

Upper Salinas – Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2023

Templeton, CA

- I. Call to Order. Secretary George Kendall called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm and determined a quorum was not yet present. Directors present: Mike Bonnheim, Dolores Howard, Randy Heinzen, George Kendall. Staff present: Devin Best, Amy Smart and Spencer Gordon (RCD), Hilary Phillips (NRCS). Members of the public present: Dan Turner (SLO Fire Safe Council), John Gee (CalFire).
- II. Changes to Agenda. Adjust order of agenda as needed to accommodate early departures.
- III. Public Comment. Amy Smart requested board volunteers for her continuing social media outreach for June, July and August. Mary Bianchi arrived at 4:06, making a quorum and assuming the chair.
- IV. RCD Reports.
 - a. Board Updates. Dolores Howard mentioned upcoming SLO Beaver Brigade fund raising and other events. Go to SLOBeaverBrigade.org for details. Randy Heinzen raised questions about recent storm damage reporting and relief programs.
 - b. Project Specific Analysis (PSA). Spencer Gordon outlined ongoing and planned forest management projects in the Cambria Monterey pine forest (handled by RCD) and at Hearst Ranch (handled by SLO Fire Safe Council). The PSAs for Rancho Marino (188 acres) and Cambria Pines Ecological Reserve (CPER, 100 acres) are due to be completed in March with both Steve Auten and Spencer Gordon input. Basic objectives are 1) Fire hazard and risk reduction and 2) Forest health and restoration. Five additional projects are planned but they do not yet have specific areas. Dan Turner (SLO Fire Safe Council Executive Director) discussed forest management work at Covell Ranch covered by the initial PSA of 18 months ago. He also discussed the upcoming projects at San Simeon Point and near Pico Creek. Draft PSAs are currently being reviewed and the projects are on the same review and approval schedule as Rancho Marino and CPER. Dan Turner also discussed and answered board questions about forest management, including the objectives, background, permitting issues, and future plans, etc. John Gee (CalFire) provided an update on grant availability and dates for future fire prevention projects.
 - c. Executive Director's Report. Devin Best reviewed the ED Report included in the meeting packet. Highlights: The Sustainable Land Initiative involves collaboration with Cal Poly. Students have designed (but not yet built) four biochar kilns which may become available for rental to local farmers/ranchers. Willow Creek: County Counsel Ben Dore has reviewed the Willow Creek Pledge Agreement. We are waiting on a property

- appraisal. Personnel: Eli Grinberg has been hired as a Conservation Technician starting in February. Hailey Leurck has been hired as a Restoration Technician starting in May.
- d. Mid-year Financial Review. Devin Best reviewed the financial report for the 6 months ending 12/31/2022 as included in the board packet.
 - e. Form 700. Devin Best requested directors to provide updated financial disclosure Form 700 by February as required by state law and considering possible additional RCD attention re Willow Creek.
- V. Board Action Item. Mary Bianchi read Resolution 2023-01 approving funding from CDFW for the Santa Rosa Creek Restoration and Improvement Land Management Design Project (Rhoades Project). Randy Heinzen moved approval. George Kendall seconded. Approved unanimously. This is the first local fisheries restoration grant in about 10 years.
- VI. Consent.
- a. Treasurer's Report. No treasurer's report due to postponed meeting between Mary Bianchi and the new bookkeeper.
 - b. November meeting minutes. No changes. Dolores Howard moved approval. Randy Heinzen seconded. Approved.
- VII. Other Agency, Director and Association Reports.
- a. NRCS. Hilary Phillips discussed programs for assisting with recent storm damage. For ECP (for damage to ag land, debris removal, etc.) contact the FSA then the NRCS. For EWP (Emergency Watershed Protection Program) contact the NRCS. This program requires a local agency sponsor.
 - b. WRAC. There was no January WRAC meeting.
 - c. ALAB. Mary Bianchi's term as ALAB member ends in April. She suggested switching the membership to alternate Mike Broadhurst while she becomes alternate. A letter from the RCD to ALAB is needed to affect this. Mary Bianchi departed at 5:30 and George Kendall assumed the chair.
- VIII. Agenda Setting. Ethics training (Devin Best to arrange); Financial Subcommittee discussion; Willow Creek Update.
- IX. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm. Next meeting is February 23 at 4 pm.