



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 10, 2021

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Yuba County Resource Conservation District (YCRCD) was held on **December 12, 2021**, commencing at **9:33 A.M.** The meeting was conducted by Zoom Video Conference and Audio Teleconference.

The Yuba County Resource Conservation District supports the orders and directives from the California Department of Public Health and the California Governor’s Office in the effort to minimize the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Brown Act, Government Code section 54953(e), makes provisions for remote teleconferencing participation in meetings by members of a legislative body, without compliance with the requirements of Government Code section 54953(b)(3), subject to the existence of certain conditions.

ROLL CALL

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

Others Present:

- Gurveen Dhillon, Sutter County RCD
- Pa Yang, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Brandon Johnson, NRCS
- Andrew Lee, NRCS

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments provided.

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Approval of the minutes of the October 8, 2021 Special Meeting, the minutes of the October 8, 2021 Regular Meeting, and the minutes of the November 5, 2021 Special Meeting. Upon motion made by Director Aseltine Neilson, seconded by Director Lindman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the minutes as written.

ACTION ITEMS

- B. Adoption of Resolution #21-9: A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE YUBA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT PROCLAIMING A LOCAL EMERGENCY PERSISTS, RE-RATIFYING THE PROCLAMATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY BY GOVERNOR NEWSOM'S ORDER DATED MARCH 4, 2020, AND RE-AUTHORIZING REMOTE TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE BODIES OF YUBA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 11, 2021 – JANUARY 11, 2022, PURSUANT TO BROWN ACT PROVISIONS. Upon motion made by Director Lindman, seconded by Director Fildes, and unanimously carried, the Board approved Resolution #21-9.
- C. Approval of \$1,000 credit, to adopt a banking policy. Since the banking policy does not specify a debit card limit, the Board agreed to vote on a motion to increase the debit card limit to \$1,000. Upon motion made by Director Lindman, seconded by Director Fildes, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the debit card increase. While reviewing the banking policy, Director Aseltine Neilson identified another change to the banking policy. Currently, only staff and the Treasurer (Director Fildes) may use the debit card. Director Aseltine Neilson provided some modifications to the banking policy as part of the Director's packet which would allow both staff and all directors to use the debit card with the continuation of the requirement that purchases over \$100 need to be approved by the Board. A vote on this item did not occur, so this modification will need to be approved at another meeting.
- D. Approval to sign Needs Assessment contract and pay initial invoice of \$6,000. Upon motion made by Director Fildes, seconded by Director Lindman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the signing of the Needs Assessment contract by Director Lindman and payment of the initial invoice of \$6,000 to the contractor, Amy Stork with Solid Ground Consulting.
- E. Approval of Director Lindman to sign the Cal-recycle contract. Upon motion made by Director Aseltine Neilson, seconded by Director Fildes, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the signing by Director Lindman of the 2021-22 Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement Grant.
- F. Approval of the revised work plan and budget for the DOC FAP Grant. Upon motion made by Director Fildes, seconded by Director Aseltine Neilson, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the modifications made to the DOC FAP Grant work plan and budget.
- G. Approval of reimbursement to Director Aseltine Neilson for WordPress website and domain name. Upon motion made by Director Lindman, seconded by Director Fildes, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the reimbursement of \$114.00 to Director Aseltine Neilson.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- H. Presentation by NRCS staff

Pa Yang from NRCS introduced Andrew Lee (NRCD forester from Region 1) and Brandon Johnson (who will be the acting director for the Yuba City NRCS for the next two months while Pa is away). Pa Yang then provided some general information about the NRCS. In California, there are four areas; Yuba County is in Area 1 (Northern CA) and within Area 1 Yuba County falls under the Sacramento Valley local regional area. For local grant funding, Yuba County proposals compete with the other counties included in the Sacramento Valley local regional area. The boundaries of this local regional area are similar to the boundaries for the Sacramento Valley RCDs. For the EQIP grants, there are three levels: national, state, and local. The national fund pool comes from DC with a certain amount provided to CA; staff do not have much control over adjusting the grant programs as they target specific federal interests such as National Air Quality Initiative. For the state fund pool, NRCS staff have more control and can tailor the programs to meet California needs (e.g., CAT fire and tribal). However, proposals from Yuba County compete with those from across all areas of California, so the process is very competitive. For the local fund pool, proposals from Yuba County are competing with those counties within the Sacramento Valley local regional area and cover such programs as crop lands, range lands, and water conservation. Pa Yang plans to provide more information on these different programs during a future meeting. Pa Yang also mentioned that we could hold another local work group meeting to bring together agency staff, RCD directors, members of the community, and partners. The NRCS and the RCDs have many common goals and since the RCDs operate at a county level (and tend to be more approachable than those at the federal level), the RCDs can play an important role by providing information on NRCS programs (focus on natural resource concerns, different funding pools, how priorities are set - e.g., proposal that includes water quality, soil, and wildlife concerns will do better than one that only addresses one of these), helping to answer questions, and acting as a liaison between the county communities and NRCS. The RCD monthly meetings provide an opportunity for outreach to the community since NRCS staff are attending and providing information and updates. These meetings also provide an opportunity for NRCS staff to hear what the needs are within in the county.

Andrew Lee, who is the head forester for Area 1, then talked about the post fire/catastrophic fire (CAT) program which is part of the EQIP program but is funded through money the state puts aside for wildfires incidents. Once the fire is put out, landowners can apply for financial assistance for activities such as woody debris clean up (stands of dead trees, residual woody material), replanting (including site preparation), and sanitation cutting, but NRCS assistance cannot be associated with any commercial timber activities (e.g., cutting of timber that will be milled). (For example, landowner could have timber company come in and remove trees, and then apply for financial assistance to cover cleanup of residual debris.) There are post fire activities that NRCS cannot fund; these include cleaning up burned over house sites. Since CAT is part of the EQIP program, landowners still need to have a parcel number and meet other NRCS EQIP requirements.

NRCS also can provide technical information about what to do after a fire such as preparing for winter or preventing erosion and in the past the NRCS has provided such information at community outreach meetings. The RCDs can help with such outreach efforts. There also is the emergency water protection program, but this program is

unique in that it is not intended for private landowners but requires a partnership with a local unit of government (like a county) who will be responsible for the contracting and implementation of the work.

Director Lindman asked about post-fire soil erosion control. Andrew Lee indicated that the NRCS rarely provides financial assistance on post-fire soil erosion control efforts (e.g., seed broadcasting); this is primarily due to the environmental review requirements for these efforts which can result in projects not getting off the ground in a timely manner.

Director Aseltine-Neilson asked about the availability of this funding for private landowners to cover tree and debris removal from local areas impacted by fire this past summer. She also asked whether it makes the proposals more competitive if several landowners submitted a joint proposal. Andrew Lee said that these landowners might be able to apply for this funding, but they would need to get parcel numbers and meet the requirements. The NRCS funding also usually does not cover the entire cost of the work, so there is some out-of-pocket expense for the landowner. While a joint application would be possible, he is not aware of one being done successfully. It would take a lot of coordination between the landowners.

He also does not see many funded projects for private landowners with small parcels. There can be issues due to the size of the equipment used in these clean-up activities. Also, smaller parcel efforts typically get priced out because of the cost for the equipment and crew. The cost share rate is set at a per acre level and the cost of the work per acre is typically higher for small parcels.

Director Aseltine Neilson also asked if other grants are available such as those that might have been considered to address the fire clean-up efforts after the Camp and Bear/North Complex fires. Andrew Lee suggested contacting the Butte County RCD (Wolfy Rouble) and Butte County Firesafe Council. For the areas affected by the Camp fire, NRCS was allowed to provide assistance for work conducted inside of the private defensible space.

In addition, Director Aseltine Neilson asked about funding opportunities for a group of eight or more landowners who would like to develop a "firewise community." Andrew Lee indicated that NRCS can assist landowners with fuels reduction work that is not associated with commercial timber work and is outside of the landowner's defensible space. He has not seen a successful group application; the reasons for this vary. It is possible for a group of landowners to apply through the EQIP Forest Lands fund pool; however, NRCS cannot fund all the applications and the application pool area is large, so competition is high.

Director Fildes also asked whether NRCS keeps a list of entities that do fuel reduction such as mastication. He was contacted by an individual who is interested in doing such work. Andrew Lee indicated that he does not keep such a list. The local NRCS offices may keep such a list although the NRCS cannot make specific recommendations. If we provide him with the contact information, he can pass it along to the local NRCS offices in case they do keep such lists.

I. Partner Reports

Sutter County RCD

The Sutter RCD Project Manager provided an update on joint Sutter County RCD-YCRCRD actions. Sutter County RCD has their upcoming Mulching and Orchard Sanitation Hub event on December 14th. The Project Manager also mentioned that the State Speak Off competition that will be held Thursday, December 16th, via zoom. All the other projects are going along as planned. Lastly, she notified the Board that the CalRecycle project has been funded and will be starting soon.

J. Financial Report

The current balance in the YCRCRD accounts is \$19,096.26. Director Lindman had a question about why the cost for the renewal of QuickBooks (\$860) was so much. Director Fildes reported that last year's QuickBooks purchase was a special deal and the current renewal was the only deal that he was able to get (as the RCD does not qualify for some of the specials for non-profits, etc.). Director Lindman indicated that it would be worth it to see if there are other options. The Sutter County Project Manager reported that they do not pay that much and that she would check on what QuickBook's option they have. (The Sutter County Project Manager reported later in the conversation that SCRCRD's expenditure for QuickBooks is about \$12.50 per month.)

Director Fildes mentioned that the Yuba RCD should be receiving a reimbursement soon from the Yuba Watershed Protection and Fire Safe Council for staff time. He also expressed concern about the timing of payments for the audit and needs assessment. Director Lindman indicated that she will talking to the DOC grant liaison about reimbursement for the Needs Assessment payment. Director Fildes asked about how much we could expect from the CalRecycle grant. Director Lindman indicated the RCD will only realize \$2000 to \$3000 from this grant as there is now staff time being charged to this project. In answer to Director Aseltine Neilson's question, Director Lindman indicated that the Needs Assessment invoices must be paid before requests can be made for reimbursement. There is \$5,000 for this activity in the DOC grant and Yuba Water Agency has approved funding the other \$8,600.

K. Audit Update

Director Fildes reported that Mr. Bane is ready to perform the audit but needs a sign off on the contract. The cost will be about \$3,300 for each year. Director Fildes will find out the timeframe for the billing of this work. The Board then discussed whether the audit should be postponed given the potential timeline for revenue and expenditures. The Board decided to postpone the decision about the audit timing until the January board meeting.

L. Website Update

Director Aseltine Neilson had no update on the website.

M. Virtual Meetings Update

Because the YCRCRD regular board meeting will occur more than 30 days from this meeting, the YCRCRD board will need to hold a special board meeting prior to the regular board meeting to approve a new resolution for holding virtual board meetings. The Board

members agreed that a special board meeting will be held on January 7th, 2022, at 09:30 and at this time the Board can address not only this virtual board meeting resolution, but also approve Director Lindman's signing of the contract with the auditor.

N. Firewise Pamphlet of Booklet Development

Director Aseltine Neilson asked the board members to look at the examples she provided in the Board packet. She has talked to Randy Fletcher about the booklet and is planning to have a call with Randy and Allison Thomson of the YWPFSC about this booklet development.

O. Draft 2022 Workplan and Budget Discussion

Director Aseltine Neilson indicated that Gurveen is putting together some information on the joint SCRCO and YCRCO projects and Gurveen then mentioned that she will be able to put that information together by the next meeting. Director Aseltine Neilson also has the revised DOC grant workplan and budget that Director Lindman provided, and she will add in the information on the Needs Assessment and audit as well as the re-occurring budget items.

P. Project Updates

Regarding the Needs Assessment, Director Lindman is providing Amy Stork with YCRCO background materials. Director Aseltine Neilson will look through the old YCRCO materials to see if the previous boards developed any bylaws. Amy Stork plans to conduct individual interviews with Board members (internal stakeholders) and with a couple of key external stakeholders (including Randy Fletcher and Allison Thomson), and then hold three or more focus groups (with up to 6 people), one of which will consist of board members and staff from the SCRCO. Amy Stork also plans to set up a retreat with YCRCO board members. She needs to know whether the Board prefers to hold this retreat in person or hold it virtually. The board decided that a virtual retreat is fine. Director Lindman will contact Amy Stork to let her know the Board's decision. Director Lindman also indicated that Amy Stork will be reaching out to the Board to set up times for the individual interviews. Director Lindman will forward Amy Stork's Needs Assessment overview email to the Board and to Gurveen Dhillon.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Board President covered the Needs Assessment effort under the Project Update agenda item.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Because of the need to adjourn the meeting around 11 AM, the Board decided to push any Director's comments and reports to the next board meeting. As noted above, the Board decided to have a special board meeting on January 07, 2022 at 9:30am, so this meeting will include a discussion of agenda items for the January regular board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 A.M.