



## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **I. Call to Order: 4:05 pm**

#### A. Director Roll Call

Kelly Kucharski, Alan Fry, Blair Duncan, Craig Jones, Gary Temple, John Heywood, Jae Lee, M Hurley, Robert Jackson, Shawn Murphy, Siran Erysian, Steve Haze, Tami Jones, Vue Her, Pete Lassotovitch. Attendance was virtual on MS Teams.

#### B. Introduction of Guests

Directors: Alan Fry, Gary Temple, Pete Lassotovitch

Staff Present: Steve Haze, Kelly Kucharski, Blair Duncan, Vue Her, Craig Jones

Guests: Robert Jackson (Yosemite Clean), Matt Hurley (Tranquility RCD), Shawn Murphy (CCC), John Heywood (IP Advisors), Jae Lee (NRCS), Siran Erysian (CA dept of water resources)

### **II. Approval of Minutes for January & February 2020 Board Meeting**

***No motion was made for the minutes to be approved.***

### **III. Public Comment for any item not on the agenda (No action can be taken)**

No comments.

### **IV. SRCD Board Action Items and Discussion Topics:**

#### A. Introduction of Tami Jones – District Development and Public Affairs

Introduction of Tami Jones as new District employee for Public Affairs and District Development.

#### B. Email correspondence by Sierra Institute to Sierra RCD Staff

Kelly received an email from a Sierra Institute employee that brought concern to Steve and the RCD and it is being resolved professionally. This began a conversation about institutions communicating and a reinstating of guidelines between SRCD and Sierra Institute. Steve shared that the director apologized and assumed full responsibility and SRCD and Sierra Institute are working toward a resolution.

#### C. DWR Announcement of Mt. Counties Region DAC Funding Area

This funding area is being looked at by the SSRWMG and part of SRCD's DOC watershed coordination program.

#### D. Determination by Directors to go into Closed Session



This item was not addressed.

- E. Re convene Public Session- discussion on whether to continue or adjourn

This item was not addressed.

- F. Based upon Board Determination Continue public session for the following:

This item was not addressed.

- G. CA Conservation Corps Regional Campus/Auberry Revitalization Committee

State of CA purchased Auberry Middle School to set up a residential facility for the CCC for corp members for a 24-7 operation. 6 conservation crews will be working at the site, plans for the crews to be CalFire crews. Will take time for the site to be operational in the next three years, with funding from the state to facilitate that. Working on an interagency agreement with the CCC instead of a MOU. Steve could task orient projects to the CCC and they could help with that as well.

Tami Jones started to build Revitalize Auberry and is a managing partner who has joined with the RCD to continue to build and work together as the RCD goals and Auberry Revitalization efforts work together.

John Heywood is looking at avenues for the mill site and potential acquisition or a master lease agreement. Looking for state funding and grant funding for certain things, also working with a lobbyist. Technology partners working with for Auberry, and the Ringgolds. Ringgolds let SRCD get logs for chipping and biochar and are working with Ted Fulmer to get their mill operation moving forward on. John has been in some conversation with the Intermountain Nursery, because they are selling property. SRCD is looking at landscape restoration going forward with the nursery, as some RCD's have their own nurseries. Together with the Grand Bluffs site, for a joint partnership where the RCD holds the conservation easement.

Community Vision is working on a line of credit, they need more information that John got to them last week, it looks promising for SRCD and they are underwriting it now after a year. SRCD doesn't know if it will be for a quarter million or not. SRCD is looking at the credit for gap financing, so that SRCD doesn't have to wait for reimbursement for the grants in between.

- H. District Clean Air Initiative and "Our cars run on Wood" outreach campaign

"Our cars run on wood" campaign with the APCD. SRCD generator is run by a gasifier conversation, which will charge SRCD vehicles. The EC4 needs a new battery system. Two off road utility vehicles are coming. SRCD is setting up a meeting to do joint public outreach and education with APCD. Kelly is working on a charging station for the SRCD, and maybe more for around the city as well so that one can be used for public access.



I. Commencement of phase 2 Community Firesafe and stewardship Program

Today SRCD was up at mile high and took the first load of logs from the Lewallens delivered to the former Ball ranch at the San Joaquin River. During the video call Steve is showing the log decks that were delivered. The person who helped delivered was an older people in the community, doing good transporting log decks to help them be firesafe. Solving the problems of getting them off landowner's property and in order to do restoration projects on the San Joaquin River, the SJR Conservancy needs logs.

CFSC slowing down on assessments because of shelter in place orders. The tree mortality task force does not meet his month because of Covid 19. Blair did one property assessment last week. SRCD Moved into Phase two by starting to take logs off of the hill.

J. Announcement of Funding Awards:

- 1) NRCS National Award – Conservation Practices and Healthy Soils. To implement conservation practices and healthy soils, led by American farmland trust, 5 RCDs and other NGOs.
- 2) Tulare-Kern DAC: UC-Merced/SNRI Tule River Reservation. SRCD was awarded and the funds start with DWR and were channeled through Tulare County government for a study of the upper Tule river watershed, on behalf of the Tule River Indian Tribe.
- 3) Tulare-Kern DAC: LLNL/CSU East Bay Isotopic Analysis for 3 Tribes. In partnership with Lawrence Livermore lab, 6 wells for 3 tribes, hopefully COVID will not deter this participation. 65k
- 4) DWR Tulare Lake Region IRWM – Sequoia Nat'l Forest / TU. Prop 1 DWR implementation grants, awarded 441k in partnership with the SNF and Trout Unlimited to conduct meadow restorations in the SNF (Sequoia).
- 5) Caltrans – Mitigation project with Sierra Foothill Conservancy. For the round about mitigation, Agency to agency and SRCD is the fiscal sponsor for Sierra Foothill Conservancy. 235k.
- 6) San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District – Clean Air EV Program. 2 off road battery vehicles, and one EC4 Ion. 80-125 mile range. In forest lands and ag lands as necessary. Chevy Bolt has been purchased and is not currently available for the district.
- 7) Joint Chiefs 2 – Discussions with NRCS. Blair and Vue coming on board and expanding projects in scope for RCPP. Joe explained that this is a new program on the valley floor, and the challenge they are all experiencing is the boots on the ground to deliver on all these things. NRCS said it's good to have Blair and Vue for help. NRCS is losing one of their senior planners, Bobby Evans. He has left and gotten promoted, in their area office in Olympia Washington. COVID changes mean the NRCS office is open for business but closed to the public.



K. Candidates for Directors/Assoc. Director: Intertribal Representation

To have intertribal representation, Steve is asking for consent at the associate or director's level.

L. CARCD- LAFCo SOI & Annex. – Draft MSR submitted

No change, with Covid-19 they are shelter in place, no action no addition information. SRCD is being awarded 41,400 for the first round of implementation grants, SRCD is their fiscal sponsor and a member of the SSIRWM. This includes restoration of 8 meadows and there is a DAC component associated with it that will take some additional work.

M. Web Site & District Enterprise Operations Development & support

Kelly Kucharski is working on forest health watershed program website- going to be doing a catalog of all the watershed activities. Kelly did training for the board, got everything going through COVID to stay in operation, and put together everyone's bios on the website.

N. Dinkey Collaborative – Steering committee, Com Plng & Socioeconomic WG

John Heywood reported they did not have a steering committee meeting.

O. DOC – Southern Sierra Forest Health Watershed Program

Steve reported that the DOC is ready to send money, approved our 5 invoices and the check is in the mail. Matt Hurley will be more engaged with the water associations and getting downstream people involved with the upper regions. Moving forward with the TWP network and gathering of entities and partners on June 26<sup>th</sup> for the kickoff and planning, tangential and some of the people to bring into the DOC program. Matt recently took a tour of the Auberry mill site, said the grant is on track with what we are accomplishing, and thinks SRCD is even ahead of schedule.

P. Tree Mortality Crisis and Biomass Resource Management Development

1. Biomass Utilization under USFS-R5 / SNF / SNC Interagency MOU

Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) spoke with Steve about an agreement. SRCD was fast tracking with Yosemite Clean to get the use permit in place with a need to do SEQA and NEPA and site control. There is a 5 year agreement that is conditional and it is currently in year two. With the breach in the mill pond, the County of Fresno used SRCD as leverage to get the landowner to do something about it, however the breach is on the neighboring property, and the neighboring



property was recently sold. Steve is optimistic about County involvement as Greg Allen came to the Auberry Mill Site to see the biomass utilization campus this month.

John Heywood talked to USFC, SNF and region 5 and having conversations with Dean Gould and trying to work something out. John reported that there are limitations for the forest service, and John is looking at how to work within and around those limitations. Getting access to the biomass is critical for all the downstream products of the biomass for the projects. John is working diligently to progress in this area.

Craig is looking at implementation work on private lands, and hauling of material and leads into the biomass efforts. Looking at the connectivity there, and looking at the carbon forest plan.

## 2. CAL FIRE CCI Forest Health 2018 Award – Executed Agreements

890k advance request was approved and Covid 19 made it so that Calfire employees are not in the same building. The request is at the state controllers office.

The check from the CFSC dropped in the SRCD account this morning. Cal Trans and the mitigation and the 135k and the climate initiative and 1 or 4 advances or 890k and 6 months coverage commence April 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> and any moment it will drop in the SRCD account. This money will go to a new bank account that works with government institutions called Umpqua Bank.

Kelly is interfacing with Kris Gibson, over time Kelly will be working with the USFS about how the project is managed, and Blair with the ground operations. Goes into March of 2020.

## 3. Auberry Mill Site – SNC CUP grant

Gasifier was having issues, sorted it out, with a local Auberry resident with a lot of experience with gasifiers. Local resident is a retired electrical engineer and has extensive knowledge on building gasifiers.

SRCD has a one year extension on the conditional use permit process. John Heywood is looking at another proposal, a master agreement of some ownership, so that SRCD has site control. John put together a representation agreement so that he can represent SRCD as a buyer of the property to the current owners. The deal that might be the most feasible is SRCD getting a grant for the acquisition. SNC has a grant program where SRCD could qualify up to \$500k for the acquisition of the property. John is thinking to set up a new LLC where SRCD would be part



owner because in an LLC operating agreement, it can be made clear of who has what authority, and the LLC can have full control. With an LLC, SRCD will be able to qualify for the grant for the property and any other grants for biomass operations. A bi representation agreement John will put together, and John will put this up for Alan and the board members moving forward. Currently SRCD has a 1-acre lease at the mill site. There is a 10-acre conditional use permit in the works, and then there is this LLC approach with SRCD having just over 50% ownership.

4. Fresno County Tree Mortality/Forest Health Task Force (TRAC)

Did not meet for the month of April due to COVID.

5. CARCD / NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Blair and Vue have not moved forward with the RCPP access right now.

6. CARCD / Carbon Cycle Institute – Grand Bluffs FCP & Potential Sale

Steve is trying to put together the first forest carbon farm management plan. Steve has the existing management plan from Bonnie, and they will be looking at it and determining what the shortfalls are and updating it.

Craig is taking the lead on the forest carbon plan and wants to come out to the 240 acres for the landsmart plan. Will be working with Jae Lee on other NRCS plan, it gets complex in the forest carbon planning. Craig received the initial CFIP plan and is using it as a template. The next step is working on the plan on the ground and do best practices of sequestering carbon.

Another CA Fire Safe association of RCDs and the grant with the fuels reduction projects, will come out in mid may. Prop 68 ideas and looking at how to do those. Craig is working from Colorado and is part of the team in moving things forward.

John will be discussing this property with the same conversation as the Intermountain Nursery.

Q. Programs and Projects Status Report

Estimated \$4.9 million in projects present at this time. 3 million in projected proposals.

R. CARCD- DWR/NRCS/CDFA SWEEP & Healthy Soils for diverse small growers

This program is in limbo at the moment, no update at this time.

S. Grant Opportunities Tracking List



Yosemite Sequoia put in a grant for RCD to be a partner in the firewire communities. Craig Jones talked about a firewise community program working with the two fire safe councils, it's a nation-wide well respected program and takes the next step of a CWPP to a community level and some requirements and based on everything happening in Fresno county, can continue to move forward.

Emergency preparedness, looking into a command center at the mill site, but mobile to work with local residents in emergency situations. For those in emergency situation, disaster planning, and disaster response and recovery. The whole disaster management life cycle, CAL OES and FEMA have funding available. Microgrids and the regional center and mill site and the town can have some kind of security for power and communications. Steve would like to work with the CCC regarding this in the next few months.

T. Other- AB2093 (Gloria - Email retention legislation)

CARCD and other state associations are signing to be on the list for SRCD's position on the potential legislation. Good news, don't have to save all your emails including your junk mail and spam.

## V. Financial Reports

A. Monthly Reports

100k in the bank with CVCB. Working with Umpqua Bank and the CA State Special Districts Association, they focus on municipal or government accounts. SRCD was eligible, and they will back it in assets for every dollar. CVCB will do 5-10% at the most. Alan Fry shared the amount of cash withdraw you can take per day to 2k. Will be transferred over, to Umpqua bank. Staff will have purchase cards, will be able to purchase 10k of equipment. Chevy Bolt was first time financed anything and only put 5k in. Will pay it down accordingly. Established the first credit history for SRCD with the Bolt purchase.

Kelly K displayed for view the:

- Balance Sheet
- the Profit & Loss
- the Transactions by Account
- Central Valley Bank Summary

B. Review & Approval of expenses:

For the energy commission conference, the board is favorable to give a stipend for John to go for SRCD. SRCD has the funding for a power wall unit. When the power goes out,



the power wall can keep the lights on without restarting the Power Palette. There is a rebate and a discount for a 20 KW power wall. Steve is trying to get that available, and with that the power wall will be about \$12k.

## VI. Reports:

### A. NRCS Report

No report given.

### B. RC&D Report – Closer Consultations Request - Next meeting 7/30

Yosemite Sequoia, in the past came to the District without consultation and became a fiscal sponsor, they are not supposed to be promoting themselves but their members and providing support. Request from the board that when they are conferring that they do it in closer consultation with SRCD, and whether or not it's a reasonable request.

### C. CARCD – Forestry Committee /SJV Region (Area 9)

SRCD is for the regional surveys with SARCD and CalFire out of Sacramento, to find more about the population and identify things better to work together.

The forestry committee is looking at going to quarterly meetings, which Steve thinks is advisable. There is an action plan to work on.

### D. Correspondence, Fresno County LAFCO Responses

Nothing to report.

### E. Other

Ted shared a concern that in feeding the Power Palette with products that it's going to consume with a 5 gallon bucket. To get any kind of production of a few hours or minutes, there has to be a way to handle the material for the power palette to consume. Craig is looking at a conveyor and a three sorter for screening. Ted sent Blair some information from a gentleman in Wisconsin and who sorts his woodchips. There is a wood products plant and a huge classifier at Terra Bella. Steve, Craig and Blair have been looking at sorting and screening for the gasifier. Several staff and Ted are doing research in advance to go about finding the right solution.

## VII. Adjournment: Meeting end 6:15pm

**Next meeting: Monday, June 22nd, 2020**

Respectfully Submitted, Kelly Kucharski