

**PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Regular Meeting  
March 23, 2010**

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 4:20 p.m.

MEMBERS AND OTHERS PRESENT

Directors Present: Thomas (Tom) Wehri  
Robert (Bob) Wiswell, Jr.  
Claudia Smith  
Andrew (Dave) Funk  
Robin Mahoney  
Christine Johnson

Directors Absent: Steven (Steve) Garcia – Approved Absence

Others Present: Rick Gruen, RCD Manager  
Mike Brenner, NRCS District Conservationist  
Katie Maloney, RCD Programs Manager

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Claudia Smith moved to approve the agenda as presented. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously.

GUESTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Bob Wiswell moved to approve the RCD Board Minutes for the February 23, 2010 meeting as presented, Christine Johnson seconded; motion carried unanimously. Claudia Smith abstained.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Katie Maloney presented the February 2010 financial reports. Claudia Smith moved to approve the February financial reports as presented. Robin Mahoney seconded; motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS

Old Business:

- a) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: RCD Rural Conservation Specialist:*

Rick Gruen noted he solicited and received feedback at local Ag community events regarding the Rural Conservation Specialist position. The Specialist as envisioned will assist landowners with best management practices and compliance issues.

Rick reviewed the job description outlining the position parameters and the flow chart showing landowner assistance scenarios. The proposed job description and flow chart were included in the board package for Board review. Rick solicited input and fielded Board questions.

Board discussion revolved around the job skill set desired, compensation parameters, and the importance of marketing the RCD service to landowners.

Tom Wehri recommended the Board approve the March 23<sup>rd</sup> revision of the Rural Conservation Specialist job description as presented. The job will be a full time position at an annual salary of \$50K-\$60K, depending upon candidate qualifications.

Bob Wiswell moved to approve to approve the draft job description as presented at the meeting. Claudia Smith seconded; motion carried, with Dave Funk abstaining.

Rick noted he is exploring potential sources of funding dollars to support implementation of projects for landowners that fall outside of NRCS Farm Bill programs parameters and indicated the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has expressed an interest in supporting the RCD's assistance concept where mutual goals and objectives can be served.

The Board directed Rick to move forward with advertising the Specialist position and set a timetable to close the application period at the end of May, with the selection process to take place in June with a targeted start date of July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Board also suggested developing a set of questions for applicants to help identify qualified candidates from the pool of applicants.

*b) Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Pilot Cost Share Placer County Chipper Program Development:*

Rick Gruen reviewed his program development update included in the Board Package for review. The CA Fire Safe Clearinghouse Chipper funding proposal for 2011 was submitted. Rick reported reviewing Western Shasta RCD's full fee for service chipper program, the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County's free service that strongly encourages donations to support administration and overhead costs, and held discussions with Placer County staff regarding existing county eligibility parameters for low-income and disabled assistance programs.

Rick drafted a cost-share model for the RCD Chipper Program based on a 50/50 cost share of retail rate of service that includes operations, maintenance, administration, and overhead costs.

The model includes the establishment of cost share exemption criteria using county adult/social services program parameters to compile an eligibility list for free chipper service.

The Board directed Rick to continue to move forward with the 50/50 cost share concept for additional Board review and input.

New Business:

c) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Hidden Falls Education Center Concept Letter of Support:*

Rick Gruen reviewed the request for a letter of support for the Placer County capital improvement funding proposal to support the development of the proposed Hidden Falls Education Center. He asked for Board approval to send the proposed letter of support included in the Board Package for review.

The Board made a few minor revisions to the letter and Robin Mahoney moved to approve the letter of support. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Rick indicated he expects the development of a document in the near future identifying potential partners and outlining their potential roles in the Education Center effort.

d) *Discussion to Consider and Possible Action Re: Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) Vacancy:*

Tom reviewed the call for nominations for the Placer County LAFCo seat representing Placer County Special Districts.

After Board consideration, no nominations were forthcoming.

RCD COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

DIRECTORS' REPORTS

*Claudia Smith:*

- Claudia reported visiting the Chico State University Farm.

*Bob Wiswell:*

- Bob attended the High Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council Executive Committee meeting.

*Robin Mahoney:*

- Robin reported the effort to provide trail access above Lake Clementine did not pan out and expressed his interest in addressing recreational access issues.

*Dave Funk:*

- Dave reported attending the Nevada County RCD Board meeting where one of his clients was awarded the Conservationist of the Year award.

Dave instigated Board discussion regarding the possible development of a similar awards program. It was suggested the Education Committee explore the idea.

*Tom Wehri:*

- Tom reported the CA Special Districts Association (CSDA) Placer Chapter will now be holding only two meetings per year. The next meeting will be held in May and Rick has been invited to make a presentation regarding the Placer County Chipper Program. A second yearly meeting will be planned around election issues in the fall.
- Tom has accepted the Vice Chair position on the CA Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) Board. He noted the CARCD is on a very tight budget and that Karen Burr is serving as a part-time Executive Director since Tacey Currey vacated the position to pursue other interests.
- Tom reminded the Board of Day at the Capitol activities coming up in May.

RCD STAFF REPORTS

In addition to the District Manager's bi-weekly activity reports emailed to Board members, the following items were discussed.

- Rick reported he has implemented a bi-weekly staff reporting process as well as a weekly staff meeting. Board members will receive a Manager's activity report every two weeks in order to keep them informed on a timelier basis.
- Rick reported he visited a mulching/composting project with Mike Brenner.
- Rick reported attending a CALPERS training.

Tom Wehri added Rick now has a knowledge base gained from the class that will be incorporated into a recommendations report to the Operations Committee for needed clarification of the RCD Personnel Policy in order to bring the policy more in line with CALPERS parameters.

- Katie Maloney reported the match issues related to the American Basin project has been resolved.
- Katie reported she has also resolved the fuel billing issue related to borrowed Chipper equipment and will be billing DPW monthly for any fuel and maintenance costs related to borrowed equipment being automatically billed to the RCD.

## AGENCY REPORTS

- Mike Brenner noted he is re-aligning his reporting periods to correspond to the monthly Board meeting timeframe and therefore no report was submitted.
- Mike reported the \$155K initial allocation for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) has been augmented and he has now been allocated a total of \$305K. He noted because Placer County is a non attainment area in terms of ozone, additional funding for a tractor retrofit/ replacement will be available. Mike gave an overview of the types of projects being considered for EQIP funding.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- RCD Letter dated February 25<sup>th</sup> to Mike Boyle, Assistant County Executive Officer requesting the Placer County Board of Supervisors appoint Christine Johnson to the RCD Board of Directors.
- Copy of letter dated March 16<sup>th</sup> to Christine Johnson from Placer County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors informing Christine of her appointment to the RCD Board of Directors.
- Letter dated February 26<sup>th</sup> from the CA Special District Association calling for nominations to their Board for the 2010-2013 term.
- Letter from Dept of Water Resources requesting the RCD submit FTB 590 (Withholding Exemption Certificate). FTB 590 completed and returned March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Letter from Placer County Auditor/Controller requesting the RCD submit at FTB 590 (Withholding Exemption Certificate) and IRS W9 (Payee Data Record). FTB 590 and IRS W9 completed and returned March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Letter dated March 15<sup>th</sup> from the Sierra Business Council soliciting participation in a Sierra Day at the Capital Reception slated for April 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Special Districts and Local Government Institute seminar registration materials for Advanced Studies (Managing Boards/Staffs and Managing Money) slated for April 22-23 in Palm Springs, CA.
- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) newsletter, *Forestry Notes*, for March 2010
- USDA Farm Services Agency newsletter, *FSA County News*, for March 2010
- State Fund newsletter, *COMPONENTS*, for 2010, Issue 1
- CSDA magazine, *Special District*, for January/February 2010

### FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

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

- RCD Conservation Specialist Selection Committee Formation
- Chipper Cost Share Program Update
- RCD Budget Variance Report Review
- LAFCo Representative Selection
- Red Sesbania Program Update

### ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Claudia Smith moved to adjourn. Bob Wiswell seconded; motion carried unanimously. Tom Wehri adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m.