



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
April 8, 2022

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Yuba County Resource Conservation District (YCRCD) was held on **April 8, 2022**, commencing at **9:30 A.M.** The meeting was held in person at the Yuba County Agricultural Commission Office’s conference room. Members of the public could attend in person or via Zoom Video Conference and Audio Teleconference.

ROLL CALL

Directors	Present	Absent
Alyssa Lindman (President)	X	
Gary Fildes	X	
Deborah Aseltine Neilson	X	

Others Present:

Simar Bains, Sutter County Resource Conservation District (SCRCD)
 Ana Santos, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 Pa Yang, NRCS

CHANGES TO AGENDA

Director Aseltine Neilson requested that an action item be added to the agenda to approve the purchase of ink for the office printer. Director Lindman made a motion to add this item, Director Fildes seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were provided.

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Approval of the minutes of the March 11, 2022 Regular Meeting, as written or as modified. Upon a motion made by Director Fildes, seconded by Director Lindman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the minutes as written.

ACTION ITEMS

- B. Approval to purchase business cards and booth items in preparation for May 19th “Be Prepared” Fair. Director Lindman indicated that a table banner would cost between \$50-\$75 depending on shipping costs. The directors agreed that the business cards could be printed in house so the only cost would be for the business card blanks (around \$25).

Director Aseltine Neilson indicated that Pa Yang should be able to print a poster for the back of the booth area. The directors also discussed what type of promotional items could be purchased for handing out at the fair. Upon a motion made by Director Lindman, seconded by Director Fildes, and unanimously carried, the Board approved spending up to \$200 for the purchase of the banner, business card blanks, and promotional trinkets for the fair.

- C. Approval for purchasing ink for printer. Upon a motion made by Director Lindman, seconded by Director Fildes, and unanimously carried, the Board approved spending up to \$100 for the purchase of ink for the office printer.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

D. Partner Reports

Ana Santos - NRCS

Ana Santos introduced herself. She has been working for the NRCS for about a year and a half as a soil conservationist. First, she asked whether the YCRCD would be interested in holding a stakeholder meeting in the next couple of months. The YCRCD board indicated that it would be better to hold this meeting later in the year or maybe even next year since many of the YCRCD's partners have recently been interviewed during the Needs Assessment process.

She then reviewed the various NRCS programs and associated deadlines that were outlined in the April NRCS report to the YCRCD Board.

Sutter County RCD

Since Director Lindman attended the SCRCD meeting last week, she reviewed some of the activities that the SCRCD is doing. Simar Bains also provided some information on the status of the programs that he is working on.

Gurveen Dhillon is leaving the SCRCD for another job so the SCRCD now is looking for someone to replace her (position will be for an administrative assistant). They also have a new Associate Director (a non-voting member of the Board).

The SCRCD is part of a working group (which also includes Reclamation District (RD) 108) that is looking at groundwater recharging in Colusa County west of the Sutter bypass. One way to recharge groundwater is by turning agricultural land into flood plains.

The SCRCD also is working on a policy manual, which they will share with the YCRCD once it is finished, and their audit. Once these administrative tasks have been completed, then the two RCDs can move forward via the joint SCRCD-YCRCD working group to consider the potential for merging the two RCDs.

In addition, the SCRCD just submitted a grant application for trails in Sutter County along the river.

Regarding the Monarch Working Lands Habitat project, Simar reported that he has been reaching out to farmers and landowners about Monarch gardens and the Monarch Habitat Kits. He asked about the status of an application from the foothill charter school.

Director Fildes confirmed that the school principal had received the information about the Habitat Kits; Director Aseltine Neilson will provide Simar with the principal's email. Simar also summarized some of the topics (mission statement, community involvement, projects) discussed at the March Monarch Working Lands Habitat working group meeting.

Director Lindman asked Simar about the carbon ranching program. Simar indicated that he emailed the program leads about this program, but no one has gotten back to him.

Simar also mentioned that he is finishing up his efforts to assist farmers to apply for the current California Department of Food and Agriculture Healthy Soils composting grants. He helped around 30 farmers from Sutter, Yuba, and neighboring counties apply for the grant. So far, 25 of these grants have been awarded totaling nearly \$2 million.

Simar also provided information to the Board regarding the Mobile Irrigation Lab project. SCRCDC partnered with Yolo, Colusa, and Yuba RCDs on a grant application that would fund the use of a Mobile Irrigation Lab. This Lab goes out to farms and evaluates their irrigation systems (which can include water quality tests). Within the proposed project area, the acreage of farmland is not as high as in other counties; however, the area does contain a many small farms, a number of which are owned by underserved ethnic groups. Consequently, this project provides a unique opportunity to provide this service to these underserved farmers. Simar has talked to some of these farmers, and they are definitely interested in the project. This grant was funded, and the project will begin this summer.

SCRCDC also submitted a Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP) grant to the California Department of Conservation. The intent of this program is to increase groundwater sustainability. This project will include demonstrations to farmers on ways to conserve water and how to use cover crops.

E. Financial Report

Director Fildes indicated that there has been no change in the account balances except that the reimbursement check from the Yuba Water Agency is now included. The current total balance in the YCRCD accounts is \$19,662.02.

F. Audit Update

Director Lindman is still waiting for the audit management report (initial audit report and recommended actions) from Larry Bain. She will reach out to him about the audit results.

G. Updates to Website

Director Aseltine Neilson noted that the new YCRCD website is now live. She asked that the Board members let her know if they hear about any events, news, or other items that should be put up on the website. She also reviewed some of the additions that she hopes to make to the website in the near future.

H. Meeting Logistics and Equipment

Director Aseltine Neilson indicated that the YCRCD has the conference room reserved for the mornings of the second Friday of each month. Through the assistance of the IT staff from the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, the logistics of having a joint in-person and videoconference meeting have been successfully implemented. The webcam being

used for the meeting was provided by the IT staff. Director Fildes pointed out that the YCRCD's Banking Policy allows purchases of items on the debit card that are under \$100, so Director Aeltine Neilson can go ahead and purchase a webcam for the YCRCD without approval through a Board action item.

Director Lindman will reach out to Kelli Evans to see whether the YCRCD can continue to use the SCRC's Zoom teleconferencing program. If not, then the YCRCD will need to consider purchasing a copy of this program for its meetings.

I. Update on Forest Health/Fire Resilience Pamphlet Development

Director Aeltine Neilson indicated that she has reviewed the information within the Butte County Healthy Forest Guidebook and she now needs to put together an outline that can be shared with Allison Thomson (Yuba Watershed Protection and Fire Safe Council [YWPFSC]), Jannike Allen (new YWPFSC staff), and Beverly Cameron.

Director Aeltine Neilson also mentioned that she talked to Allison Thomson about the Yuba Water Agency (YWA) grant cycle. The latest grant applications were due April 1st. Also, grant concepts need to be approved by the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) that oversees Yuba County's Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) prior to a grant application being submitted to the YWA. The next grant application window is in September-October 2022. Since we are still working on the design of the forest booklet, asking for publication monies in the September-October timeframe is workable. Allison also provided Director Aeltine Neilson with information on a small grant through the Feather River Air Quality Management District Mini Grant Program that could provide some initial publishing costs.

The Board then discussed some different topics that could be included in the booklet.

J. Needs Assessment

Director Lindman mentioned that the last meeting with Amy Stork, Solid Ground Consulting, regarding the final draft of the Needs Assessment report has been rescheduled to April 21st. Amy has been meeting with a few additional partners as well as reaching out to staff at several other RCDs in the region.

The Board talked about the need for more YCRCD Board members and the expectations that the Needs Assessment will include information that can be used in outreach materials directed towards potential Board members. The Board discussed adding a teaser to the website that advertises the two Board director openings along with the Yuba County's RCD Director Application. Director Aeltine Neilson indicated that she would get a digital copy of the form so that it could be uploaded to the website. Director Fildes mentioned that once a notice is ready regarding the two YCRCD Board director openings he could provide it to the YWPFSC webmaster for their website. The Board discussed the various types of information that would be useful to provide within a packet for individuals interested in becoming a YCRCD Board director.

Director Fildes mentioned that he has had the opportunity through his YWPFSC activities to talk to people about the YCRCD Board. Some of these individuals expressed a willingness to pass along the information to others in their local communities; however, no one was interested in becoming a Board member.

K. Project Update

Director Lindman indicated that the contractor for the CalRecycle project is almost finished with the work. Delivery of some pipe for the contracted work has been delayed due to shipping issues. Once the work is completed and the final grant paperwork is submitted, then YCRCD will receive some of the grant administrative funds (around \$4,000).

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Director Lindman provided information on a call she had with Dale Pierce, a Board director with the El Dorado RCD. This RCD is very involved in fuel reduction projects, both large and small scale, as well as post-fire restoration projects. The type of projects that they are doing are similar to those undertaken by fire safe councils. The forested areas of Yuba County have not had any large-scale fires in recent history such as those in Butte County and El Dorado County, so the YWPFSC is not involved in any post-fire restoration projects. However, organizations including the RCD should be developing the structure to provide post-fire restoration programs should such events happen. Dale recommended that the YCRCD should make connections with the US Forest Service and CalFire. The Board discussed some of the current contacts that directors have including those with the US Forest Service and CalFire as well as potential projects that the Board knows about, and current projects that are occurring in Yuba County. In addition to National Forest land (Plumas NF – Feather River Ranger District; Tahoe NF – Yuba River Ranger District), Yuba County also has Bureau of Land Management lands and California Department of Fish and Wildlife lands (Daugherty Hill, Spenceville, and Feather River wildlife areas). The Board then discussed the various roles that the YCRCD could serve in collaborative efforts to reduce fuel and build resilience in local forested areas.

Director Lindman attended a Regional Fire and Forestry Capacity Program workshop that was offered through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC). The SNC is sponsoring these workshops to help out RCDs and similar groups. Unfortunately, this particular workshop focused more on items that apply to RCDs that already have considerable capacity (identifying education topics for constituents, engaging tribal partners and constituents, getting the Board of Directors and RCD finances organized, and sharing equipment and staff) rather than on capacity building so it was not as useful as she had hoped. She had hoped to learn more about the Forest Fellow effort, but this was not discussed. It is possible that this intern program is no longer being offered. Although SNC has expressed interest in supporting the YCRCD, there does not seem to be any other additional funding programs available at this time that would be applicable to the YCRCD.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Director Aseltine Neilson indicated that she participated in a meeting between the California Resilience Partnership and representatives from some of the Sacramento Valley RCDs. The State has money that it is directing toward resource conservation efforts. The California Resilience Partnership received a grant to identify gaps in these types of efforts, and during this meeting, this group focused particularly on what needs the RCDs have in regard to their resource conservation efforts. It was noted during the meeting that RCDs certainly do play a major role in resource conservation in the state, but they also need a certain level of funding to

sustain their operations; consequently, it would be helpful if a certain base level of funding was provided to the RCDs.

Director Aseltine Neilson also mentioned that she is trying to schedule a call with Dan Macon, who is a livestock and natural resources advisor with the UC Cooperative Extension based out of Yuba City. She also contacted several different people in an attempt to find a grant writer as this seemed the best use of the Forest PACE funding, but she could not find anyone who was available. As part of this effort, Director Aseltine Neilson scheduled a call with staff at the Butte County RCD, but she unfortunately had to cancel this call and at this time it has not been rescheduled. The Butte County RCD staff are interested in talking to the YCRCD Board directors about their efforts as well as some potential collaborations, so it would be good to schedule a call with them.

Director Aseltine Neilson mentioned that she will reach out to Pa Yang about who from NRCS will be attending the "Be Prepared Fair".

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 A.M.