

Upper Salinas – Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2019

- I. Call to Order. Chair Susan Cochrane called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm and determined a quorum was present. Directors present: Chuck Pritchard, Mike Bonnheim, Mike Broadhurst, George Kendall, Tom Mora, Susan Cochrane, Mary Bianchi. Staff present: Devin Best (Executive Director of the US-LT RCD), Hilary Phillips (NRCS District Conservationist). Members of the public present: Margy Lindquist.
- II. Additions/Changes to the Agenda. None
- III. Public Comment. Susan Cochrane reported on the recent CA Beef Council Dinner Meeting where Dr. Frank Mettlinger gave an informative presentation on climate change.
- IV. RCD Reports.
 - a. Board Updates. Mike Bonnheim talked about county road maintenance practices contributing to the invasive weed problem along road rights of way. There was considerable board discussion of county practices, mowing, individual and group spraying of herbicides, etc. There was consensus that the invasive weed problem needs to be addressed more directly at the county level. Mike Broadhurst suggested that a draft resolution be prepared by Devin Best for action at the October meeting. There was further discussion about the Ag Commissioner's weed management program, logistical issues about spraying, possible mandatory spraying, the Bitterwater Road approach (county + landowner action), etc. Mike Bonnheim, Chuck Pritchard and Tom Mora agreed to help Devin draft a resolution for possible presentation to the Board of Supervisors.
 - b. Executive Director's Report. Devin Best reviewed the ED's report which was included in the meeting packet. Key items were: 1) staff is evaluating how to survey the Arundo infestation on the Salinas River; 2) low turnout at public GRASS-C presentations, possibly because of concern the RCD is a regulatory agency. Staff is considering how to better market GRASS-C; 3) Gerhardt project is awaiting cultural resources report before submission of further permit applications. Staff will need to consult with indigenous groups; 4) Healthy Soils. Staff is working with partners Mesa Vineyards and Black Diamond to collect data to evaluate efficacy of vermicompost on vineyards.
 - c. Hemp and Cannabis Ordinances. Devin Best discussed the county's hemp and cannabis ordinances. There was general discussion about various related issues, including odor, spray residues from neighboring crops, and general crop co-existence issues. Devin mentioned he had a good meeting with new Farm Bureau ED Brent Burchette. He anticipates future cooperation with Farm Bureau and both of the county's RCDs.
 - d. Board Position Elections. George Kendall and Mary Bianchi indicated interest in continuing as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Susan Cochrane indicated she could

possibly continue as chair. Devin Best requested board members communicate possible interest in vice chair or chair positions via email.

- e. Strategic Plan Update. Devin Best reviewed the Annual Report, including the overall financial position of the RCD and reasons for recent annual variations.
- V. Consent. Chuck Pritchard moved the August 2019 BOD meeting minutes be approved. Tom Mora Seconded. Unanimous approval. Mary Bianchi reviewed the revised format and content of the Treasurer's report. There was discussion of the amount of flow of funds through the RCD (Project Grant Services). Minor date correction. Mike Broadhurst moved approval. Tom Mora seconded. Unanimous approval.
- VI. Other Agency, Director and Association Reports.
- a. WRAC. Tom Mora reported that the September WRAC meeting featured two presentations. The first was about Santa Barbara County's program for improving the environmental friendly practices of landscape professionals and is considered a success. The second was a report by the Regional Water Quality Control Board about the effects of climate change on the central coast (San Mateo county to Ventura county). There was discussion about the planned USGS hydrologic study of the "fractured rock aquifer" in the Adelaida area, including SLO county's share of Lake Nacimiento water, additional state water, the possibility of forming a water district in the area, etc.
 - b. NRCS. Hilary Phillips provided an update on the GCI (Grassland Conservation Program Initiative) funding and the status of EQIP. She discussed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) recently proposed by the national NRCS. Issues raised by the board included the additional work required to assemble and chair a working group, the redundancy and cost of certain activities and reporting requirements, and the size, wording and specificity of the MOA document. It was agreed that Devin Best and Chuck Pritchard would compile comments to be forwarded to the CARCD.
 - c. ALAB. George Kendall briefly mentioned the content of the hemp-dominated September ALAB meeting. An ALAB subcommittee will continue to work on the county's hemp ordinance in parallel with the county planning department.
- VII. Board Action Items. None
- VIII. Agenda Setting. Draft resolution regarding county road maintenance and the invasive weed problem. Possible future presentation by County Public Works or Ag Commissioner. Board Positions (Chair and Vice Chair).
- IX. Adjournment. Meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm. Next meeting is Thursday October 24.