



Tulare County Resource Conservation District

3530 W. Orchard Court ~ Visalia, CA 93277

Phone: (559) 622-0378 ~ fax (559) 636-3277

11 January 2017

Board Meeting Minutes

Directors Present: Warren Hutchings, Scott Powell, Walt Bentley, Larry Schwenkl

Staff: David Witt, Teri Van Huss

Sequoia Fire Safe Council: Bob Puls

NRCS: Joe, Genett, Bonnie, Lorena

Guests: Paul Fuller (Posey), Michael Tharp

Review minutes: Larry moved, Walt seconded for approval of the December 14 minutes.

Financial Report: A financial report through 11 January was presented. Scott moved, and Warren seconded to approve the report and pay the bills. Aye vote ensued. Discussion about extra funding being transferred to the County account – Larry moved, Scott seconded to make the transfer of \$30,000 from RCD general funds to the County acct. Aye vote ensued.

❖ New Business

Bonnie Eyestone presented a project she's been working on. Bonnie is half-time with NRCS and half-time with Point Blue Conservation Science – nature-based solutions for wildlife and grazing.

Bonnie does a lot of rangeland monitoring, measure the ecological function of rangelands, particularly with birds and vegetation transects. Looks for the relationship between livestock, soil, vegetation, and wildlife. She's working with 7 ranches, and presented on grazing management in a sycamore alluvial woodland. She presented the goals the landowner created to increase riparian pasture, enhancing habitat for wood ducks and raptors, increase the aesthetic value of riparian area along roads, reduce wildlife fuel loads, and maintaining riparian areas for long-term. Bonnie talked about how she works with the landowners, walking the entire property, monitoring bird species because they are such good indicators of habitat quality, and helps the landowner do intensive land management monitoring. Point Blue has specific monitoring designs she uses. The bird monitoring results show comparisons with the highest measurements for bird species in the canopy, mid-canopy, shrubs, and understory. This property showed European sparrows as the highest species, an invasive problem in that they use all the tree cavities leaving no room for native species. She also looked at grazed areas and ungrazed – the grazed areas showed the most diversity of bird species. Conservation solutions: prescribed grazing, nest boxes for Wood ducks, control starlings, monitor shrub and tree recruitment. Bonnie will continue monitoring for another year. Point Blue goals include preserving open spaces and rangelands that contribute to climate stabilization.

Point Blue works only on private lands, but one of their main goals is to teach their monitoring systems to others.

Dept of Conservation Proposed Regulations for RCD Accreditation Program – Documents for the proposed regulations, one round of comments have been given.

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Updates

Sequoia Fire Safe Council – Teri made a report of conversations and questions for Doug Souza and the County Counsel regarding fiscal coordination. Board discussed the situation, stating that a course should be laid out, documented with a MOU, and all details understood and documented before we do this. There is a commitment to keeping this organization going. The Board requested Bob Puls to put together a MOU for the Board to look at.

NRCS Forester Agreement: Warren will call Brian Rueger to offer this work, and David says Jeff can be available also.

NRCS Archaeologist Agreement: Ben Barnett is now gone, Tom Heck is in charge for now.

Tree Mortality Task Force: Bob introduced Paul Fuller who is from Posey, and who works with the community to get the trees taken care of. David says he's willing to write grants, and Mr. Fuller says the communities up there are ready to work with the RCD. Discussion ensued, and the RCD will work with the communities in the Foothills to put projects together.

RCD Equipment Usage: Bob gave information on miles moved by the Water Tender (339), Truck 3 (6,326), and Chipper (59).

SGMA: Bob says he went to the Water Commission meeting, the Board of Supervisors says the County will have a drilling moratorium until the SGMA takes affect. BoS says there is good coverage all across the County but there are problems with overlapping areas by different agencies. Bob says the RCD should continue attending and monitoring the effort.

SWEEP Projects: Bob says there is another CDFA liaison for sending out the RCDs to do the inspections.

CDF Chipper Days / Sequoia Crest: Chipper Days has enough grant monies left for a small project at Sequoia Crest in April/May. The SRA grant for Sequoia Crest has its CEQA almost completed. There are two phases planned, this grant will fund the first phase. Mtn Home Camp will be used, probably starting in June. This project should complete this year.

NRCS Updates.

Joe says they are down two soil conservationist position he is trying to fill. One should be done in a month or two.

Public Comment Period: none

Correspondence: none

Meeting Adjourned at 2:25 p.m. Next meeting is January 11th

Respectfully submitted, Teri Van Huss