



# Tulare County Resource Conservation District

3530 W. Orchard Court ~ Visalia, CA 93277  
Phone: (559) 622-0378 ~ fax (559) 636-3277

---

4 November 2015

## Board Meeting Minutes

Directors Present: Walt Bentley, Scott Powell, Stan Noble, Warren Hutchings, Larry Schwankl  
Staff: Teri Van Huss  
Fire Safe Council: Bob Puls  
NRCS: Genett Carstensen, Bonnie Eyestone

The meeting was called to order by Warren at 12:25 p.m.

**Review minutes:** The minutes were reviewed from 10/14. Scott moved to approve, Stan seconded. Aye vote ensued.

**Financial Report:** Financial report for 11/3/15 was reviewed. Larry moved and Stan seconded to approve the financials. Aye vote ensued.

Teri reported she is ready to order a new Apple laptop; it will be partitioned to also run PC programs, especially Quickbooks.

## New Business:

**Planning Session:** Need an agenda for the RCD/NRCS planning meeting in December. Gennett says NRCS is looking for three projects to come out of this meeting; they have one about soil health they are thinking. Larry suggests we have time periods set up to discuss specific subjects. It is recommended we invite Jeff Mitchell to attend. David Witt will also have a role in developing projects. Walt wonders if the soil issues around burned watersheds would be a good subject, absolutely. Larry brought up the idea that almond farmers are especially interested in cover crops as pollinators.

Bonnie reports that Dept of Conservation has \$42 million for carbon sequestration projects – they are holding a public meeting in Tulare next Tuesday.

**Sustainable Groundwater Management** – Larry says he attended the meeting last week where the DWR talked about the program. His takeaway is 1) focus is different with ag vs urban 2) accusations of neighbors pumping their well dry. It looks like there are different takes on the program: 1) I'll just sign up and it will be okay, 2) we partner to create our own groundwater management agency (i.e., a profit center due to grant assistance, and 3) those who haven't paid attention and don't know what's coming. Given there is reimbursement, it serves the local districts to get their own groups together. Bob says Kaweah Delta Conservation District is doing well in knowing what their history is, but they are not joining the Tulare County/Visalia/City of Tulare coalition.

## Updates:

**CARCD Conference:** Walt will be attending the conference. He wants to know if there are certain workshops he should attend.

# Tulare County Resource Conservation District

3530 W. Orchard Court ~ Visalia, CA 93277  
Phone: (559) 622-0378 ~ fax (559) 636-3277

---

**Chipper Days:** Bob reported they've been working in Ponderosa, Sequoia Crest, Doyle Springs (the people there were thrilled). We are now snowed out.

**SWEEP** – Round 3 has been awarded and Round 4 has presented their new program with proposals due on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Johnsondale FB:** Bob reported we'll be working on a few piles until the snow stops it.

**California Department of Fish and Wildlife** – Our first project for silage delay of harvest has been signed and will now be invoiced.

**Meetings:** Bob says there is an interest by the Dept of Conservation to keep RCDs going. Several small ones have closed; one of the issues has been the cost of audits. Some discussion about combining audits.

**NRCS:** Gennett – Joe is reassigned for a couple months. Signups are ongoing, rollovers are frequent with replanning, particularly including cover crops, which are becoming more popular. NRCS did \$9.1 million in Tulare County last year. The new rules have batching periods – it should only take about 30 days to award each batch. One of the differences now is that everything much be planned up front with all the costs attached.

There was general discussion that the RCD is more interested in Soil Health and not so much about carbon sequestration. Bob brings up the point of the Food Safety System which looks at mulch/manure/cover crops, etc., as "alternative" farming and could be critical of farmers who do this. Bob says his dad farmed like this, with cover crops, and how far we have slid backwards.

## **Public Comment Period:**

## **Correspondence:**

Meeting Adjourned at 1:42 p.m. Next meeting is December 16<sup>th</sup> from noon to 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Teri Van Huss