates  
Ira Bennett, Cobblestone Homes  
Chris White, Balance Hydrologics

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Scott Harvey moved to approve the minutes with a correction to Agency Reports to reflect the inclusion of the monthly activity report in the Board Package. Claudia Smith seconded; motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Katie Maloney presented the Financial Statements as well as the Grants and Programs Summaries for the month ending February 29, 2008.

Bob Wiswell moved to approve the financial statements and reports as presented. Scott Harvey seconded; motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS

New Business:

a) *Conservation/Mitigation Easement Opportunities Presentation and Discussion:*

Tom Wehri introduced Ira Bennett and Barry Anderson. Tom reviewed past meetings that have taken place with Ira and Barry regarding easement management opportunities related to the development of new foothill subdivisions and the tremendous need to find an entity willing to manage smaller conservation/mitigation easements related to new developments.

Tom turned the floor over to Ira and Barry, who gave the Board an overview of the mitigation process related to the development of new subdivisions, easement management opportunities, how other RCDs in the state have stepped into this role, and specifically the need to find an entity to manage a small easement in relation to the Kemper Woods subdivision located at the corner of Kemper and Bean in Auburn.

Discussion revolved around funding options for the operations and management (O&M) of conserved areas, the collection of that funding, the enforcement and implementation of the Resource Management Plans (RMPs), the need for the RCD to have a role in the development of easement RMPs, and whether easement management is an appropriate role for the RCD. Concerns were voiced regarding the historical role of RCDs as a resource for the private landowner carrying no regulatory obligations and the potential for easement management to place the RCD in the position of enforcer. Also discussed, was the potential for larger easements to include resource monitoring and reporting responsibilities.

Scott Harvey expressed support for the concept of easements as an important tool to implement the RCD Mission and made a motion to proceed with subsequent discussions on how to move forward with the concept.

Stan MacDonald seconded; motion carried with Claudia Smith abstaining due to the proximity of her property to the Kemper Woods conservation easement area and Steve Garcia opposing the motion due to his reservations regarding a potential for the public to perceive the RCD as a regulatory body in relation to easement management activities.

b) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Funding Update of Healthy Forest/Defensible Space Handbook:*

Rich Gresham reviewed past discussions regarding the need to update the Healthy Forest/Defensible Space Handbook to reflect current law increasing defensible space requirements around structures from 30 to 100 feet

Steve Garcia reported revised text for the updated publication has been completed and updated photos and exhibits are in process. He noted his desire to expand the maintenance component of the document and expressed hope that the county will use the updated document to help guide them in their ordinance development process.

The Board concurred on moving forward with the development of the updated document and a search for appropriate software that will allow for the incorporation of revised text and updated photos and exhibits. They will address the expenditure of funds to do so in the '08-'09 budgeting process.

Katie indicated if the Board desires, she is willing to edit the revised document.

c) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Contracting with CalFire to Produce Quarterly Forestland Steward Newsletter:*

Rich Gresham reported contract language is under development and the current editor of the newsletter has agreed to continue in that capacity. When the contract is ready to execute he will bring it to the Board for approval.

d) *Update and Discussion Re: Ag Resource Center/Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposal:*

Tom Wehri reported the development of the Ag Resource Center is currently in limbo with the Farm Services Agency pulling out of the USDA Auburn Service Center and no response from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy regarding the RCD's proposal related to the potential Center.

New Business:

e) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Open Nominations for Special District Representative:*

After a short discussion, Stan MacDonald moved to nominate John Moberly to the LAFCO Special Districts seat. Scott Harvey seconded; motion carried unanimously.

f) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: USDA Service Center – Auburn Field Office Issues:*

Mike Brenner reported there is no new information to report in terms of future plans for the USDA Service Center. He noted the Farm Services Agency has already paid their rent for the next several months. Mike reported he has been directed to approach the RCD for a contribution towards rent in the next fiscal year.

After a short discussion, the Board directed staff to determine how much square footage the RCD needs and a per square footage amount for consideration in the '08-'09 budgeting process.

g) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Foothill Farmers Market Association Website Funding Request:*

After a short discussion regarding the current fiscal situation in terms of shrinking tax rolls and budget constraints due to the downturn in housing, no action on the request was taken.

Rich Gresham requested Board Committees meet in the next month to develop a workplan and determine their funding needs for the next fiscal year.

### RCD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Forestry & Fuels Management Committee: Stan MacDonald reported the Committee met and continued their work on the development of an updated Healthy Forest/Defensible Space Handbook.

### DIRECTORS' REPORTS

*Claudia Smith:*

- Claudia reported attending the Small Farm Conference and the Ag Resources Fair that garnered about 50 attendees.

*Bob Wiswell*

- Bob reported the next High Sierra Resource Conservation & Development Council Executive Committee meeting is slated for Friday and requested another Board member attend the regular meeting slated for mid-April as he will be unable to attend. Tom Wehri volunteered.

*Scott Harvey:*

- Scott reported he and Rich have been working in conjunction with the Dept. of Conservation on the formation of the Advisory Committee and respectfully requested the Board consider submitting his name to serve on the committee. No objections were raised.
- Scott gave an update on the Governor's surcharge proposal and the alternate proposal being put forth by the Legislative Analysts Office where the surcharge would only apply to State Responsibility Area constituents vs. being levied statewide. Scott will email Katie contact information so the Board Resolution can be appropriately submitted.

*Tom Wehri:*

- Tom reviewed his National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Annual Meeting report. He noted the NACD Washington office needs upgrades and is looking for assistance with capital improvements. The Board agreed to consider assistance in the '08-'09 budgeting process.
- Tom reported his observations regarding the lack of progress being made on the Farm Bill that has been extended to April 15<sup>th</sup>, when a potential extension to year end will be considered.

## RCD STAFF REPORTS

In addition to the written activity reports for the month of February, submitted in the Board Package, the following points were discussed:

- Ryan Bellanca reviewed GIS products he has developed in response to requests from partner RCDs. He is planning to present his work to the individual partner RCD Boards.
- Rich Gresham requested the Board form an ad hoc Selection Committee to review applicants for the Board vacancy and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on behalf of the Board.

The Board concurred the Selection Committee should make a recommendation to the BOS from the existing pool of applicants on their behalf.

- Rich reminded the Board of the April 10<sup>th</sup> CARCD Central Sierra Region Spring Meeting being hosted by the Nevada County RCD at the Miners Foundry in Nevada City.

Katie took a head count of attendees so she can handle the registration.

- Rich announced the Placer Chapter of CA Special Districts Association will be hosting Senator David Cox April 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at the ARD Canyon View Community Center.
- Katie Maloney reported editing and publishing the 2007 RCD Annual Report written by staff member, Jane Keillor.

## AGENCY REPORTS

In addition to the written activity report for February-March, submitted in the Board Package, the following points were discussed.

- Mike Brenner reported budget impacts have resulted in NRCS being directed to conduct an audit of EQIP practices not yet implemented. Placer County currently has 39 contracts that fall in that category and Mike expects about 15 contracts to be terminated due to non-implementation in 2008.
- Mike briefly reviewed site visits, surveys, and completion checks conducted, engineering and technical assistance provided, and conservation practice training attended.
- Mike reported there was a luncheon held for the departing FSA employees.
- Mike reported he responded to a question survey conducted by Ohio and Utah State for information on urbanization and impacts to local agriculture.

Scott Harvey requested a copy of the Ohio/Utah State report when available.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Letter dated February 22<sup>nd</sup> from Rich Gresham to Congressman Doolittle requesting he intercede on behalf of the Farm Services Agency in light of the proposed relocation of the Auburn office to Elk Grove.
- Letter dated March 6<sup>th</sup> from the Sacramento River Watershed Program Chair, Butch Hopkins soliciting support for the establishment of the Sacramento River Watershed Coalition and RCD participation in the proposed Coalition.
- Letter dated February 28<sup>th</sup> from Placer Local Agency Formation Commission soliciting nominations for the Special Districts Representative whose term is due to expire in May.
- Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Board Meeting Agenda for the March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting
- River Network's 2008 River Rally registration information

- Stewardship Council Spring 2008 Update
- National Watershed Coalition Action Alert re: President's Proposed Fiscal Year 2009 Budget that does not contain funding for the USDA Watershed Program
- Understanding the State Controller's Report: A Nuts & Bolts Workshop for Special Districts
- State Compensation Insurance Fund publication, *Safety News*, Issue One 2008
- Placer Arts publication, *Perspectives*, March/April 2008
- CA Special Districts Association publication, CA Special District, for January/February 2008

#### FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following items will be on the April agenda:

- Forestland Steward Newsletter Update
- Ag Resource Center/SNC Proposal Update
- USDA Service Center Update
- NACD Capital Court Campaign Support

#### ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Scott Harvey moved for adjournment. Claudia Smith seconded; motion carried unanimously. Tom Wehri adjourned the meeting at 6:43 p.m.