



Tulare County Resource Conservation District

3530 W. Orchard Court ~ Visalia, CA 93277
Phone: (559) 734- 8732 ext. 3 ~ fax (559) 732-2805

July 11, 2012

Board Meeting Minutes

Directors Present: Tom Daly, Stan Noble

Staff: Teri Van Huss

Fire Safe Council: Bob Puls

NRCS: Mark Davis, Genett Carstensen

Meeting called to order at 12:33 by Tom.

Not a quorum. Information meeting only.

UPDATES

David Witt gave an update on the new grants starting this summer. David, with assistance from Teri and Bob, has already spent more than a month getting all these started.

State Grants – all Prop 40:

Mtn. Home – at the State's request a masticator will be used, a certain contractor they have approved. Mtn. Home is in initial phases with environmental paperwork and will start next week. Our chipper will be on this project.

Ponderosa – will tie into a Forest Service fuel break; they are very happy about this project. Our chipper will be on this project. Local contractor for mastication. It has started with CEQA, and after approval, should start the end of August.

Sequoia Crest – a CEQA project which will make it available as shovel-ready when grants come out.

USFS:

RAC Johnsondale – CEQA for doing fuels work behind the cabins. There is a chance this project will be expanded.

FSC / Y/S RC&D / Chipper Program – the RCD will carry out this program. Bob gave them a plan for the communities we'll be doing the program in.

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Applications:

SNC – turned in application for additional work in Mtn. Home, but SNC had a differing opinion on the CEQA work. It has been resubmitted, and will provide additional acreage to the current Prop 40 project.

FWS – Blue Ridge has an area of brush that they don't want to burn. Can't get the chipper in closely, but they would like us to clean it up.

Financials: Teri submitted a Balance Sheet and P&L as a preliminary fiscal year end at 6/30, plus a Check Run through 7/2/12.

DIRECTOR VACANCY – Board would like to send a letter to the Tribal Council because of the 10 year history of representation on this Board.

PEOPLE'S GARDEN PROGRAM FUND RAISING: Kara reported we submitted a 2-year \$100,000 F2S grant with a matching effort to USDA. Should fund sometime this Fall. We are the only project in the Western region that is working with the People's Garden model, i.e., including the actual garden at the school for the kids to learn even more about eating well. Mini-grant applications include Save-Mart, Wal-Mart (which is opening a new store near Goathead), Wells Fargo, SCE, Visalia Community Bank. Land O' Lakes – we need a dairyman to support our request. ConAgra (in January 2013) has capacity funding. People's Garden comes out at the end of the fiscal year. We've been contacted by 4-H and SHE multi-unit housing who can get funding for gardens. Center for Race and the Environment may be a possibility. Jim Sullins suggested the Visalia Rotary Foundation.

WEED MANAGEMENT AREA: Jim Sullins reported that the Kearney Ag Center stole Andrew, but he is still working two days a week on surveying yellow starthistle. Treated about 300 acres this year, using about \$15,000 on the public acreage. For the next two years he'll have CDFA money through the Forest Service, which is good. Also received a Fish & Wildlife Foundation grant through SRT including doing outreach with the mine operators to operate weed-free. Working with the RMA, and possibly the RCD, to get into the mine reclamation ordinance to strengthen the regulations for invasive species.

Genette mentioned that NRCS can also assist any homestead with weed management as long as they have made \$1,000 off their land.

Jim would like the RCD to consider taking over the WMA in the next couple years. Tulare County is the only WMA run through the Cooperative Extension office, most are run through the Ag Commissioners office.

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Range conditions show an interesting year – higher elevations looked good but his numbers show about 70%, but it died early.

Golden Oak borer – he has information that it is a threat to the oak woodlands. It's coming up from the south and has caused a heavy die-out in San Diego County and winds up as fire wood – concern about firewood moving around and carrying it.

Water Quality – with the nitrates issues and irrigated lands regs coming are where the money is going to be and a long-term future issue. Julie Finzell is the new rangeland manager for Coop Extension for Kerns, Kings, and Tulare Counties.

Tom wonders how the RCD could help issues with Seville, etc., issues. Jim says Rotary is looking at this too. Small communities need to get their water quality issues addressed – filtration units? They need leadership and organizational skills, not just their hand out. Issues now with Boards who don't meet, etc. Rotary is thinking about having the big bottled water stands and putting them at schools. They use three filters and reverse osmosis and will handle most of the pollution issues.

NRCS UPDATE - Genett reported that this NRCS office pulled \$10,573,095 from the Bay-Delta for 270 contracts for water /air/soil quality cost share contracts, more than most states. All watershed projects got funded, dairies got help with return systems, most tractors this year. Mark wants to know if there are any resource concerns that NRCS hasn't met – oak tree regeneration was recommended. This level of funding should stay the same for next year.

SEQUOIA FIRE SAFE COUNCIL– Bob reported the FSC had a presentation from Bill Putnam about goats eating weeds – the goats are doing a great job, especially at the COE office near Lake Kaweah.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Next meeting is August 8th, 2012

Respectfully submitted,
Teri Van Huss