

Fall River Resource Conservation District

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Meeting Minutes Fall River RCD
Special Board Meeting
Nov 27, 2018, at 12:00 pm

Establish Quorum: , Bill Buckman [X], Clay Jacobson [X],
Don Martin [X], Mike Millington [X], Pat Oilar [], Jeff Oldson []

Staff: Sharmie Stevenson [X], Todd Sloat [X], Garrett Costello [], Julie Allen [X],
Sara Small [X]

Call To Order: 12:02 pm

Public Comment: None

New Business: Island Ranch Project

Peter Colby, Western Rivers Conservancy made a presentation on the Island Ranch Project, a proposal for Western Rivers Conservancy to purchase Island Ranch then grant fee title of the property to the Fall River RCD. The Fall River RCD would then undertake long term management for recreation, restoration and agricultural production. Funding for the acquisition would most likely come from state funding sources.

Don Martin brought up the previous attempt by the State Department of Fish & Game to purchase the property and the objections from the surrounding property owners to the purchase. Primary objections were 1. uncontrolled number of watercraft on the river 2. uncontrolled types of watercraft on the river and the devastating effect on the fragile river ecosystem. A third objection pertained to the DFG poor track record in managing properties and lack of funding for maintenance.

Other subjects discussed were riparian water rights, surface water rights and groundwater rights and the necessity of determining any or all that applied to Island Ranch. What restrictions might come with public funding that would effect long-term management of the property. What would the maintenance costs be especially considering the levee system.

Dale Kroschel, NRCS, said that a priority project for the Island Ranch was the leveling of the north field and converting an irrigation ditch to pipe to prevent water quality issues.

Prior to today's meeting, Mike Millington talked with John Ranlett, Ducks Unlimited. Ranlett provided maps and descriptions of two shovel ready projects engineered by Ducks Unlimited but not started due to lack of funding. One project was for strengthening the levee along the Tule River. The second project was for the restoration of approximately 250 acres of wetlands. Ducks Unlimited would be willing to resurrect both projects if the Fall River RCD were to take fee title of Island Ranch.

The Board discussed the issue of how to best manage public access keeping in mind the necessity for the protection of the fragile ecosystem of the river. One method would put access on a reservation system similar to State Parks and Refuges. It would also be necessary to restrict types of watercraft allowed on the river system.

The necessity of maintaining a revenue stream, to pay for maintenance, through continued agriculture, developing current lodging facilities, fishing access and hunting activities was discussed.

It was the consensus of the Board to join Western Rivers Conservancy in the Island Ranch Project by providing support for acquisition grants, Accepting fee title of Island Ranch, and undertaking long term management for recreation, restoration, and agricultural production.

Executive Director, Sharmie Stevenson, will be the project point person and contact for Peter Colby. The first items of business will be to write a letter of support from the RCD and fill out a step one application with DWR Integrated Regional Water Management Group.

Mike Millington asked for consensus of the Board to add two items to the agenda, 1. election of board officers, 2. approval of grant resolutions.

There was no consensus of the Board to elect new officers, therefore Mike Millington remains President and Bill Buckman Vice President.

Sharmie Stevenson explained the necessity of collaboration with the Pit RCD on the DOC Grant. Todd Sloat said both he and Jeff Oldson were writing grants that would require resolutions too. It was the consensus of the board to approve 3 resolutions, one for each of the three grants authorizing submission of the grants. 1. DOC grant with the Pit RCD to provide a watershed coordinator to cover both districts, 2. grant application for Cal Fire funds for forest health, and 3. grant application for Cal Fire funds for fire prevention.

The board decided that with no new business on the horizon and the Christmas Holidays upon us, to cancel the December regular Board meeting. The next meeting is on January 16, 2019 at 7:00 pm

Adjourned: 1:32pm

