

MINUTES

Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta Resource Conservation District

Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

Truax Building

41923 Second Street, Fourth Floor

Temecula, CA 92590

I. PRELIMINARY FUNCTIONS

Call to Order: 4:00 p.m. meeting recorded by Rose Corona

Flag Salute

Roll Call/Establish a Quorum

Directors Present: Rose Corona (President), Newt Parkes (Secretary-Treasurer), Randy Feeney (Director), Pablo Bryant-(Director) Darlene Gilbert-Temporary Office Manager.

Directors Absent-Teri Biancardi (Director)

Associate Directors Present: Rick Neugebauer- Rick Neugebauer-Associate Director

Associate Directors Absent: None

Office Manager: Darlene Gilbert-Present

Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCS) Waiting to new representative to be named- Bob Hewitt retired.

District Counsel: Melissa Cushman-Absent

Guest Speakers: Mandy Parkes-Inland Empire RCD, Brian Brady, Executive Director - SAWA

Public Guests: Sebastian Valente

Approval of Agenda

President Corona asks for a motion to approve the agenda with the removal of one item which was the presentation of the SAWA Flood Control projects. The main presenter for SAWA James Law had an ankle injury and could not attend to President Corona asked that this item be moved to the next meeting. President Corona made a motion to include the Consent Calendar, correspondence, financials

and minutes as presented, excluding the presentation by SAWA which was moved to the next meeting. Director Parkes seconded. With no further discussion, President Corona calls for a vote. Unanimous vote-4-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS-NONE

II. ACTION ITEMS

Item 1: Update on current and future projects with Cal-Recycle Grants. - Director Corona reports that Director Biancardi who is absent will be giving a more in-depth report at the next meeting but the overall result of our grant proposal was that the client who owns the property that was being considered declined the grant offer. Director Pablo asked what was the portion that the owner of the property would have to pay and President Corona said \$19,000 of an approximate \$50,000 clean up cost.

Item 2: Update on Benton Channel Conservation Easement and Potential Habitat Restoration projects- President Corona notes that Joan Valle with Riverside County Flood Control and who is in charge of regulatory aspects with the District, is working on outreach to the Army Corps, CDFW and others to see how we can amend our conservation easement at Benton channel to be able to do a more restoration. It would involve using some of the urban slobber on each side of the easement that is currently owned by Flood Control. Although there was nothing more to report, the President felt that at least the wheel is starting to roll as far as this project is concerned if Riverside Flood and TEAM RCD and get everyone in the same room to discuss

Item 3: Update and discussion and potential approval of equipment for podcast. - Director Corona reported that she obtained some pricing for equipment and that Director Feeney was working with her on this project. She asked for a motion to provide a not to exceed amount of \$500.00 to purchase adequate headphone sets and potential software to get this program launched. Randy Feeney seconded the motion. Director Bryant asked what kinds of themes would be presented. President Corona said that at the present time, TEAM RCD would stick with agricultural themes in that this is an area in which we are doing work in the District, such as the CropSwap and Ag Efficiency Irrigation programs. So that encompasses a lot of the District activities. Also she acknowledge that many people are getting back to raising their own foods and livestock and have no resource for that information or at least don't know where to find that information so it could be of help. Also she has had local government agencies reach out and want an avenue to discuss what they do. For example, the California Dept. of Food and Agriculture has reached out and wants to be of assistance to the community and have a platform to discuss what they do along with groups like the Riverside County Farm Bureau would be a great asset in that all their members have a wealth of knowledge in regards to a variety of different kinds of farming. Or talking to a

variety of local farmers in informing people about various types of farming both large or organic farming in the District. This could also include the Wine Growers Association and even the extension at UCR.

Director Neugebauer asked if TEAM RCD planned on doing a YouTube link and the President suggested baby steps to start out by having one on one interviews in a radio style to begin with and then include potential YouTube educational programs if we find the program is successful. In particular, if the TEAM RCD interview is trying to show how to do something, such as plant an avocado tree and how to water it etc or building a chicken coop or something that would be better received or understood if it was shown to the public, then of course YouTube would be better. The members threw out a few more ideas and the President also noted that she would have to discuss with the District Counsel the parameters of using social media by a District. Motion was made by President Corona. Director Feeney seconded. Call for a vote. Unanimous 4-0.

Item 4: Reminder to all Board members where it is applicable to take the Ethics and Harassment Training through the CSDA webinars- President made a quick reminder. No motion necessary.

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1: Update on New Drought Executive Order- Brian Brady who is the Executive Director of SAWA and a Board member of the Rancho California Water District came and spoke about the New Drought Executive Order that how that order may have an impact on TEAM RCD's area. Mr. Brady brought a chart to show the latest drought conditions in the State. Although hope was high that California would have a good year in late 2021, he indicated that January and February of 2022 were the driest consecutive months on record. He noted that often the public will hear on radio or TV that one day will be the hottest day on record, yet the announcers or weather people will also note that the drought is the most severe in 1200 years. Most people don't know that this data has only be being recorded for only 100 or so years so it gets confusing for the public. But as Mr. Brady said, regardless, the State of California is in a drought. He also noted that the Dept. of Water Resources along with the Executive order is going to require a 20% water use reduction by the public. The language in the EO is to focus on what is called "non-functional turf". In other words, your lawn. Mr. Brady noted that DWR is considering banning irrigation of non-functional turf for all commercial and industrial customers, however, those customers have the least demand for water. The greatest demand is from schools and other governmental agencies and of course, residential. Brady notes that by mid-May there will be some sort of regulation and that Rancho Water has done an analysis on that and they RCWD doesn't feel that non-functional turf is going to make really any contribution to reducing consumption. He also spoke about the fact that the implementation date is by May 25th and there is a lot of things that have yet to be discussed including recycled water.

He also brought forth the issue of what is called conservation hardening which goes to the conversation about how many homes now already have installed low flush toilets and water constrictors on showerheads and faucets and because it already had been done and it's called "hardening". So where do we look to get the next 20% and RCWD is taking a look at that.

For Rancho Water customers however the positive thing is that they are expecting to implement what's called Stage 3C. In simple terms, that means everyone is given a budget or allotment which allows customers to water their crops, lawns, etc without penalty as long as they stay under the allotment. There are three tiers. Tier one is the customer's allotment. Tier two is referred to as "inefficient" use of the allotment, and Tier 3 presently is called wasteful. Mr. Brady feels that this last tier "Wasteful" will probably be eliminated. The issue then becomes that with less water being used, the Rancho Water District will end up taking between a \$500,00 and \$3 million dollar hit on revenue so they will have some budget impacts. However, in terms of having water for the District, he noted he feels very confident the water will be there for the customers.

There were a few more questions regarding the definition of non-functional turf and how the RCWD will look at allotments for farmers who are involved in the CropSwap and RootStock swap programs and how the allotments will change. President Corona asked it will clearly be less water being used yet the trees will eventually grow. President Corona wanted to know how that would affect the farmer's allotment. Mr Brady felt that the ag customers allotments are done on a "Base Year" allotment which reflects a fully functioning crop and cycle not one that is starting over from scratch which would reflect a smaller use of water since the crops are not fully functioning.

AD Neugebauer noted that the Executive Order also doesn't address new growth or new meter hookups or new commercial development. So there are many things to consider before the actual Executive Order goes into place. President Corona thanked Mr. Brady and the Board moved on to the next item.

Item 2: Update and Discussion on AB 1902 and Legislation on potential updates to Division 9- Mandy Parkes is the Executive Director of the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District and came to discuss and inform the Board on the a recent legislative bill (AB1902) that would provide potentially more accessible revenue stream for RCD's statewide. Ms. Parkes asked if the Board knew what the California Association of /resource Conservation Districts is. President Corona proceeded to explain to the Board that it is the association that represents all the RCD's in the state of California if they choose to belong to it. Ms. Parkes noted that it is a voluntary 501c6 that can do advocacy work at the Capital on behalf of the Resource Conservation Districts to help them build capacity, networks within their districts and to make sure that the members have updated representation on their concerns. Ms. Parkes noted that one of the biggest hurdles to RCD's is that people aren't aware the RCD's exist and particularly because of the difference in functionality amount the districts among the Districts. Some do forestry because their near forests, other do fish related projects because the are near lakes, streams

or the ocean. Some Districts have tax base money, others don't. Some are actively programming while others do very little programming. And there's a lot of difference in ability. The biggest hurdle, Ms. Parkes states, is associated with getting funding on an ongoing basis through strategic implementation of statewide priorities on a regional or local scale. Ms. Parkes also went on to say that the RCD's would like to continue to position ourselves to be the boots on the ground on a local/regional scale but there are a few things standing in the way, which one of them being a code that was written originally in the 1930;s which had no significant changes in the language since then. So she wanted to provide more information for the Board as to the pros and cons of the bill itself to help TEAM RCD have a better understanding of what is happening on the state and national level that effects TEAM RCD and the other RCD's.

She mentioned that the CARCD is looking to quadruple the amount of capacity funding for around \$10 million dollars toward Tier one and the legislation and changes are connected to that capacity building money. It is possible that each RCD in the network could receive \$100,000 toward projects if the legislation goes forward to continue building their capacity. Ms. Parkes went on to discuss the pros and cons and the possibility that there is always risk involved when legislation makes changes. However, the significant updates if approved would make it possible for RCD's to have better access to funding and more direct support from the Department of Conservation. It assists in potentially helping those RCD's that are not as operational as those that have tax base support to be able to build their capacity and become more operational. The language also improves the language that lets the public know that the RCD's do more than just soil erosion and water projects.

Ms. Parkes also discussed the issue of advanced payments for grants as well as the matching funds issues that make it so difficult for RCD's to get grants or even submit the information in the first place. She stated that revision in the language would change the list from vague to a list that would give the Dept. of Conservation the ability to provide a range of assistance to RCDs, financial, technical, organization, capacity building etc. instead of limiting it to soil erosion and water. The changes would also authorize the DOC to provide advance payments to RCD's changing the existing policy of having the RCD's put money up front for grants and then have to wait for the money for months to come in to pay them back for their work.

She went on to discuss the involvement of the CARCD and the Pacific Policy Group to keep the important issues of the RCD's at the forefront of legislation and spoke about the concerns that many RCD's have about unfunded mandates and new language that gives parameters for how annual and long term work plans will be constructed for RCD's although annual and longterm work plans are already a requirement in Division 9. They are required for RCD's to be legally operational.

President Corona noted that in reading the e-mails and information that the CARCD was looking for letters from the RCD's either supporting the work or not. Ms. Parkes said that if the Board wishes to write a letter of support that it would be

beneficial to acknowledge the effort to build capacity for the smaller Districts and that she would send out the information for the Board to review in order that we have all the information. President Corona noted that we could discuss it further and decide whether we want to send a support or non support letter for the legislation changes. Ms. Parkes noted that Inland Empire RCD fully supports the legislation. She invited the entire Board to attend the virtual town hall meeting if they had further questions or concerns. This would give people a chance to hear both sides of the debate.

President Corona ended this portion of the presentation by reading from the Q and A answers After provided as to why the CARCD was proposing the bill and provided the concise summary for the Board. Here is the summary to the Q&A.

“CARCD has been engaging in an effort to update Division 9 for over five years as part of our long-term strategy for baseline funding capacity funding. The proposed changes in AB-1902, have been driven by conversations with RCDs.

We have engaged partners like CSDA, and **[unintelligible 00:57:54]** the last meaningful update to Division 9 took place over 30 years ago and revisions to the scope of our work haven't been made since the 1970s, which is extremely important for all of us to be aware of. In my opinion, then getting on a side note here, we've either been asked to do a lot of things that weren't initially in the idea of resource conservation districts and that was fine for the time that they didn't ask a lot of us.

Now it seems they want us to be involved in things and performing in areas that weren't initially there past the 1970s, but yet the capacity and the ability for our ability to do so is somewhat restricted by some of the language that was created 30 years ago. Am I correct, Mandy or am I just talking off the top of my head? RCDs have evolved quite a bit since this time and are pushing the envelope on activities RCDs are undertaking regarding their statutory authority, while small changes have been made over the years, no major revisions have been made and the code is antiquated and how it refers to our work, allowing us mostly as working on soil erosion and water delivery.

This has been called out by the LAFCO in San Diego and was the main reason why LAFCO paused their municipal service review of the San Diego county-based RCDs. More important than responding to LAFCO, this has also been called out by legislators and legislative staff, RCDs are often passed up by legislators or questioned as to whether we are the right entity to be included in legislation.

After legislative read are outdated code, we are missing out on opportunities to proposed updates in AB-1902 clearly spell out the role of RCDs in

achieving the state's conservation goals and responding to the natural resource challenges facing California, principally address the climate habitat drought, and other critical challenges”

It was agreed that the President would forward the information to all Board members for their review prior to the next meeting and finally asked what the timeline was for legislative review. Ms. Parkes noted that April 29th was set for tentative scheduling for assembly and local government hearings, by May 20th the bill must pass assembly appropriations. It will then run through a number of committees and then by August 31 it will be going to the Senate floor. If it passes then it will go to the Governor’s desk for veto or approval.

Noting that the bill is a lot to digest and wanted to leave the Board with the understanding on how the CARCD has changed from a loosely organized group to one that has worked very hard to show the successes of the local RCD’s and their importance. At this point, the Board moved on to the next point of business.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Update on Greer Ranch Conservation Easement projects-

President Corona discussed and recent monitoring and projects that would be happening soon at Greer Ranch. Mandy Parkes noted that Greer Ranch has asked for quarterly monitoring and noting that while doing work there, the staff from IERCD will be doing site monitoring and also hand pulling noxious weeds and removing trash.

2. Update on Homeless Monitoring-

Director Newt Parkes reported on the Homeless activities and what he had given to Mike Wooten who is responsible for the homeless activities in Temecula. He noted that the response to letting the task force know has been improved and that there has obviously been some clean up activities so the reporting of them has been having an effect. Director Parkes reported that there are three spots. Santa Gertrudis Channel has had some cleanup and it appears the homeless activity has ceased but some still remain. The Temecula Creek channel AD-159 some areas have been cleaned up that were problematic and some activities are taking place nearby. An area on Temecula Creek a camp outside the boundary under a cottonwood cluster has been also cleaned up while a transient camp and drainage pipe remain inactive.

Director Parkes also summarized the work with the Lake Elsinore Homeless Task Force, and how their objectives to keep these objectives at the forefront to focus on their mission. The objectives are finding more funding sources, options for newly homeless who are at risk, identifying funding for the nonprofit to assist with programs and

services, education and engagement, and education and encouragement campaign to activate parts of the community of Lake Elsinore supporting efforts to get homeless individuals to get the help they deserve. Reintegration programs for residents at The Anchor which is the residential facility defining explorer use, homelessness in Wildomar and the extended story behind youth homelessness in the region and identify opportunities to support the sub-population in the community based on findings.

Director Parkes reported that there were a few funding updates and how city and county and even federal offices are getting involved. He mentioned Representative Ken Calvert was involved in getting money for the community and obtained \$500,000 for Riverside County homeless services for the 2022 fiscal year.

3. SAWA Report- AD Neugebauer noted that at this time there was nothing to report.

4. Update on AEIP and CropSwap- Director Randy Feeney reported that they had been changing over from the one drive that the former Office Manager loaned us and that TEAM RCD is now on their own One Drive. Also, he reported that Luis Ramos was out on vacation which caused a bit of delay in the appointment process. However, since the Board acted immediately at the last meeting to engage the MOU with Coachella Valley, the appointments have continued on without much difficulty.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items, President Corona mad a motion to adjourn. Director Feeney seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting ended at 5:17 p.m.

Item 3-Discussion and potential approval to work towards providing podcasts on the website for information and educational content for the community:

President Corona mentioned that this had been a discussion before and would like to try to get some costs as to the costs of starting a podcast on the website. She had mentioned that she had a discussion with Streamline and they would like to discuss further the possibilities to enable them to offer the same kind of situation through their services. The costs don't seem to be exorbitant but President Corona stated she'll check into some costs for equipment and then discuss with Streamline and also then get back to the Board. She also mentioned that there are many organizations, such as the California Department of Food and Agriculture that are continually looking to bring more information and exposure to exactly what services they provide for the community. The idea got a positive reaction from the Board and the President made the motion to move forward in getting approval for podcasts. Seconded by Newt Parkes. No further discussion. Unanimously approved- 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Item 1 -Update on Clinton Keith and Empire Creek Properties- President Corona reported that there was no update at this time and she is waiting for response from Heather Pert and Jeff Brandt regarding the Clinton Keith Property and from her e-mail regarding Empire Creek.

Item 2- Update on Homeless Monitoring- Director Parkes noted that there was not much new to report and that issues continue at the same three sites that have been issues in the past. We continue to advise the task forces of the issues and in particular Mike Wooten, the Temecula homeless coordinator. Director Parkes noted that he is not sure how much follow up there has been since there seems to be little differences from month to month that are identified. President Corona asked if there was a law enforcement person that could be contacted to find that information out and Director Parkes noted that he wasn't aware of one. President Corona suggested that we inquire at the City to see if there is someone to contact in order to make more Departments aware besides just the Homeless Coordinator. We would still be doing the same reporting to both and perhaps that would help.

James Law from SAWA noted that then we could ask law enforcement to follow up and then report back to us. Director Bryant recommended the City app which allow people to "Report an Issue" which prompt citizens to geo reference and put pictures in and by texting it in it creates a public record. Director Parkes recommended that SAWA could fill that out when they are monitoring. James Law asked if it was a

Temecula app and Director Bryant said yes, also saying that the app shows a map of the city and it will let you know if you are within or out of the city limits. It then creates a public record and you can search it and see if any action was taken.

Director Parkes moved on to speaking about the Lake Elsinore Task force saying they haven't had a meeting since a month and a half ago and that he would be attending the next meeting.

Item 3-SAWA Report - AD Neugabauer noted there was a small update indicating that we would hear more from Brian Brady and James on the Lake Elsinore ILF project (In Lieu Fee) but due to the interest of saving time for the speakers, there was nothing much more to report.

Item 4-Crop Swap and AIEP Programs- Director Feeney reported that he did not have any crop swaps going on at the moment but foresees more coming a little in the future although there have been a few AEIP projects. The Root Stock programs also didn't seem to have anything at the moment but Rancho was just about to start their large promotion and mailing for the programs so we would probably get more coming in soon. Director Feeney also reported that we are expecting a lot of applications and a lot of it is going to be for changing out root stock for avocados. It appears that at the moment the program is oversaturated with grapes due to the Crop Swap program. AD Neugabauer noted that now there is a glut of grapes in the valley.

Item 5-Report on Anza/Aguanga Area-Director Biancardi spoke briefly to say that there isn't much to report but she has a couple of contacts of real estate agents who are in Anza who usually have good eyes on the ground and if the project for the grant goes through , TEAM RCD can begin planning for future projects in the area. James Law commented that if one looked at Google Earth that you can see growth everywhere and if we were looking for other projects we could start scanning around in the area and then try to reach out to the land owners. He suggested that they (SAWA) can help identify those landowners that might need help in cleaning up their farms and ranches. President Corona indicated that it might be an idea to start sending out a postcard or something to the residents promoting the Cal-Recycle plan asking if the resident is interested and having a number to call.

GUEST SPEAKERS-BOB CULLEN AND JULIANNA ADMAS-RIVERSIDE COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL

Mr. Cullen, who is the assistant Chief Engineer thanked the Board for the invitation to speak about the partnership with TEAM RCD. He also introduced Julianna Adams who is one of the Engineer Project Managers and the primary liaison for the Army Corp of Engineers, in regard to Flood Control and recreational amenities around the County. Ms. Adams would be speaking to the Board today about getting us up to speed on the trail systems that adjoins Flood Control facilities and the powerful partnership between Flood Control and TEAM RCD. Mr. Cullen commented that their mission statement has somewhat changed from "We build concrete stuff" to now the approach is much more about the communities and that Flood is trying to

improve quality of life while also providing the necessary facilities to keep the citizens safe and provide the necessary services to the County in terms of Flood Control.

After reviewing the overall size of the Riverside Flood Control District, Mr. Cullen explained the relationship between what the responsibilities of the Flood Control District and the operation of their facilities are and where TEAM RCD could fill those gaps with the private property owners using their Long Term Streambed Agreement. So for example, people will call the Flood Control district when their property is flooded. Mr. Cullen stated that it is good to remind the public as to what is their responsibility when they own property and how those responsibilities impact their neighbors and since we are able to do many things with our Long Term Streambed Agreement, it allows us to work better with the private citizens and get things done for private property owners.

Mr. Cullen continued to talk about the change in how flood channels have become more than a concrete flume but more of a trade-off that makes room for streams but also allows for a more attractive channel for the residents that surround it yet still serves its purpose. He used the channel by Pechanga Casino as an example. Mr. Cullen also discussed the trade-offs and impacts economically of concrete channels versus a more open channel that has bike and walking trails, how it affects the development of a housing tract and how the flows during rain season affect those channels. He also discussed the kinds of channels that are designed to be joint use for the community when floodwaters recede and how entire neighborhoods agree to having a different open area to use but also know the flood waters will be addressed during the rainy season.

After giving a little more history on the creation of the Flood Control District which was started after the flood of 1938, Mr. Cullen moved on to discuss the current contract with TEAM RCD and how well that is working. There are great advantages to the work TEAM RCD does at a much more affordable rate which allows invasive removal all year round if necessary and allows Flood Control to focus on what they do best. Mr. Cullen mentioned that TEAM RCD has been very efficient with their work and their budget and has been able to get more done than they have been able to do in the past. President Corona asked if there were more projects than the 11 they were working on that they could collaborate on.

Mr. Cullen spoke of a current project east of the Temecula Valley Hospital that would be a good partnership and described the history and what needed to be achieved there. There was also some question regarding the area behind the Temecula Creek Inn and the work that has been ongoing there but the challenges with homelessness there. Director Biancardi brought up the MS4 and NPDES (national pollutant discharge and elimination system) and asked if cleaning up channels and doing more quality improvement projects on private lands was a nexus. Mr. Cullen noted that although things such as human waste, or car batteries and/or other pollutants for example that pass downstream into the MS4 definitely have an impact. In those cases, source control is definitely helpful and it could be a basis of expending funds through the RCD on private property. However, he did

state that he “wanted to make it crystal clear that we’re (Flood Control) not simply making a gift of public funds to private individuals that happen to own streams. We’ve got to be careful about it and determine if it will pay off and it’s worthy.”

President Corona asked about the area under the freeway behind the Temecula Creek golf course and what was happening with that. James Law from SAWA noted that there is still restoration and invasive removal going on in that area and we are continuing to work through it. Although there is an area that is under the jurisdiction of the RCA. Mr. Cullen also noted that there may be some opportunities going up Murrieta Creek but not at the moment.

After further discussion, Julianna Adams began speaking about a quick update on the Murrieta Creek Trail system. She noted that the Murrieta Creek trail system is a part of a bigger trail known as the Butterfield Overland Trail that connects St. Louis and Memphis to San Francisco. Ms. Adams said that the trail system has been under construction for a very long time by the Army Corp of Engineers and that they were just about to finish their final punch list to be complete and done. Major construction is complete and there are a couple of small repairs needed to be completed but other than that, once those fixes are completely the project will go back over to Flood Control. She continued to speak about when the project is turned over to the District then they will also receive the responsibilities for the trail features which will in turn then be turned over to the city for their operations and maintenance. This project has been more than 20 years in the making since it was first initiated in year 2000. When the official turn over to Flood happens, Ms. Adams and Mr. Cullen will let us know.

President Corona asked if there were any other questions and offered that if there were other projects in the works, please allow TEAM RCD to have the opportunity to take them on.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None reported.

ADJOURNMENT

Since there were no other questions, President Corona Thanked Mr. Cullen and Ms. Adams and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Newt Parkes moved to adjourn. Seconded by Rose Corona. Unanimously approved 5-0

Meeting adjourned 5:05 p.m.

Secretary/Treasurer-Date

