



744 La Guardia Street, Building A, Salinas, CA 93905

(831) 975-7775

## October 15, 2020– MEETING MINUTES—Approved 11-24-2020

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, October 15, 2020, 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Directors Present: R. King, J. Doud, B. Plemmons, J. Clarke, B. Jefferson, J. Gularte, B. Lipe, I. Mendoza (Associate)

Directors Absent: M. Ritter (Associate)

Others Present: P. Robins (RCDMC), M. Barker (RCDMC), M. Errea (RCDMC), E. Zefferman (RCDMC), N. Solares (RCDMC), J. Booth (NRCS), Richard Wayne Smith (public), Ian Smith (public)

Recorders: M. Barker, P. Robins

*Because of shelter-in-place orders for the COVID-19 outbreak, the meeting was held by Zoom conference.*

Open Session: Director Jefferson called the meeting to Order at 10:00 am

Public Comment: Richard Wayne Smith, a member of the public living in the area impacted by the River Fire, introduced himself to the group. Smith shared that he is interested in any services that are available for wildfire recovery and provided his email address and phone number. Ian Smith also joined the meeting with a similar interest in wildlife recovery assistance.

### Consent Items

- *Approval of Draft Meeting Agenda*
- *Approval of Minutes from the September 17, 2020 Regular Board Meeting*
- *Accept Staff Activities Report for September 2020.*

Director Lipe moved to approve the Consent Items. Director Clarke seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

### Reports

*NRCS Report:* NRCS Hollister District Conservationist James Booth is filling in for Salinas DC Erika Boyland who is on detail in Florida until December. Booth shared that NRCS has been requested by the Farm Services Agency to help implement the Emergency Conservation Program. NRCS has been conducting field assessments in fire impacted sites in San Benito, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties for the Emergency Watershed Program. Booth also noted that the NRCS is developing a Catastrophic Fire Recovery Plan that will establish an allocation of EQIP funds set aside for fire recovery practices and will roll out more quickly to eligible landowners than the standard EQIP.

*Executive Director Report:* Paul Robins discussed that RCDMC is still waiting for to get the landowner agreement for one of our Blanco Drain Bioreactor Projects that has 24 different landowners that need to sign on. He also shared that the Speak Off Contest will be held after the board meeting at 12:30pm.

*Directors' Updates:* Director Brent Plemmons discussed that the Central Coast Area RCDs meeting is Wednesday, October 28. The CARCD Annual Conference will be held virtually this year in mid November. Plemmons will forward the details to Robins later this week as soon as he receives the agenda. CARCD is still looking for event sponsors.

Director Rebecca King mentioned that she and RCDMC Soil Scientist Laura Murphy went to Phil Foster's ranch in Hollister to see his reduced tillage practices. These practices are funded by a Conservation Innovation Grant. Foster offered to provide another tour on one of his other ranches in the area at a later date.

#### Old or Standing Business

P. Robins / Directors

No items pulled from the Consent Agenda.

*Monthly Financial Statements:* M. Errea presented the financial statements regarding Accounts Receivable, Payables and Bank balances for the period ending October 15, 2020. The accrual account balance on October 15, 2020 was \$229,236.56 with \$425,777.60 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury accounts (taking into account checks to be signed at the meeting), \$895,956 in liabilities, and \$699,415.17 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. For comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$174,132.20 on September 17, 2020.

*Expenses:* Errea presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid on October 15, including bi-weekly salary through October 11, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the months of September and October, totaling \$339,675.08.

Director Clarke moved to approve the October financial statements and the September and October expenses. Director Doud seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

#### *Review of New or Revised Independent Contractor Agreements:*

The following contracts (one augmented and two new) were presented and discussed:

- FlowWest ICA 2019-08 Amendment #1 to augment the existing \$20,000 agreement with an additional \$4,000 for Blanco Drain projects engineering oversight using NRCS-CIG funds: FlowWest designed both bioreactor projects and has worked closely with the RCD in their development as well as modifications needed to meet landowners' needs and permitting agencies' conditions. The extended redesign work resulted in unanticipated costs, for which they are requesting partial reimbursement. We have the funds available in our matching grant from our NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant.
- ICA 2020-06 for NTE \$50,000 with RCD of Santa Cruz County to conduct post-fire recovery assistance under our existing NRCS 'Forestry Assistance' agreement: The agreement will fund time spent by a consulting Registered Professional Forester (RPF) and RCDSCC's Forestry Specialist to provide direct technical assistance for landowners on burned parcels in the Santa Cruz Mountains prepare for winter rains. The work period is October 1, 2020 – December 31, 2022.
- ICA 2020-07 for NTE \$15,000 with Hamey Woods for Forest Management Plan development and forestry projects CEQA assistance under our existing NRCS 'Forestry Assistance' and CALFIRE agreements: This Agreement will initially fund a portion of RPF Nadia Hamey's work to develop a Forest Management Plan for the Santa Lucia Conservancy (SLC). The Conservancy has both EQIP-funded and CAL FIRE-funded projects planned to execute the Forest Management Plan. The agreement will remain open through the term of both the NRCS and CALFIRE grants so that we can contract with her for

other small projects as needed. The work period is October 1, 2020 – March 2024.

All directors affirmed that they had no relationships with any of the contracting entities. Director King moved to approve the new and augmented Independent Contractor Agreements as presented. Director Gularte seconded and all voted to approve.

*Approval for entry into agreements with MCWRA for two Integrated Regional Water Management projects: Farm Nutrient Management and Water Quality Assistance Program (\$315,063.00) and Salinas River Multi-Benefit Stream Maintenance and Habitat Stewardship Program (partnership with River Management Unit Association—up to \$526,525):* Robins explained that there is currently not a final agreement for either of the programs, but wanted to introduce the agenda item to the board for future consideration.

*Strategic Plan discussion:* Robins shared the information provided by Board and Staff about the 2021 RCDMC Strategic Plan Update Preparatory Questions. The prompt was “*What is the RCD doing best in terms of meeting our mission and serving Monterey County's needs? Why? How could it be expanded or improved?*” Robins received responses from approximately five board members and five staff. Board members and meeting attendees reviewed the document for several minutes before continuing with the discussion. Key takeaways from the discussion included:

- Director Lipe opined that water and fire-related issues have the most potential for state funding.
- IRWM grants could be one potential resource for funding.
- Water conservation, water quality, drinking water protection, river maintenance and groundwater will continue to be important.
- Lipe also shared that delegation is integral and succession planning is also important.

Robins shared that he and RCDMC Ecologist Emily Zefferman recently attended a leadership training course with CARCD and Solid Ground Consulting (previous strategic consultant). Two more strategic planning questions will be distributed to staff and board soon. The next question will cover “*What is not working?*”.

## New Business

## Directors/ Staff

*Staff presentation: Post-Wildlife Recovery Assistance (presented by Paul Robins in Jamie Tuitele-Lewis' absence).* Robins provided a brief overview of post-fire recovery efforts in Monterey County addressing the River and Carmel Fires. He described the process for NRCS post-fire recovery assistance that requires that a local sponsor (i.e. the County of Monterey) serve as the venue for receiving Emergency Watershed Program funds to assist potentially impacted landowners. The presentation cited the Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT) report and website (links are as follows): WERT Report - <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:db0ac26f-ee17-4361-92bb-faf7da9ecb09#pageNum=1>. WERT website - <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/administrative-office/office-of-emergency-services/recovery/watershed>.

Member of the public Ian Smith asked what occurs during site visits and if fuels management is considered. Robins explained that site visits can identify any potential hazards or benefits with regards to vegetation and determine if a seed bank is already present. Depending on the burn severity and whether the existing seed bank is intact, it can be left in place. Robins noted that white ash is typically associated with severe burns.

Robins explained that hydrophobicity can provide a benefit in that it can prevent the soil from becoming saturated and unstable. As a side note, Lipe shared that goats are one potential resource for brush management for undergrowth.

Announcements

Directors/ Robins

*2020 RCDMC Speak-Off Contest:* The contest will be held after board meeting at 12:30pm. The topic is *“How should Resource Conservation Districts serve and engage the entire community in conservation work?”*

11:54 A.M. Meeting Adjourned

Next Regular RCD meeting:

Date: Thursday, November 19, 10am  
Location: Meeting will be held by Zoom conference