

**PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Regular Meeting
October 17, 2006**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Placer County Resource Conservation District Board was called to order by RCD Board Chair Chris Paull at 3:17 p.m.

MEMBERS AND OTHERS PRESENT

Directors Present: Chris Paull
Robert (Bob) Wiswell, Jr.
Stanley (Stan) MacDonald
Stewart Feldman
Claudia Smith

Directors Absent: Thomas (Tom) Wehri
Gregory (Greg) Nau

Others Present: Rich Gresham, RCD Manager
Carol Rutenbergs, NRCS Soil Conservationist-Auburn Field Office
Katie Maloney, RCD Sr. Administrative Assistant
Bill Templin, North Fork American River Watershed Coordinator
Gregg Bates, Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Claudia Smith moved to approve the agenda with NRCS Update items to be presented before New Business. Stewart Feldman seconded, motion carried unanimously.

GUESTS

Lesa Osterholm, Nevada County RCD Manager and Bear River Watershed Coordinator

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Claudia Smith moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of September 19, 2006 as presented. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Katie Maloney presented the *Financial Statements for the Month Ended September 30, 2006* and the *Schedule of Expenses and Warrants Issued for September 2006*.

Stewart Feldman moved to approve the September 2006 financial statements and expense report. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS

New Business:

- a) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Report from Lesa Osterholm, Nevada County RCD Manager Re: Agricultural Tax Assessments on Improvements:*
Lesa Osterholm reviewed with the Board a letter the Nevada County Agriculture Advisory Commission (NCAAC) will be reviewing for further refinement and approval to the Nevada County Board of Supervisors (BOS) asking for their support in seeking a legislative change to the way agricultural improvements are taxed as property improvements and expressing concern about ranchers and farmers making energy saving conservation improvements that benefit natural resources, at their own cost, then being penalized through a state mandated tax for their effort while other state and federal programs and power companies are offering incentives for the implementation of energy saving efforts.

Lesla reviewed the issue as outlined in the draft letter included in the Board Package for prior review. She gave a few examples of how Nevada County landowners are having their property taxes reassessed after the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), particularly cross fencing and irrigation infrastructure installation and/or conversion. These practices currently being assessed by Nevada County have the potential to negatively impact the implementation of BMPs promoted by Farm Bureaus, RCDs, NRCS, and others; practices that provide benefits to the community.

The NCAAC letter closes by requesting the Nevada County BOS pass a resolution to support a change in property tax assessments on conservation practices and help encourage local farmers and ranchers to continue to practice good land stewardship and conservation work.

Lesla asked the Board for their support.

Board discussion revolved around the subjective nature of tax codes, the possibility that Nevada County may be enforcing the code in an aggressive manner, and the need for property tax codes to be clarified in terms of agricultural improvements that benefit natural resources including water quality, wildlife habitat, and wildfire prevention.

Rich Gresham suggested the Board draft a letter describing the problem to the appropriate state entities and suggested a CARCD Resolution might also be appropriate.

Claudia Smith moved to send a letter to the appropriate state officials describing the problem and making recommendations to eliminate the disincentive to private landowners including ranchers and farmers implementing conservation practices. Stewart Feldman seconded.

After Board discussion revolving around the need to investigate the tax code and any discretionary leeway in the application of that code, the need to determine if this is a statewide issue or a local issue, and the potential for CARCD and environmental community support; the motion carried unanimously.

b) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Execution of RCD/Placer County MOU to cost share the Red Sesbania Control Program:*

Rich Gresham reviewed progress towards implementing the Red Sesbania Control Program and the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), included in the Board package that will facilitate Placer County's participation in the cost share program to control Red Sesbania in the Dry Creek watershed. Rich requested the Board's approval to execute the MOU behalf of the RCD. The funding for Placer County's participation will come from the unallocated funds in the '06-'07 RCD/Placer County Annual Joint Work Program meant to address unanticipated needs like the Red Sesbania Control Program.

Stewart Feldman moved to approve the execution of the MOU as requested.

Claudia Smith seconded; motion carried unanimously.

c) *CA Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) Central Sierra Regional Fall Meeting Update:*

Rich Gresham reported the Fall Regional Meeting enjoyed good participation.

Stewart noted he learned organic farms should have signage along roadways to prohibiting spraying of herbicides and pesticides along their roadways to avoid to loss of their organic certification.

Stewart also reported the CA Invasive Plant Council is working with CalTrans on Class A & B plant eradication and control.

It was noted Tacy Currey, CARCD Executive Director, shared her cell phone number at the meeting and encouraged open communication between the RCDs and CARCD.

Chris Paull reported on the review of draft CARCD Resolutions that took place at the Regional Meeting. He noted the value of hearing Central Sierra Region RCDs give an overview of their individual activities.

Chris announced he was again elected Regional Chair for another year and the RCD will be hosting the Spring Regional Meeting.

Claudia Smith suggested exploring the Flower Hill Farm located at Auburn Folsom Road and Horseshoe Bar Road as a potential meeting venue.

Chris indicated the Sierra Coordinated Resources Management Council (Council) meeting slated for earlier in the week failed to gain a quorum necessitating the need for the Special Meeting at the Regional meeting where Council business was accomplished.

Chris gave an overview of the Council's Special Meeting that resulted in the election of the Joint Powers Authority (Council) Board Officers. Elected were Bob Beegle, El Dorado County RCD, as Council Chair, Al Hubbard, Georgetown Divide RCD, as Council Vice Chair, and Chris Paull, as Secretary/Treasurer. The Council also approved the draft "Scope of Work" for the CA Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) Prop 40 Agreement in concept as the language is expected to undergo further refinement before being finalized.

d) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Selection of RCD Delegate and Alternate for the CARCD Annual Meeting:*

After a short discussion the Board selected their representatives authorized to cast votes on behalf of the Board at the CARCD Annual Meeting.

Claudia Smith moved Chris Paull serve as CARCD Delegate and Stewart Feldman as Alternate.

Stan MacDonald seconded; motion carried unanimously.

e) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Draft CARCD Resolutions for Consideration at the Annual Meeting:*

The Board reviewed previous Draft CARCD Resolutions discussions.

Claudia Smith moved the Board instruct their CARCD Delegate and Alternate to vote on the resolutions as discussed at the CARCD Central Sierra Regional Fall Meeting at the CARCD Annual meeting where the resolution will be taken under consideration.

Stan MacDonald seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Board discussion revolved around review of two draft National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Resolutions, included in the Board package that have been drafted by the CARCD Forestry & Fuels Management Committee and will be considered at the February NACD Annual Meeting.

Stewart Feldman moved to support both the Forest Ecosystem Services Resolution and Active Management of National Forest Public Lands Resolution in concept.

Stan MacDonald seconded; motion carried unanimously.

f) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Placer Land Trust (PLT) Sponsorship:*

Katie Maloney reviewed the request for sponsorship of the PLT Harvest Celebration 2006, various sponsorship levels, and their related benefits.

After Board discussion regarding the best use of funds, with Stewart Feldman making a case for using the funds on education vs. sponsorship of an entity that already has a revenue stream, Bob Wiswell moved the RCD sponsor the PLT event at the \$250 level.

Claudia Smith seconded; motion carried with Stewart Feldman opposed.

- g) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Fair Animal Auction Sponsorship:*
After Board consideration of future sponsorship of students raising animals for auction at local fair events and discussion that revolved around how to disperse these kinds of funds across the board and in a fair manner, such as contributing the ribbons for the program or the potential sponsorship of a meal associated with an event promoting the fair program, Bob Wiswell moved the pass the issue to the RCD Education Committee for further consideration and recommendation.

Stewart Feldman seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

- h) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Update on Selection of NRCS/RCD GIS Project Coordinator:*
Rich Gresham reported three resumes had been received for the position of NRCS/RCD GIS Project Coordinator of which two reflected the skill sets and experience desired for the position. Interviews have been set for next Monday.

Claudia Smith moved that the Board give Rich authorization to hire the candidate selected by the interview committee.

Stewart Feldman seconded; motion carried unanimously.

- i) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Update on the RCD Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and CA Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) Contracting Process:*
Rich Gresham reviewed the minor changes made to the "Scope of Work" and reiterated the JPA/Council Board passed a resolution to execute the CDF Agreement and approved the "Scope of Work".

Rich reported the JPA/Council Board also selected the Placer County RCD as the Fiscal Manager for the Fuels Reduction Program (Program) and the Council will be entertaining a Services Agreement between the Council and Katie Maloney to administer both the JPA and the Program.

Chris Paull thanked the Board for their support of the Program that will not only encourage landowners to implement healthy forest practices, but develop regional partnerships between RCDs and agencies, as well as opening the door to additional funding opportunities on a regional level.

Rich requested the Board consider lending the JPA funds to purchase an insurance package and possibly some filing fees for the Council in order to keep things moving forward in a timely manner. The loan would be reimbursed from the 25% advance that will be allowed once the Program Agreement between the Council and CDF is executed.

Rich reviewed the Program Participants Agreement and associated Payee Data Record. He noted it is expected that Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) will be the instrument used to collaborate with the RCDs outside of the JPA/Council boundaries, but within the fifteen county Program area. He has sent draft MOU language to the Butte County RCD for their review and input on the proposed language.

Stewart Feldman moved to approve the documents and authorize Rich to finalize any language revisions on behalf of the RCD.

Claudia Smith seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Stewart Feldman then moved to approve the RCD advancing funds on behalf of the JPA to purchase the necessary JPA/Council insurance policy in order to quickly move forward when the agreement is ready for execution.

Claudia Smith seconded; motion carried unanimously.

j) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Update on RCD/NRCS Newspaper Ad Promotion:*

Carol Rutenbergs reported the state office approved the NRCS ad promotion campaign for two printings as requested. She reminded the RCD Board approved funding for a third printing should the state office approve their portion of the expenditure.

Katie Maloney indicated she will take care of the third printing costs once the details needed to complete the transaction are gathered.

Carol closed by noting twenty applications for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) have been received so far, twice as many as received by this time last year.

k) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Update on NRCS Project Signage Program:*
Carol Rutenbergs reported due to staff work load no further action has yet been taken on the signage project as of yet.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- *RCD Forestry & Fuels Management Committee:*
Stan MacDonald reported the October 2nd meeting fostered interesting discussion, but did not result in any action being taken.

Rich Gresham added the committee will be exploring just how the State Fire Safe Council operates.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Stewart Feldman:

- Stewart worked on the Farm & Barn event among other activities including the development of the Harvest Calendar.
- Stewart attended the Sierra Club-Placer Chapter meeting to promote potential conservation activities on PG&E property located in the Christian Valley area.
- Stewart reported the Stewardship Council will next meet in the area on November 29th and is receiving input from RCDs. Stewart handed out meeting materials for perusal.
- Stewart reviewed upcoming meetings of potential Board interest.

Claudia Smith:

- Claudia reported the Farm & Barn event was successful and thanked Board members that volunteered for the event.
- Claudia reported finding the Central Sierra Regional Meeting interesting and noted she is looking forward to the 2006 CARCD Conference and Annual Meeting.
- Claudia promoted the Harvest Calendar funded by a UC Cooperative Extension grant to further the promotion of Placer County agriculture. She noted she has order forms for those interested in making a calendar purchase.
- Claudia noted she and her husband continue to farm and be involved in the Foothills Farmers' Market Association.
- Claudia noted she has applied for EQIP funding.

Bob Wiswell:

- Bob reported the Farm Bureau Hoedown on October 28th at the Mt. Pleasant Hall will provide funding for kids in agriculture and support their efforts at fair events.
- Bob reported the High Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council is planning to hold their Annual Meeting at the Loma Rica Ranch in conjunction with a small farm equipment event and handed out meeting materials.

Chris Paull:

- Chris reported he facilitated the CARCD Central Sierra Fall Meeting and felt it was a good meeting for welcoming the new Tuolumne County RCD into the region.
- Chris reported he has been involved in getting the JPA/Council up and running and reviewing Program draft documents.
- Chris reported meeting with Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Executive Director Jim Branham, his Program Manager, and Rich Gresham and explored opportunities for collaboration between the SNC and the RCD. Chris indicated he promoted GIS mapping as a potential area of collaboration. He noted SNC is involved in the Americorp Program and has given the RCD an opportunity to provide input on defining a position to be housed by the SNC for the potential development of an environmental education program thru the Americorp Program.
- Chris reported the CA Special Districts Association meeting has been postponed until after the holidays and the next East Canal Efficiency Study meeting will be held in November.

STAFF REPORTS

RCD Report:

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

- Katie Maloney reported that in addition to her usual activities, she has been working with the JPA to move their effort forward including the review of proposed language for the Participation Agreement and other Program documents.
- Katie continues to provide support to watershed groups and the Sediment Dynamics Study Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- Katie participated in a workday to re-paint the sidewalk markers for the Placer Tree Partners (PTP) Treasured Tree Walking Tour locations.
- Katie reported she has allocated the \$43K plus insurance premium rebate to the appropriate programs. The vast majority of the rebate was not related to programs but was directly associated with the RCD's insurance premium. The insurer provided proper documentation for the correct allocation of the rebate she had requested.
- Katie is gathering information from the 319(h) grant participants in anticipation of drafting the grant's final report.
- Bill Templin reviewed his activity report and solicited questions and/or comments.
- Bill shared the Mountain Democrat article on the Watershed Education Summit event with the Board and gave a run down of activities detailed in his monthly report.
- Bill noted the Cosumnes, American, Bear, Yuba (CABY) Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (Plan) process will soon give the Board an opportunity to endorse and adopt the Plan. The draft Plan is available on the CABY website and Bill shared the site location.

- Gregg Bates reviewed his activity report and solicited questions and/or comments.
- Stewart Feldman's inquired as to the Dry Creek Conservancy's (DCC's) progress in terms of their desire to expand their boundaries to the American Basin area.

Gregg reported that while DCC has made some progress they are still seeking new Board members that will properly reflect and represent the expanded boundary area. He added DCC does not have any funding to accomplish the expansion as envisioned and that he does not expect to make much progress until a funding source is found. A list of projects is being developed for the development of grant proposals outside of DCC's current boundaries the DCC could administer that would help facilitate the expansion.

- Gregg suggested the RCD Board consider a future role in the area of watershed management that would include the pursuit of funding and support for continued watershed management in the area outside of the CABY focus area. He noted DCC has been mostly grant funded and project oriented. DCC would like to see more integration between watershed issues and programs in terms of coordination on a regional level.

Gregg noted the American Basin Council of Watersheds will be without formal coordination once the Watershed Coordinator Program is finished unless additional funding for the continuation of the program is acquired.

Chris Paull inquired if a proposal has already been developed should funding be found to continue the Watershed Coordinator Program. Board discussion revolved around the importance of demonstrating the financial value of watershed coordination. The RCD is willing to help facilitate discussion regarding funding opportunities that will provide continuity of the program. Potential funding sources for the continuation of the program were discussed.

Rich Gresham stressed the need to begin the development of a proposal focused on the identification, management, and implementation of projects on a watershed basis as the turn around time for program continuation will most likely be a short one.

Bill Templin noted CABY project proposals have been submitted by Placer County that include projects that will positively impact American Basin watersheds. Other CABY proposals include the continuation of watershed coordination in the CABY area.

- Rich Gresham reported that in addition to his regular duties he attended the CARCD Forestry Committees' meeting and tour and worked to expand the Dept. of Facility Services agreement.

AGENCY REPORTS

The written activity report for September-October was handed out by Carol Rutenbergs, in Mike Brenner's absence, for Board perusal and solicited questions from the Board. No questions were forthcoming.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Placer County Water Agency Notice of Public Scoping Meeting for the Auburn Tunnel Outlet Modification Project dated September 22, 2006.
- Placer County Flood Control & Water Conservation District Technical Advisory Committee meeting agenda for October 5th and August 2nd minutes.
- Placer County Flood Control & Water Conservation District meeting agenda for October 16th.
- Placer County Agricultural Commission meeting agenda for October 9th.
- 2005 Placer County Agricultural Crop Report.

- CA Special Districts Association publication, *CA Special District*, for September-October 2006.
- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) publication, *Forestry Notes*, for September 2006.
- Stewardship Council publication, *Fall Update*, for October 2006 and *Save the Date* postcard with meeting schedule.
- Placer County Farm Bureau publication, *Bureau Talk*, for fall 2006.
- Registration materials for conference, *Keeping Working Forests - The Role of Forests in Preserving Open Space*, slated for November 28th and 29th in Bend, Oregon.
- Protect American River Canyons (PARC) newsletter, *The Confluence*, for fall 2006.
- State Compensation Fund publication, *State Fund Components*, for 2006.
- Dept. of Water Resources publication, *Water Conservation News*, for spring/summer 2006.
- Riverside-Corona RCD publication, *Resources Update*, for fall 2006.
- Water Education Foundation publication, *The CA Runoff Rundown*, for fall 2006.
- CalPERS publication, *Employer News*, for fall 2006.
- Earth Imaging Journal for September/October 2006.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following items will be on the November Regular Board Meeting agenda:

- CABY IRWMP Endorsement & Adoption
- NRCS Project Sign Update
- CARCD Annual Meeting Update

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Stan MacDonald moved to adjourn the meeting. Stewart Feldman seconded; motion carried unanimously. Chair Chris Paull adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.