



Sierra Resource Conservation District  
Monthly Board Meeting  
Clovis Memorial Building  
453 Hughes, Room 2  
Clovis, Ca. 93612

Monday,  
February 24,  
2020  
4:00pm-6:00 pm

## MEETING MINUTES

### **I. Call to Order: 4:05 pm**

- A. Director Roll Call
- B. Introduction of Guests

Directors: Alan Fry, Ted Kimbler, Gary Temple, Pete Lassotovitch

Staff Present: Steve Haze, Kelly Kucharski, Blair Duncan, Vue Her, Craig Jones

Guests: Robert Jackson (Yosemite Clean), Matt Hurley (Tranquility RCD), Shawn Murphy (CCC), John Heywood (IP Advisors), Rebecca Ozeran (UC Cooperative Extension)

### **II. Approval of Minutes for January 2020 Board Meeting**

*No quorum to make an approval.*

### **III. Public Comment for any item not on the agenda (No action can be taken)**

No comments.

### **IV. SRCD Board Action Items and Discussion Topics:**

- A. Candidates for Directors/ Assoc. Director: Intertribal Representation

There has been an action to look at potential directors or associate members. Gary Temple (SRCD) was voted back onto the board, it's in progress. Associate Directors serve for 2 years at a time. Steve (SRCD) is meeting with the Big Sandy Rancheria, Cold Springs, and Dunlap bands in order to move towards tribal representation for the District.

- B. Directors – Bios, Advocacy and Support

Kelly (SRCD) will collect information for a bio from the board members, advisors, and staff and put it up on the website for guests to see. Kelly has made progress with ones that are new on the website that have been completed at this time.

- C. Biomass Resourcing – Australia: NDA, Letter of Intent & Supply Mgmt.

John Heywood (IPFA, PFL) and Steve Haze (SRCD) have been talking to an Australian company about pelletizing woody biomass. John has been with SRCD for 5 years and has served as an Associate Director. John is taking on this item in consultation with the staff and the board. This group out of Australia was referred to SRCD through the Governors Office of Planning and Research. Their interest is in a wood pelletizing system at the AMS, for the product to go to South East Asia. 50-60 million for a plant to be set up and it would



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require up 500,000 bone dry tons of biomass per year. John is working with the USDA – US Forest Service with how to give certainty of access to the wood. 10,000 acres of slash piles up there right now but the maps for those are not up to date. The goal is to devote the resources to get an analysis of the biomass and see if it is accessible and how much is there. The Australian company would be looking at SRCD to be a partner in making this happen with the Forest Service. They are competing with coal as an energy source, and this is a renewable component that makes them competitive.

As a non-voting member John cannot do contract work with Sierra RCD and has become a District advisor. John has provided his expertise at no cost to the District. The District wants to develop a MOU with John in which it builds confidence so that John can invest his time to look at opportunities to bring in private investors to help future plans. No action today but that is the direction looking ahead.

D. Penny/Newman – Regenerative Ag – Scott Porter, TCRCD potential MOU

March 2<sup>nd</sup> Steve and Kelly (SRCD) will meet with Penny Newman to look at regenerative agriculture, vertical tilling and the ability to use carbon in the mixture for ground water recharging capabilities. Instead of hitting hard pan, these materials might do more recharging. This lead for a meeting came from Tulare RCD.

E. Personnel and Contractors – CA Conservation Corps Program

Shawn Murphy (CCC) shared that he recently met with Chief Johnson and Jim McDougall from Cal Fire, and they would like to have 2 or more fire crews at Auberry. He also met with the CCC in Sacramento and things will be moving in that direction. The structural engineers are on site Thursday and Friday, to see if the former Auberry middle school will be the right building to house the fireman. The Save the Sierra tree mortality crew will work in Shaver next week and on the SRA #2. Jose Basin received a 5 million CALFIRE grant for their 168 council and there will be more than one crew to go up there to do that. On the 27<sup>th</sup> the Manzanita Lake – Madera County project might be moving forward as well too.

F. CARCD – LAFCo SOI & Annex. – Draft MSR submitted

SRCD has not received the MSR as submitted. Karen Buhr is going to give a presentation called “RCD’s 101” on March 18<sup>th</sup> in the board of supervisors chambers at the Hall of Records, board members are invited to attend.

G. Web Site & District Enterprise Operations Development & support Kristina



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Kelly (SRCD) is working on a website catalogue for the DOC watershed program grant. She has worked with Vue (SRCD) and Rebecca (UCCE) for utilization of MS Teams for board meetings and operations.

H. Caltrans and Sierra Foothill Conservancy Mitigation Agreement & MOU

Caltrans is finishing off the interagency agreement, and it should be finalized this month. Cal Trans will transfer the money to SRCD, because SRCD is the fiscal sponsor for the agreement and the Sierra Foothill Conservancy is the recipient for performing the mitigation work for the establishment of the Prather round-about.

I. Dinkey Collaborative – Steering Committee, Communications Planning & Socioeconomic WG

Last Thursday the Collaborative held a science symposium. Vue (SRCD) attended and explained how he learned of the bark beetle's intercepting with the trees in the forest. SRCD was recognized for their support of the KREW research, through the PSW research station. Steve (SRCD) named several other important research initiatives that were brought up in discussion at the symposium, including NEON and a Western contaminants project.

J. DOC – Southern Sierra Forest Health Watershed Program

This program has been moving forward well as SRCD is establishing the website and data collection for the southern sierra region by identifying the research activities and what they are. Matt Hurley (TRCD) is going to set up a meeting with the President of Reedley college to see how to approach this grant with their involvement.

K. DWR/Tulare County – SSIRWM Tule Indian Watershed Study w/ UCM

Steve (SRCD) has executed all the agreements for SRCD and they are back with Tulare County for them to execute on their end. There is a meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup> with the lab. SRCD will be reaching out to the tribes about when and where Livermore Labs will be doing water testing.

L. DWR – SSIRWM grant conditional award Sequoia Nat'l Forest/Trout Unlimited

SRCD is being awarded 41,400 for the first round of implementation grants, SRCD is their fiscal sponsor and a member of the SSIRWM. This includes restoration of 8 meadows and there is a DAC component associated with it that will take some additional work.

M. Tree Mortality Crisis and Biomass Resource Management Development

1. Biomass Utilization under USFS-R5 / SNF / SNC Interagency MOU



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Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) spoke with Steve about an agreement. SRCD was fast tracking with Yosemite Clean to get the use permit in place with a need to do SEQA and NEPA and site control. There is a 5 year agreement that is conditional and it is currently in year two. With the breach in the mill pond, the County of Fresno used SRCD as leverage to get the landowner to do something about it, however the breach is on the neighboring property, and the neighboring property was recently sold. Steve is optimistic about County involvement as Greg Allen came to the Auberry Mill Site to see the biomass utilization campus this month.

2. Potential for Carbonator 500 placed at AMS for demo purpose

John and Steve have been working on securing the Carbonator 500 for demo purposes. The unit is in Northern California and Oregon. The Air Pollution Control District said to submit a TAP application again. SRCD is looking for a 20-21 with the APCD for a 6-month exemption for new types of equipment to reduce air pollution.

3. Biochar Central, Chemists Without Borders – CSUF Jordan College

Blair (SRCD) was scheduled to be trained on the Starbot biochar units on Thursday and Wednesday they told him the equipment is too close together. Blair will be moving the equipment on Monday and setting another date to do the training. Chemists without borders was discovered through Christoph who gave the two starbots that Blair will be trained on. Chemists without Borders has dedicated a part of their website for biochar initiatives and they would like to work with the District to produce biochar and trailblaze in establishing some markets to sell them.

4. CFSC – Eastern Fresno County FireSafe & Stewardship Fuels Reduction

Blair (SRCD) gave an update on CFSC program. There are close to 500 letters sent out and up to 20 responses. Craig Jones is in town from Colorado and did two assessments with Blair including the 100 acre property music camp. Landowners are starting to recognize the letter we are sending out and seeing the District as in the game of wildfire mitigation.

5. CAL FIRE CCI Forest Health 2018 Award – Executed Agreements

This agreement has been executed. The 2017 agreement dropped out and ends March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Kelly and Steve met with our counterparts with the US Forest



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service and PSW. SRCD has enough information to submit the first advance at this time.

6. Auberry Mill Site – SNC CUP grant & Yosemite Clean

SRCD has a one year extension on the conditional use permit process. John Heywood is looking at another proposal, a master agreement of some ownership, so that SRCD has site control. John put together a representation agreement so that he can represent SRCD as a buyer of the property to the current owners. The deal that might be the most feasible is by SRCD getting a grant for the acquisition. SNC has a grant program where SRCD could qualify up to \$500k for the acquisition of the property. John is thinking to set up a new LLC where SRCD would be part owner because in an LLC operating agreement, it can be made clear of who has what authority, and the LLC can have full control. With an LLC SRCD will be able to qualify for the grant for the property and any other grants for biomass operations. A bi representation agreement John put together, and John will put this up for Alan and the board members moving forward. Currently SRCD has a 1-acre lease at the mill site. There is a 10-acre conditional use permit in the works, and then there is this LLC approach with SRCD having just over 50% ownership.

7. Setting up Operations at AMS

Craig (SRCD) said the AMS looks like a real operation with the load center panel, and there is more going on with the trailer as an office.

8. Fresno County Tree Mortality/Forest Health Task Force (TRAC)

Blair (SRCD) said PGE gave kudos to Fresno County for the big wind event lately. Madera County was mess with lots of trees down. Fresno County did great, lots of good work happening there, and the only outages were in areas closer to the valley.

9. CARCD / NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Takes multi-country project area and the state association in how money is being spent to take care of issues in our area. CARCD, NRCS area, and local partners will understand where they are at and how to move forward, looking at the first implementation year in a 5-year program. RCPP takes some time to get off the ground. Blair (SRCD) has been attending RCPP training. It's been informative for him and he's been training with Bobby Evans (NRCS) on site visits.



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10. CARCD / Carbon Cycle Institute – Grand Bluffs FCP & Potential Sale

Steve (SRCD) is trying to put together the first forest carbon farm management plan. Steve has the existing management plan from Bonnie, and they will be looking at it and determining what the shortfalls are and updating it.

N. Programs and Projects Status Report

Estimated \$4.9 million in projects present at this time. 3 million in projected proposals.

O. NRCS- Diesel Tractor Replacement AQ program

This program is in limbo at the moment, no update at this time.

P. NRCS- Conservation Planning & support for SE Asian Specialty Growers/SWEEP

Vue (SRCD) has been talking to some farmers about the SWEEP program and educating farmers and how to conserve water with irrigation. Vue will be working with Sam Vang at NRCS for the Mong and Punjabi to educate them on this program. Steve has Vue studying for the SWEEP program at this time.

Q. Kings Basin Water Authority/So. Sierra IRWM/SGMA WG/ SGAs

Nothing to share at this time. Karen Buhr (CARCD) is coming down because of SGMA and the role of RCD's in this conversation. Water agencies and districts don't fully understand what the role of an RCD is.

R. Grant Opportunities Tracking List

Displayed the recent submissions and those in process for grants.

S. Other- AB2093 (Gloria - Email retention legislation)

CARCD and other state associations are signing to be on the list for SRCD's position on the potential legislation

Drones have been ordered for operations. Craig (SRCD) talked about drone reforestation opportunities out there, where the drones will shoot pods into the ground with fertilizer, seeds, and moisture. Blair (SRCD) is looking at flying the drones to get video and photos for bigger properties. Rebecca (UCCE) would like to be pulled into the loop on this technology with seeds from drones as it could have uses on rangelands.

**V. Financial Reports**

A. Monthly Reports



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Kelly K displayed for view the:

- Balance Sheet
- the Profit & Loss
- the Transactions by Account
- Central Valley Bank Summary

**B. Line of Credit and Carbonator 500 purchase based upon A/R and grants**

Submitted an application in September and it was for a Quarter million dollar line of request and wanted a 12 month outlook, Steve put together an 18 month expenses and outlook with a payment schedule.

**C. Review & Approval of expenses: Tools, stipend for Heywood EPIC Conf**

For the energy commission conference, the board is favorable to give a stipend for John to go for SRCD. SRCD has the funding for a power wall unit. When the power goes out, the power wall can keep the lights on without restarting the Power Palette. There is a rebate and a discount for a 20 KW power wall. Steve is trying to get that available, and with that the power wall will be about \$12k.

**VI. Reports:**

**A. NRCS Report**

No report given.

**B. RC&D Report – Next meeting 1/30**

Rubbie, Justine and Robert (YSRC&D) met with Kelly and Steve (SRCD) on how to better serve SRCD. They felt it wasn't necessary to come to the board meeting this month after a productive meeting with SRCD.

**C. CARCD – Forestry Committee /SJV Region (Area 9)**

The forestry committee is looking at going to quarterly meetings, which Steve thinks is advisable. There is an action plan to work on.

**D. Correspondence, Fresno County LAFCO Responses**

Nothing to report.

**E. Other**



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Ted (SRCD) shared a concern that in feeding the Power Palette with products that it's going to consume with a 5 gallon bucket. To get any kind of production of a few hours or minutes, there has to be a way to handle the material for the power palette to consume. Craig (SRCD) is looking at a conveyor and a three sorter for screening. Ted sent Blair information from a gentleman in Wisconsin who sorts his woodchips. There is a wood products plant and a huge classifier at Terra Bella. Steve, Craig and Blair have been looking at sorting and screening for the gasifier and are doing research in advance to go about finding the right solution.

**VII. Adjournment: Meeting end 5:55 pm**

**Next meeting: Monday, March 23rd, 2020; 4:00pm – Room 2**

Respectfully Submitted, Kelly Kucharski