

Upper Salinas – Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

August 22, 2019

- I. Vice Chair Mike Broadhurst called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm and determined a quorum was present. Directors present: Mike Broadhurst, Randy Heinzen, Tom Mora, George Kendall, Chuck Pritchard. Staff present: Executive Director Devin Best, NRCS District Conservationist Hilary Phillips.
- II. Additions/Changes to Agenda. Add discussion of Conservationist of Year Award as item IVd. Chuck moved for approval of amended agenda; Tom Mora second; unanimous approval.
- III. Public Comment: none.
- IV. RCD Reports
  - a. Board Updates. Chuck Pritchard suggested having PG&E meteorologist John Lindsay as a speaker. He also discussed federal changes to endangered species regulations. George Kendall gave an update on the Cape Ivy meeting in Cambria on August 14. The USDA has approved the release of a cape ivy specific gall-forming fly to suppress the invasive weed. At Mike Broadhurst's suggestion the North Coast Advisory Committee formed a subcommittee to investigate flooding/global warming impacts along the lower portion of Santa Rosa Creek. A sea level rise of 3 – 7 feet is projected by the year 2100 which would affect private property and municipal infrastructure.
  - b. Executive Director's Report. Devin Best reviewed highlights of the report the report, which had been distributed with the meeting packet. After meeting with SLO County counsel, the RCD canceled the contract with subcontractor Channel Islands for invasive plant removal in Carpinteria and retained \$42,000 of the \$107,000 contract. Retention was not contested by Channel Islands, and we are now seeking a new subcontractor to finish the work. We are in discussions with the Wildlife Conservation Board regarding the future monitoring work and potential liability to fulfill terms of the contract. Two WSPs (Haley Barnes and Oswaldo Martinez) will be joining the staff in October. The RCD received a second Healthy Soils grant (for Vermiculture in vineyards). Mike Broadhurst reported that County Code Enforcement now has two divisions: Cannabis issues and everything else.
  - c. Estate Vineyards Update (aka Justin Property Update). Devin Best reported that he presented the RCD's proposal approved at the July 8 emergency board meeting to Justin Vineyards Public Relations Coordinator Maria Kelly in July and that the proposal was well received. Maria Kelly will discuss the proposal with Justin's management and respond in due time. Devin intends to inform SLO County Planning Director, county supervisor John Peschong and possibly other county personnel in order to keep them appraised of the situation.

- d. Conservationist of the Year Award. There was a general board discussion of potential names and frequency for the award. The main points were that the recipient should be truly deserving of the recognition and that the award may not be annual. September 10 is the tentative date for the BOS presentation.
- V. Consent Agenda. After brief review Tom Mora moved and Randy Heinzen seconded that the July 8 board meeting minutes and June and July Treasurer's reports (included in meeting packet) be approved. Unanimous approval.
- VI. Other Agency, Director and Association Reports
  - a. WRAC Report. There was no WRAC report since the WRAC did not meet in July or August.
  - b. NRCS Update. Hilary Phillips reported that the state level NRCS and CARCD have agreed to update their Memorandum of Agreement. This would replace the 2003 agreement and requires review and comment by all 98 RCDs in California. The main change is that all RCDs would be required to post certain information and hold formal Local Working Group meetings to solicit local input to projects, priorities, etc. These results would need to be compiled and communicated up through the NRCS management structure. Comments to CARCD are due by September 30 and need to be sent to Mr. Jim Kocsis at CARCD. There was discussion of the prior history of local working groups and the additional work required to arrange and conduct the required meetings.
  - c. ALAB. George Kendall reported that the July ALAB meeting focused on hemp cultivation and related issues. There was board discussion about cross pollination between hemp and cannabis, hoop house cultivation and water issues, odor issues and other related issues. It was suggested that a hemp update be arranged for a meeting this Fall.
- VII. Board Action Items
  - a. Legislative Advocacy Policy. Devin Best remarked that the policy had been approved at the May board meeting but that additional discussion had been requested regarding the specific policies to be advocated for. The board reviewed points 1 – 4 of the Legislative Advocacy Procedures and concluded the procedures were well crafted and clear. No action was taken.
- VIII. Agenda Setting. Next meeting will be Sept. 19 at 4 pm. Randy Heinzen suggested that Devin or Andy should give the hemp update. Chuck Pritchard suggested compiling comments about the NRCS – CARCD Memorandum of Agreement so a letter can be sent to the CARCD. Mike Broadhurst suggested that a) the board receive a quarterly update on the RCD strategy and b) the board discuss the 2020 officer election.
- IX. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm.