

MINUTES
San Benito Resource Conservation District
Board Meeting
June 23, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.
USDA Hollister Service Center, 2337 Technology Parkway, Ste. C, Hollister

Board members present: Cameron Wright (President), Veronica Stork, Paul Hain, Tony Stork

Board members absent: none

Staff present: none

Guests present: James Booth, Karminder Brown

1. Meeting called to order at 4:10 pm by Cameron Wright.
2. Public Comment
 - a. The public (Karminder Brown) reported on status of CARCD membership and the board welcomed the public to request an invoice from CARCD to renew membership for the next fiscal year at the rate of 2% of unrestricted funds (\$260.00).
 - b. Karminder Brown asked whether the RCD has social media accounts. Cameron said there is a Facebook account and the Board would like to be more active on social media. Cameron will look for the password. Veronica suggested eventually hiring someone part-time to manage the social media for the RCD.
 - c. Karminder Brown mentioned that she will be meeting next week with the Coastal Conservancy regarding their wildfire resiliency prioritization planning.

3. New Business

- a. District Manager/Executive Director Vacancy

The Board and Karminder Brown reviewed the proposed contract and Scope of Work for Karminder Brown's services as Executive Director for six months from 6/23/22 to 12/31/22, and made slight adjustments to some clauses and tasks.

MOTION: The San Benito RCD Board of Directors approves Contract #2022-06-23-Brown. Veronica so moved. Tony seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Reports

- a. NRCS District Conservationist Report for Hollister Service Center, James Booth

James welcomed Karminder. She will attend the NRCS all-staff meeting 6/27/22 and will meet with James 7/5/22. He will begin paperwork for Karminder's permissions and introduce her to the FSA office staff.

James has a lot of ideas about projects/programs for the RCD, including regional grants that he will discuss with KB when they meet.

James emailed the MOU between the RCD and NRCS that was developed several months ago to the RCD Board and Karminder, as well as an Appendix A developed by the NRCS State office. James recommended that the Board review the Appendix.

Supplemental Space Sharing and Vehicle Use agreement – the State office will provide a new agreement soon, which James will submit to the RCD Board for review. It will cover office space, equipment and vehicles. He believes the office space for the RCD will be up to 200 square feet.

A remodel of the USDA Hollister Service Center will take place late this year or early 2023. The USDA will be taking over the space next door, taking down walls and re-organizing office space. The remodel will include space for 2 RCD employees, and a much larger conference room. The work could take place in late December. The RCD will be asked to remove any items that are not furniture prior to the re-model, so this is a good time to inventory the office and get rid of stuff that isn't necessary.

James suggested asking CARCD if they provide website development assistance.

For a possible Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) proposal, he has been thinking about the Upper Pajaro River watershed and connectivity between the Gabilan and Diablo mountain ranges. There is also the most diverse population of pollinators in the United States at Pinnacles National Park. He envisions a swath of pollinator habitat restoration extending from San Jose/Morgan Hill all the way through south San Benito County. In addition to pollinators, there are other opportunities to improve habitat connectivity for elk and medium-size invertebrates.

b. Director's Reports

Veronica Stork— Wildfarmers is working on a pilot pollinator project with the Xerces Society. They received the plants already, but many of them are not suited to our region.

Wildfarmers is also working with the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association (CCPBA) to plan a 20-acre prescribed burn in November. Following the burn, they will work with Point Blue STRAW to involve local students in restoring native plants to the burned area.

Veronica spoke to Tracy at the Community Foundation for San Benito County (CFFSBC) and learned that capacity-building grants may be available next year. This year they will release a project-based RFP soon for up to \$10K for specific projects.

Paul Hain – He attended a workshop at Ridge Vineyards near Cupertino last week, sponsored by Wild Farm Alliance on the topic of western bluebirds and barn owls in vineyards for pest control. Paul has built a lot of the bluebird boxes, and they are very effective.

Wild Farm Alliance would be a great partner for James' idea. Paul would like to see more bluebird boxes installed in vineyards in San Benito County.

Anita Kane with the Historical Society is planting milkweed in containers at the San Benito County Historical Park, to produce seedlings to distribute to people. This is another project the RCD could get involved in.

Tony Stork -- no report.

Cameron Wright – Cameron expressed enthusiasm that James is excited about developing RCD programs, and welcomed KB.

5. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned by Cameron at 5:50 pm. All in favor.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday July 28, 2022 @ 4pm.