

Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

9481 El Camino Real, Atascadero, CA 93422 | 805.460.7272 | www.us-ltrcd.org

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes April 27, 2023 Atascadero, CA

- I. Call to Order, 4:01pm by Mary Bianchi.
Attendance
Board Directors: Mary Bianchi, Treasurer; Tom Mora, Director; Randy Heinzen, Director; Dolores Howard, Director;
Staff: Devin Best, Executive Director; Amy Smart, Program Manager; Spencer Gordon, Project Manager; Eli Grinberg, Conservation Technician; Hailey Leurck;
NRCS District Conservationist: Hilary Philips;
Public: In Person- John Gee (CalFire), Dave Erickson (CalFire); Via Zoom- Dan Turner (SLO Fire Safe Council), David Pearson (Cambria Fire Safe), Jeff Wilson (Greenspace), Lara Rachowicz (Ascent Environmental), Heather Blair (Ascent Environmental), Nicole Greenfield (Ascent Environmental), Crosby Swartz (Cambria Forest Committee), Michael Thomas (CCSD), Steve Auten (Auten Resource Consulting), Riley McFarland (ARC).
- II. Additions/Changes to the Agenda (Gov. Code 54954.2(B)): Cambria Project Specific Analysis moved to item IV.a. Item VII.c. moved to after presentation. Item IV.e. removed, board to take action on ALAB nomination.
- III. Public Comment:
- IV. RCD Reports
 - a. Cambria Project Specific Analysis: Spencer Gordon- PowerPoint presentation available on RCD website. Provided overview of fire history, CalVTP, Coastal Zone, regulatory compliance, PWP, Coastal VTS, PSAs. June 7th Coastal Commission meeting to review PSAs. Opened floor to questions; Dolores Howard- questions about cultural resources, air quality, tribal outreach conducted, responses received, highlighted importance of building relationships with tribes, discussed native plant retention recommendations by CNPS. SG responded- working under AQRCB requirements to monitor air quality, discussed controlled burn vs uncontrolled burn, tribal and archeological surveys will be conducted, projects designed to minimize ground disturbance. Heather Blair commented- Ascent preparers of statewide PEIR, conservatively addressed impacts as substantial evidence required to reduce impacts to less than significant in CEQA, robust impact avoidance measures included. Randy Heinzen- question regarding process if artifact is discovered. CalFire responded/commented- outlined standard operating procedures for archeological resources. RH commented process is more aggressive in PSA compared to agricultural requirements. SG responded to biological component of DH question- CNPS retention comments and suggested standards, discussed buffer zones, live trees to remain, mimic fire regime, discussed differing views of forest health and management. Tom Mora- question about implementation timing. SG-Spring to fall prepare piles, burn piles in winter. TM- comment to exercise utmost care to preserve environment, public image, relationships with landowners. John Gee response- Described fire watch daily and weather watch. TM- Question about cost. SG- total grant cost for RCD and monthly treasurers report provide transparency, Dan Turner mentioned CA Climate Investment funds utilized for the project. DH- How will the public be made aware of project? SG- Agency reports, CalFire reporting, coordinate site visits when feasible. Dave Erickson- Social media outreach on burn days via CalFire, residential notification



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process. Crosby Swartz- Cambria Forest Committee received response to comments however feels concerns not sufficiently addressed, discussion on removal of healthy pine trees and forest health, wind increased, carbon sequestration slowed, pile burning emissions. SG- acknowledged ideologies at odds regarding forest health, best available science, work collaboratively to address greater needs of community. Jeff Wilson- concerned about project reporting requirements, unclear who at project proponent level decides if/when mitigation measure action is taken, clarify process, include broader input. SG- agrees transparency should be prioritized, discretion of a Registered Professional Forester, Lara Rachowicz- comment on intention of phases during process development, language comes from Public Works Plan that remains in effect for 10 years, first phase is the initial treatment. Devin Best- Closing comment on importance of PSAs and PWP as only reasonable process to permit forest management work within the Coastal Zone, iterative process. Mary Bianchi- DB will sign resolution should Board approve.

- i. RH motion to approve Hearst Ranch PSA, TM seconds motion;

Tom Mora, Yes

Dolores Howard, Abstain

Mary Bianchi, Yes

Randy Heinzen, Yes

- ii. RH motion to approve Rancho Marino PSA, TM seconds motion;

Tom Mora, Yes

Dolores Howard, Abstain

Mary Bianchi, Yes

Randy Heinzen, Yes

- b. Board Updates: RH provided update on new role in Paso Robles GSA recycled water TAC.
- c. Executive Director Report: DB reviewed report distributed prior to meeting, update on BRAE biochar project.
- d. Board member Secretary and Vice Chair, vacancies, and survey – Amy Smart reviewed need for Board member recruitment, requested outstanding surveys.
- e. Finance Officer discussion- support needed to build RCD capacity to track and report finances, MB reviewed previous minutes to determine previous direction given by Board, RH discussed previous bookkeeping issues, reduced liability with contract position vs internal hire, suggests consultant. DB will move forward with securing finance officer consultant.

V. Consent:

- a. Approval of regular meeting minutes (distributed prior to meeting)
- b. Approval of treasurer's reports (distributed prior to meeting)
 - i. TM motion to approve, DH seconds. MB yes, DH yes, TM yes, RH abstain (not present at meeting)

VI. Other Agency, Director, and Association Reports

- a. NRCS Report- Hilary Phillips: new programs coming to NRCS, more information forthcoming.
- b. WRAC: DH attended meeting, information on WRAC website.
- c. ALAB: No report.

VII. Board Action Items

- a. Executive Director Salary: Mary Bianchi – discussion on merit pay increases have been historically addressed, previous 18 months challenging, increases in salary should be merit based. DH question about yearly work plan, discussion on job descriptions. RH suggests merit evaluation later in the year, MB suggested July to coincide with staff evaluations, discussion



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ensued. RH motion for MB to put together an Executive Director workplan for review in July, all Board members present in favor.

- b. ALAB Nomination: RH nominates MB to ALAB, all Board members present in favor.
- c. Climate Action Plan Grant Resolution: Read aloud by DB, DH moves to approve, all Board members present in favor.

VIII. Agenda Setting

- a. Next board meeting in May
- b. Finance Subcommittee scheduling, no action taken, review budget at May meeting.
- c. Willow Creek
- d. Pending violation of labor code

~~IX. Closed Session~~

- X. Adjournment: 6:04 pm. Next meeting is May 25, 2023 at 4pm.