

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 24, 2025, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

SRCD Auberry Office – 33224 Auberry Road Auberry CA 93602 & Via MS Teams

Meeting Minutes

- I. Call to Order** *President*
- A. Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Director roll call
Directors: Alan Fry, Joe Denham, Pete Lassotovitch, Matt Hurley
- C. Introduction of guests
Staff: Kelly Kucharski, Chelsea Hutchens, Tanner Michaelson, Sokmarly In, Daisy Guzman, Jessie Kanter, Husandeep Singh
Guest: Rosie US Fish and Wildlife Service, John Heywood, Mikel Chatelle (NRCS),
- D. Core Values: Stewardship, Responsibility, Innovation *Manager*
Director Hurley made a motion to have Director Lassotovitch facilitate the meeting via video call, Director Fry seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and motion passed unanimously. (3-0-1)
- II. Approval of Minutes from January 2025 (A)** *President*
Director Hurley made minor edits to the January Minutes.
Director Hurley made a motion to approve the meeting minutes with minor modifications, Director Denham seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and motion passed unanimously. (3-0-1)
- III. Public Comment for any item not on the agenda (No action can be taken)**
- IV. Partner Reports (I)**
- A. NRCS Report
Fiscal year 2025 currently has 600 applications processing. The application deadline for the National Air Quality Incentive program ended on January 31st. The EQIP ranking deadline is March 14 and two weeks after that they will start to see selections being made. The CSP program minimum has increased from 1,500 to 4,000. They are hopeful this increase encourages more growers, especially smaller producers, to participate in the CSP program. In the 2024 fiscal year, Area Three had 87 CSP contracts and distributed approximately 8 million dollars to those contracts.
NRCS currently has a freeze on hiring more staff like other government agencies. They have also lost 1 staff member due to the layoffs issued by the OPM. IRA funding is currently frozen and NRCS is paying out existing contracts but not moving forward with most applications that were submitted.
The NRCS office is waiting to hear from their state office about a vehicle use agreement between SRCD and NRCS.
- V. SRCD Board Action Items and Discussion Topics: (I) Info / (A) Action**
- A. Financial Management *Controller*
- 1) Financial Reports: Balance Sheet FY 24-25 YTD, Profit and Loss FY 24-25 YTD, Grant Status Report, SRCD Operations Budget to Actual with Detail, AR Aging Detail as of 01.31.2025, AR Aging Detail as of 01.31.2025 **(I)**
Financial Controller went over the financial reports. The District is currently waiting on a few invoices for receivables therefore they are pulling from the CLASS account to run payroll for January and might do the same for February.
The District Manager gave more details on the federal funding freeze impact on staff payroll funding. The two funders freezing work proceeding on Federally funded projects with Sierra RCD are the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts and the American Farmland Trust. Currently, there is no effect on staffing.
- B. Actions *Manager*
- 1) Approval for *Fuels Reduction and Vegetation Management for Wildfire Resilience*
– *Miramonte, Dunlap, and Yokuts Valley* Notice of Exemption for USDA Community

Wildfire Defense Grant (A)

Director Hurley motioned to approve the NOE for the USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant, Director Fry seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and motion passed unanimously (3-0-1)

- 2) Approval for *Habitat Establishment on West Fresno Vegetable Farms* Notice of Exemption for Wildlife Conservation Board California Association of RCD's Block Grant (A)

Director Hurley motioned to approve the NOE for the Wildlife Conservation Board California Association of RCD's Block Grant, Director Fry seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and motion passed unanimously. (3-0-1)

C. Projects and Programs

Manager

1) Board of Directors

a. District Policies (I)

Director Hurley sent Kelly Kucharski District Policies files by email. Director Lassotovitch met with Kelly Kucharski to share records for the District.

b. Local Legislator Meeting (I)

The District is planning a Local Legislator meeting with the help of Director Denham. Although the date is still to be determined, PG & E has agreed to pay for costs. Director Denham will reach out to Legislators to have them decide a date based on their availability.

c. District Projects Overview of Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (I)

District Manager Kelly Kucharski went over the Updated Responsible Accountable Consulted and Informed chart which shows all District projects and the roles staff have.

d. Grant Application Report FY 24-25 (I)

This report is an update of the grants SRCD has applied to, got awarded and awaiting updates on.

2) Programs – (A/R – Ag and Rangeland, F/W – Forestry and Watershed, C/I – Collective Impact)

a. (A/R) Draft Memorandum of Understanding with Fresno County Parks Department (I)

Agriculture and Rangeland Manager Jessie Kante is working with the Fresno County Parks Department on a Memorandum of Understanding to support the County's public park spaces with conservation initiatives. This opportunity is part of the Sierra RCD's project with the Native Plant Society at China Creek Park for the Wildlife Conservation Board Habitat Implementation Funding through the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts.

b. (C/I) Program Presentation (I)

C/I Manager

The Collective Impact Program Manager Tanner Michaelson updated the Board of Directors on the Program's achievements. As the newest established program of Sierra RCD, Collective Impact administers almost 2 million in grant funding across nine projects and manages nine fellows through the Fresno State College Corps Program and California Climate Action Corps. Their efforts are focused on community engagement, climate resilience, and disaster preparedness. The Program also successfully facilitated the establishment of a VOAD in Fresno County, creating a collaborative network of community-based organizations and government agencies to support the community before, during, and after disasters.

c. (F/W) Program Presentation (I)

F/W Manager

Forestry and Watershed Program Manager Chelsea Hutchens gave the annual presentation and updated the Board of Directors on the Program's achievements and future plans. The Program's awarded funds reach around 8 million. The Forestry Team focuses on establishing Firewise communities, organizing community workdays, contracting work for private landowners in wildfire prevention, collaborating on projects with partners like the California Conservation Corps, reforestation, and supervising prescribed burns. New to the District is the Forester Apprenticeship Program which supports the professional development of Program staff to become a Registered Professional Forester, of which two are currently enrolled.

VI. Adjournment – Next Meeting: March 24th, 2025 – Clovis Veteran's Memorial District

To make changes/additions/corrections please email: Daisy Guzman dguzman@sierrarc.com