

**PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Regular Meeting  
October 27, 2009**

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 6:01 p.m.

MEMBERS AND OTHERS PRESENT

Directors Present: Thomas (Tom) Wehri  
Claudia Smith  
Robert (Bob) Wiswell, Jr.  
Steven (Steve) Garcia  
Andrew (Dave) Funk  
Robin Mahoney  
Scott Harvey  
Stanley MacDonald, Associate Director

Directors Absent: None

Others Present: Richard Gresham, District Manager  
Mike Brenner, NRCS District Conservationist  
Katie Maloney, RCD Programs Manager

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Claudia Smith moved to approve the agenda as presented. Steve Garcia seconded; motion carried unanimously.

GUESTS

Rui Cunha, Placer County Office of Emergency Services Program Manager  
Edmund Sullivan, Placer County Senior Planner  
Stewart Feldman

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Dave Funk moved to approve the minutes of the RCD Board Meeting of September 22, 2009 with requested changes. Steve Garcia seconded; motion carried with Scott Harvey abstaining due his absence at the last meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Katie Maloney presented the September 2009 financial reports. Scott Harvey moved to approve the financial reports as presented. Steve Garcia seconded; motion carried unanimously.

## BUSINESS

### New Business:

a) *Placer County Conservation Plan Update, Edmund Sullivan, Placer County Planning:*

Tom Wehri introduced Edmund Sullivan who proceeded to give the Board an overview of two projects being pursued that fall within the larger Placer County Conservation Plan/Placer Legacy strategy.

The first project reviewed was the Lakeview Farms project that encompasses 600 acres with 60 acres of habitat restoration/creation. This project revolves around existing easements and compatibility with existing land uses. The project site is adjacent to on-going restoration efforts and is located in a 'Priority Watershed' where special status species are present. The project addresses wildlife habitat connectivity issues with funding coming from both grants and mitigation fees. Restoration components of the Lakeview Farms project include perennial and seasonal wetland creation and upland grassland restoration. Edmund reviewed the design components of the project and post project monitoring and maintenance.

The second project is a fish passage project that will remove or mitigate for A Nevada Irrigation District (NID) gauging station and the Hemp Hill diversion dam, both located on Auburn Ravine and barriers to fish passage. Project partners include NID, NRCS, the Dry Creek Conservancy, Fish & Game, the City of Lincoln, and Placer County. This project will improve fish passage for special status species Steelhead and Chinook salmon. Edmund reviewed the preferred design alternative for addressing the NID gauging station. He noted the challenge of striking a balance between the needs of area fisheries and water delivery to NID customers in terms of Hemp Hill Dam management. NID is exploring several alternatives to removing the dam including the exploration of designing and installing a fish ladder. A successful fish ladder design is a challenge due to the use of flashboards and the configuration of the dam apron. Ed noted the first sighting in Placer County of a Chinook salmon in years was in Auburn Ravine. The removal of fish passage barriers will help facilitate the movement of Chinook salmon upstream to spawn.

Tom gave Edmund an overview the RCD's exploration of the Army Corps of Engineers In Lieu of Mitigation Program. He stressed the RCD is a willing partner in these kinds of efforts. After discussion revolving around collaboration vs. competition, the Board expressed an interest in beginning a conversation to explore collaborative opportunities in the context of the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP)/ Placer Legacy efforts.

Edmund indicated if the PCCP will be going before the Placer County Board of Supervisors (BOS) soon and if approved, there will most likely be an opportunity for the RCD to be a collaborative partner in the county's efforts.

Tom informed Edmund that he expects the RCD to follow-up once the new District Manager is in place.

b) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Fee for Service Chipper Program:*

Tom Wehri reviewed the suspended status of the current Placer County Chipper Program due to a funding gap between grants and the challenge of making the Chipper Program sustainable in the longer term. He reviewed the subsequent exploration of a Fee for Services Chipper Program.

Tom introduced Rui Cunha, Program Manager for Placer County Office of Emergency Services.

Rui thanked the Board for the RCD's leadership in administering the Chipper Program; the informal multi-partnership effort that has been successful for more than a decade. Rui reviewed Placer County's contributions to the program and of the other partners involved in the effort. He noted the changing funding climate has necessitated a serious exploration of developing a Fee for Service Chipper Program that will be self-sustaining into the future. Rui indicated the community at large views the program as a great benefit and has been very vocal about suspension of the program.

Rui reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of program options being explored including a program that relies on solicited donations for services in addition to grant funding or a program sustained by charging a nominal fee for the service to cover program expenses with the county providing a loan to the RCD providing seed money to facilitate a fee for service program up and running quickly rather than waiting for the awarded grant funding to come through this coming spring. The Grantor has indicated the grant will cover expenses incurred from October 1<sup>st</sup> and suggested the county loan could be repaid once grant funding arrives. He indicated that while only preliminary work has been completed and the BOS has yet to approve the proposed loan, if the RCD Board approves moving forward, he will work on a developing a recommendation to the BOS to approve the loan to get a fee for service program back up and running ASAP.

Rui reviewed the preliminary numbers, based on historical costs, revealing the program will cost approximately \$180K per year and reviewed the parameters and assumptions taken into consideration in the cost analysis.

The new program will be in need of a public information and awareness campaign with preliminary plans being made to address area Fire Safe Councils and Municipal Advisory Councils. The proposed target date for start up is February 1<sup>st</sup> if not before.

Claudia Smith brought up the issue of addressing the needs of seniors living on a fixed income and unable to afford the service.

Rui indicated he would have to defer a hardship program to the RCD and indicated everything at this point is dependent upon RCD approval to move forward.

Steve Garcia suggested the Board determine the long term goals for the chipper program suggesting the option of pursuing a tax assessment option to pay for a program available to all regardless of ability to pay on an individual basis, how to transition back and forth between a fee for service program and a grant funded program, and the need to identify who would respond to criticism of a fee for service program ahead of start up.

Dave Funk suggested the Board request the development of a business plan for the proposed fee for service program.

Stewart Feldman brought up the issue of the fees for service as potentially being perceived as penalizing landowners for chipping, an environmentally positive activity while burning, an environmentally negative activity remains free of charge.

Bob Wiswell brought up the issue of competing with the private sector.

Tom Wehri agreed the issue of competing with the private sector needs to be addressed potentially by keeping the current program restrictions that placed specific parameters on the landowner in order to receive chipping services thereby not directly competing with the private sector that places no such restrictions on the landowner.

Mike Brenner brought up the issue of biomass as a related issue that should be addressed and stressed that fact that with property ownership comes responsibility, one of which is vegetation management.

Rui indicated he serves on the Biomass Committee and is aware of the issue.

Steve Garcia moved to direct staff to move forward with the exploration of an Agreement with the county.

Dave Funk made a counter-motion to develop a business plan for Board consideration.

Tom Wehri asked the Board to approve allowing staff to move forward with developing a Fee for Service Chipper Program.

Steve Garcia made the motion to authorize staff to continue development of a Fee for Service Chipper Program for further Board consideration. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously.

The Board thanked Rui for his time and effort.

Rui indicated he will continue to work with the RCD on further developing a Fee for Service Chipper Program.

Old Business:

c) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Revised RCD '09-'10 Budget:*

Katie Maloney gave the Board an overview of the proposed revisions to the RCD'09-'10 Budget based on more accurate information and fielded questions from the Board.

Tom Wehri indicated the proposed budget revision includes the maximum of 650 hours allowed for each Retired Annuitant and suggested revising the figures downward to more accurately reflect expected needs. He suggested the District Manager be limited to 60 hours and the Resource Management Planner to 450 hours.

Robin Mahoney moved to approve the Proposed RCD '09-'10 Budget Revision with the changes to personnel costs as suggested by Tom Wehri. Steve Garcia seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Tom suggested the Board defer considering the annual transfer of General Funds to Restricted Funds or visa versa until after the end of the second quarter of the fiscal year. The Board concurred that would be prudent in this transitional year.

d) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: CA Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) Annual Meeting and Conference:*

The Board reviewed the Draft CARCD Resolutions and provided direction to the Board's Delegate and Alternate as follows:

- CARCD Resolution #09-001 – A Resolution for water conservation efforts: Board supported the resolution in concept.
- CARCD Resolution #09-002 – A resolution for promoting, supporting, and Implementing policies, programs, and projects that address forest wildfire issues, including forest fuels reduction, biomass production, and forest health projects: Board supported the resolution in concept
- CARCD Resolution #09-003 – Golden Spotted Oak Borer: Board supported in concept with reservations about the whether the issue should be addressed on the local level or the state level.
- CARCD Resolution #09-004 – The CA Biomass Resolution: Board supported the resolution in concept.

## RCD COMMITTEE REPORTS

*Forestry & Fuels Management Committee:* Dave Funk reviewed the committee meeting and asked for clarification about what constitutes a quorum within the committee structure. Tom Wehri clarified that a simple majority of committee members can make a recommendation to the full board even if there is only one Director serving on the committee and the others are serving as advisors.

Robin Mahoney volunteered to serve on the committee along with Dave Funk, Steve Garcia, and several advisors.

## DIRECTORS' REPORTS

*Bob Wiswell:*

- Bob attended the High Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council Executive Committee meeting.
- Bob received the PNSSNS Sub-Watershed Group Newsletter and it contained the appropriate acknowledgement of the RCD's support.

*Dave Funk:*

- Dave attended Dr. Harris' Wildlife Workshop and indicated it was well done.

*Steve Garcia:*

- Steve reported fire season is over and burning was recently suspended due to windy conditions. He noted he has been working with numerous landowners dealing with dead trees from beetle infestation. Now that it is no longer economically feasible for foresters to remove dead trees at no cost to landowners other options needs to be explored.

Dave Funk indicated tree kills from beetles are becoming a real problem and would like to work with Doug Ferrier to develop a grant to remove more of these trees in local communities. No objections were raised.

*Tom Wehri:*

- Tom reported at the Central Sierra Regional Fall Meeting it was decided the region would provide a hospitality room at the CARCD Annual Conference with all the regional RCDs contributing to the event.
- Tom reported attending the CA Special Districts Association meeting for the Placer Chapter where the Placer County Assessor made a presentation and indicated a 1.6% downward trend in current assessments.

## RCD STAFF REPORTS

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

- Rich Gresham reported fielding 30 inquiries about the Manager position and has received two full application packets thus far.

- Katie Maloney reported she will be meeting with the District's CPA for the field work on the Annual Audit the second week in November. She asked for the Board's forbearance should the financial reports not make it into the November Board Package if time constraints become a factor.

The Board agreed that under the circumstances reports could be deferred to December.

### AGENCY REPORTS

In addition to the written activity reports for September-October, the following points were discussed:

- Mike Brenner reviewed his monthly activity report and indicated the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is off to a good start and announced Forest Management Planning is now an eligible EQIP practice.
- Mike also announced the next Local Working Group meeting.

### COMMUNICATIONS

- Copy of RCD Letter of Support to Senator Feinstein regarding the Placer County Biomass Utilization Pilot Project
- Thank you note from Robert and Kathleen Montigny to Mark White for his assistance after the 49er Fire
- Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District meeting agenda for October 19, 2009
- Introduction letter for Lu Restoration Nursery with resume and plants listing
- Invitation to Nevada County Land Trust event slated for November 11, 2009.
- Placer County Clerk-Recorder-Elections notice regarding upcoming election deadlines for election services
- National Association of Resource Conservation Districts (NACD) publications, *Forestry Notes*, for October 2009
- Western Forestry & Conservation Association registration materials for Managing Forestlands for Biomass Utilization Workshop
- Western Forestry & Conservation Association registration materials for Forest Health-Identification & Management of Forest Insects & Diseases
- NACD magazine, *The Resource*, for Fall 2009
- Riverside-Corona RCD newsletter, *Resources Update*, for Fall 2009

- PNSSNS Subwatershed Group Newsletter for Fall 2009 including a Farmland Self Assessment Workbook
- CA Forest Stewardship Program newsletter, *Forestland Steward*, for Fall 2009
- CalPERS Employers News for Fall 2009
- CA Forestry Association magazine, *CA Forests*, for Fall 2009

#### FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The November RCD Board Meeting Agenda may include the following items:

- Fee for Service Chipper Program Business Plan/ Draft Agreement Review
- District Manager Candidate Review and Selection Committee Formation

#### ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Robin Mahoney moved for adjournment. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously. Tom Wehri adjourned the meeting at 8:46 p.m.