

Minutes of the Calaveras Resource Conservation District (RCD)

Regular Board Meeting

August 5, 2021

423 Saint Charles St, San Andreas, CA

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by S. Beckman-President @ 6:00 pm

Board Members & Staff Present: S. Beckman-President; B. Dubois; K. Hafley; K. Lambert; M. Robie; G. Long-Executive Director; Dana Simpson-Staff Accountant; Mary Cole-Admin, Jill Micheau – Grant Manager

Board Members & Staff Absent: None

Others Present: Kaylee Dillashaw; Jesse Fowler

Public Comment: None.

Partners: Ag Commissioner, Jesse Fowler reported on the crop report being finalized. Grape harvest will be early this year. NRCS, Bobette Parson submitted her report.

Consent Agenda Items:

1. Approval of 6/3/21 Minutes. Board Action – **K. Lambert made motion to approve, M. Robie second. On a 5-0-0 vote, minutes were approved.**
2. Approval of June/July 2021 Finance Reports – **K. Lambert made motion to approve, M. Robie second. On a 5-0-0 vote, financials were approved.**

Old Business:

1. Review and Approve Audit – David Farnsworth, CPA (via telephone) gave a presentation of his audit process and findings. After many hours reviewing documents and meeting with D. Simpson and G. Long, his opinion was unmodified with NO indications of fraud, difficulties with management, nor abuse or wasteful spending. **K. Lambert made motion to approve the Audit and Annual Financial Reports, M. Robie second. On a 5-0-0 vote, Reports were approved.**
2. Approve 2021-2022 Budget – After a review of the budget by D. Simpson, **K. Lambert made motion to approve the proposed Budget as presented, M. Robie second. On a 5-0-0 vote, budget was approved.**
3. Update on Cal Fire Murphys to Forest Meadows Fuel Break Grant: G. Long reported that work on the Darby Unit is completed. Did a walk-through with CalFire to review the quality of the work. Everyone was quite pleased. G. Long met with Noah, a reporter from Calaveras Enterprise, for a story on this work. G. Long will organize a field trip for the board to see the property. J. Micheau added that for the next two units to be done, RFPs are going out on August 23. Depending on weather, we should be able to start work in about six weeks.
4. Update on current grant applications– K. Dillashaw reported on her submission of a SNC application last May but was denied for lack of enough ROEs. She will resubmit after more ROEs are received.

G. Long submitted a new CALFIRE grant application for a project near Pine Mountain Lake through Tuolumne RCD. He also noted some future projects to work on:

- Fuels reduction work on a 2,000 acre area of brush in the Ross Drive area of Valley Springs. The sponsor is Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District.

- Talks have started on a vegetation management project in the Mokelumne Hill area.
- Identifying a potential project for a fuel break and replanting of ponderosa in the Butte Fire scar.

New Business:

1. Change Meeting Date & Time – S. Beckman first asked if the Board would vote to change the meeting date to the second Thursday of the month. **K. Hafley made motion to approve the proposed date change, M. Robie second. On a 5-0-0 vote, date change was approved.** Then S. Beckman asked if the Board would vote to change the meeting time to something a little later to accommodate members’ work schedules. After some discussion, it was voted to change the start time to 6:30 pm. **K. Hafley made motion to approve the time change, M. Robie second. On a 5-0-0 vote, time change was approved.**
2. Discussion on Building Sale – K. Hafley reported he spoke with Brent Jolley, an attorney from Stockton who specializes in government transactions. He charges \$350/hr. and does not require a retainer. It was suggested that all pertaining documents get sent to him for review and then a committee of Hafley, Robie and Beckman schedule a meeting with him. S. Beckman will forward documentation of efforts so far. And K. Hafley will set up a meeting.
3. Discuss Ross Drive project – This was previously discussed in Item 4 of Old Business.

Reports:

1. Committee Reports – None.
2. Other Items for Consideration – None.
3. Board Member announcements – S. Beckman spoke with Scott Oneto and JoLynn Miller to discuss the rental agreement for UCCE increasing the rent to \$.65/sq ft. They agreed to determine how they would fund this increase and report back to CCRCD.

K. Hafley reported sharing a board appointment application with a rancher from Mountain Ranch.
4. Staff announcements – M. Cole reported on the increase of 119 new Facebook Followers since she started posting to it. As of 8/5/21 we have 471 total Followers.

Adjournment of meeting. Meeting adjourned @ 7:30 pm.

Next meeting will be newly scheduled for **Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 6:30 pm.**

Attest:

President, Sid Beckman _____

Date _____

Secretary, Brady Dubois _____

Date _____



CALAVERAS COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
PO Box 1041 • 423 E. St Charles St. • San Andreas, CA 95249
info@CalaverasRCD.org

9/9/2021

Governor Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814
leg.unit@gov.ca.gov

RE: SB 332 (Dodd); Request for signature

Dear Governor Newsom:

Calaveras County Resource Conservation District is writing this letter to request that you sign SB332. By reforming the liability standard for prescribed burners in California, this legislation will remove a major disincentive that currently prevents highly trained prescribed fire practitioners from applying ‘good fire’ to the landscape. The liability protections provided through SB332 will increase our collective ability to treat fuels, protect communities, restore habitats, and work toward a more resilient future with fire in California. The need for prescribed fire is more clear than ever, and we can no longer afford to delay these kinds of essential policy changes.

Under current law, private prescribed fire practitioners and cultural burners can be billed for fire suppression costs associated with prescribed fire, in the rare instance that something goes wrong and additional crews or equipment are needed to contain a burn project. State and federal practitioners are immune to such costs for their projects, but private practitioners personally bear that burden even while their projects provide public benefit. While less than 1% of prescribed fires escape their intended burn area and property damage and personal injuries are even more rare, concerns over *potential* liability nevertheless severely disincentivize the application of prescribed fire. If we want to increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire projects in California, we need to assure well-trained private practitioners that the state is a solid partner and supporter of their work. We know that the state and federal agencies can’t tackle these complex problems on their own.

SB 332 would apply a ‘gross negligence’ liability standard to private practitioners, holding them liable only for suppression costs resulting from reckless or willful misconduct. There is little reason to believe that this change in law would increase prescribed fire escapes or costs, particularly because the gross negligence standard would only apply to projects and practitioners using best management practices, under review by highly qualified, well-trained prescribed fire professionals certified as burn bosses under a curriculum developed by the State Fire Marshal. But the benefits of the gross negligence standard would be monumental, addressing perceived liability and supporting the partners who are doing this critical work, potentially improving access to liability insurance, increasing the state’s wildfire resilience through preventative application of ‘good fire,’ and expanding the suite of ecological benefits that prescribed fire provides.

We urge you to sign this bill, which had full bipartisan support in the legislature and no opposition, and rallied incredible support from groups as diverse as the California Cattlemen’s Association, the Karuk Tribe, and Defenders of Wildlife, among dozens of other community groups, tribes, fire safe councils, academics, and others. With your support of this bill, you will make a lasting impact on the future of prescribed fire in California.

Sincerely,

Sid Beckman, President
Calaveras County Resource Conservation District



CALAVERAS COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

PO Box 1041 • 423 E. St Charles St. • San Andreas, CA 95249

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9/9/2021

Governor Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814
leg.unit@gov.ca.gov

Re: AB 642 (Friedman); Request for signature

Dear Governor Newsom:

We are writing to notify you that Calaveras County Resource Conservation District strongly supports AB 642, which will protect Californians living in high fire hazard areas by making various changes to increase cultural burning and prescribed fire and improve fire prevention. We urge you to sign this important bill and help California move toward a more fire resilient future.

On January 8, 2021, the Governor's Forest Management Task Force (Task Force) released a comprehensive action plan to reduce wildfire risk for vulnerable communities, improve the health of forests and wildlands, and accelerate action to combat climate change. The Task Force's action plan, among other things, called for expanding the use of prescribed fire and cultural burning. The Task Force's action plan also called for the support of community wildfire risk reduction. AB 642 will assist in implementing these portions of the Forest Management Task Force action plan.

AB642 includes a number of critical actions around prescribed fire and fire prevention, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Requires development of a proposal for a prescribed fire training center in California, in collaboration with a wide range of partners;
- Requires CAL FIRE to consider availability of non-departmental contingency resources when making decisions on whether to issue prescribed fire permits;
- Takes steps to improve retention on dedicated fuels crews, and requires outreach to tribal communities for employment on those crews;
- Requires creation of a Cultural Burning Liaison at CAL FIRE;
- Requires CAL FIRE to respect tribal sovereignty, customs, and culture when engaging with tribes, tribal organizations, and cultural practitioners;
- Requires CAL FIRE to improve and update wildfire severity maps.

We believe California must take bold action to become more fire resilient and reduce the damage caused by high-severity wildfires. AB642 includes a powerful set of actions to set California on a better trajectory for living with fire in the future. For these reasons, Calaveras County Resource Conservation District strongly supports AB 642 and urges your signature on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Sid Beckman, President