

CARSON WATER SUBCONSERVANCY DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND
CARSON RIVER WATERSHED COMMITTEE MEETING
October 16, 2019, 6:30 P.M.

Minutes

Chairman Erquiaga called the meeting of the Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD) to order at 6:30 p.m. in the NAI Alliance Conference Room, 1000 N. Division St., Ste. 202, Carson City. Roll call of the CWSD Board was taken and a quorum was determined to be present.

CWSD Directors present:

Brad Bonkowski, Treasurer
Carl Erquiaga, Chairman
Ken Gray, Directors
Barry Penzel, Director
Fred Stodieck, Director
Steve Thaler, Vice Chairman
Larry Walsh, Director
Mike Workman, Director

Absent CWSD Directors: Stacey Giomi, Jack Jacobs & Ernie Schank.

Roll call of the Caron River Watershed Committee was taken which included CWSD Directors and Committee Members present, David Griffith, Don Jardine & Austin Osborne.

Others present:

Sally Champion, US Forest Service
Julie Fair, American Rivers
Shane Fryer, CWSD Watershed Program Specialist
Brenda Hunt, CWSD Watershed Program Manager
Edwin James, CWSD General Manager
Patrick King, CWSD Attorney
Mo Loden, Alpine Watershed Group
Debbie Neddenriep, CWSD Water Resource Specialist II
Catrina Schambra, CWSD Administrative Assistant/Secretary to the Board
Matt Zumstein, US Forest Service

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Erquiaga.

Item #4 – Discussion Only: Public Comment – None

Item #5 – For Possible Action: Approval of Agenda

Director Thaler made the motion to approve the agenda, moving Item #13 to in between Items #9 and #10 as requested by presenter. The motion was seconded by Director Bonkowski and unanimously approved by the Board.

Item #6 – For Possible Action: Approval of the Board Meeting Minutes of Sept. 18, 2019

Committee Member Osborne made the motion to approve the Board Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2019 as presented. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Griffith and approved by the Board 11-0-3. Director Gray, Chairman Erquiaga and Committee Member Jardine abstained due to absence.

CONSENT AGENDA

Item # 7 - For Possible Action: Approval of Treasurer’s Report for September 2019

Item # 8 - For Possible Action: Approval of Payment of Bills for September 2019

Treasurer Bonkowski made a motion to approve Consent Agenda Items #7 and #8 as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Gray and unanimously approved by the Board.

****END OF CONSENT AGENDA****

Item #9 – For Possible Action: Presentation by US Forest Service regarding the proposal of introduction of Beavers in Faith Valley to enhance wetlands

Mr. James introduced Matt Zumstein, the new US Forest Service District Ranger in Carson and Sally Champion, Sierra Zone Hydrologist to begin their presentation.

Ms. Champion introduced Julie Fair of American Rivers, who is also present to answer any questions. First of all, she wants to make clear that the intent is NOT to introduce new beaver to the area. That is a misconception. The intent is to enhance the habitat for the existing beaver in Faith Valley.

Faith Valley on the West Fork is in a degraded condition and bank erosion is steep in some areas. This area has been on the USFS radar for years and they have been working with American Rivers to upgrade and improve vegetation and habitat and raise water table for more late-season flow. USFS has looked at lots of ideas for ways to improve this area. It was proposed that they do project similar to what was done in Hope Valley. They did complete one section, but it was labor intensive and did not have the desired outcome. As a result, the “Beaver Dam Analogs” (BDA) project was proposed. This project is to mimic beaver work by retaining sediment. The primary purpose is to restore the channel with the beaver’s help, and to get increase to ground water level in the meadow.

Julie Fair mentioned that Beaver Dam Analogs are to enhance local conditions which were blown out in the 2017 floods. The project is to help the dams be stronger and thus help both Beaver and channels.

Ms. Champion stresses they are at the earliest phase of the proposed action. Tonight’s meeting is considered part of the scoping phase of the project. USFS is sharing information to interested parties at this time.

Patrick King asks if beavers don’t move in, will the dams still work? Ms. Champion answers maybe. He asks, is the objective to increase the beaver population? No, she says; it is to improve the habitat area and to increase meadow surface water.

Director Penzel wonders why we are having to make the beaver’s work unnatural, can’t we just let the beaver do their thing? Do we have lazy beavers?

Ms. Fair explains that they are working to reverse over 100 years of degradation; heavy grazing, road constructions, culverts and increased flows that have made the system unnatural. This project is trying to bring Faith Valley back to its natural state.

Director Thaler asks how long it will take. Ms. Fair says no timetable has been set.

Ms. Fair mentioned that they have been monitoring the water flow and sediment in the river.

Director Thaler asks about the consequences of doing nothing and what if these BDAs blow out too? Ms. Champion responds, the BDAs are more durable and should be more resistant to blowing out. To do nothing alternative invites further erosion of the area. Another concern is that the Willow Flycatcher is no longer in the meadow because the water level has dropped so low. Restoring the meadow will enhance the Willow Flycatcher habitat.

Director Gray asks who will maintain the BDAs? Ms. Champion says they are working on more flexibility in the structures so that maintenance is easier. For example, the posts would be semi-permanent, so they would remain if the dam was blown out, and the beaver could build the dams again.

Committee Member Griffith asks if the USFS is required to have an EIS completed by an independent party prior to beginning the project. Ms. Champion answers yes, but they are still in the early stages. The hope is for a decision to move forward by May 2020 on this proposal. Committee Member Griffith says he read a conceptual report last year that stated if you were to raise the water level there would be an increase in stream flow. He would like to read the actual study and Ms. Fair said she will email it to CWSD. Ms. Champion reminds him that that target is more of changing the timing of the flow throughout the year, rather than increasing the flow. He also asks, regarding long-term maintenance, (1) would it matter whether it was maintained once installed; and (2) is the Willow Flycatcher being gone more an effect of climate change? Ms. Fair has studies that answer both those questions that she will forward to CWSD. Committee Member Griffith announces that a Beaver expert, Shelby Blair will be at the Alpine County meeting in November to discuss this topic.

Director Penzel says he hasn't heard anything about the effect on the downstream neighbors. Ms. Champion says this project should not change the volume of water downstream, just the timing of the flow. Ms. Fair says they are open to stream flow monitoring and would like to coordinate this project with CWSD.

Committee Member Griffith asks about the phases of the project. Ms. Champion estimates that it would be 2-3 years, but must consider logistics, etc.

Mr. James says the meadow does need work. It is not functioning like it did in the past. CWSD just recently released water from Lost Lakes and we did not see a big impact downstream, but there is concern that if there are many beaver dams during irrigation releases it could be detrimental to this process. Ms. Fair says she welcomes these questions and is willing to research our concerns.

Mr. James asks what if the beavers over-populate? Ms. Fair says they seem to self-regulate based on food sources.

Committee Member Osborne wonders if the beavers are native to the area? He had heard that the beaver in the area are different and bigger than the beaver in the past. Ms. Champion says she is not sure. Committee Member Griffith asks about historical data available about local Beaver populations. Ms. Fair has this data and will forward it to CWSD.

Director Erquiaga asks if there will be another opportunity to discuss this issue prior to the final decision on the project. Ms. Champion assures CWSD that more public opportunity will be available before any decision is final.

No action was taken.

Item #13 – For Discussion Only: Presentation on the Watershed Literacy Program

Shane Fryer and Brenda Hunt presented the latest version of the I AM CARSON WATER campaign video, showed the stickers that will be distributed to the community during the launch in November & December and said they are looking at other funding sources to get more stickers. This is the first step in the community education campaign. Next year we may enter a float for the Nevada Day parade! Director Stodieck suggests

AG in the Classroom as a great outreach program to partner on this project. Ms. Hunt also described the plan for “Watershed Moments” as the next video in the series.

No action was taken.

Item #10 – For Possible Action: Authorize General Manager to sign the Agreement with JE Fuller regarding Ruhenstroth ADMP in an amount not to exceed \$124,451

Mr. James explains that Items #10-11 are funded through FEMA MAS 10. Mr. James explained the projects and asks for authority to sign the agreements, starting with JE Fuller for the Ruhenstroth ADMP project.

Director Penzel states his concerns that project priorities are decided by staff and not brought directly to the policy makers in his county. He would have suggested a different direction in this case. Mr. James explained the current process in selecting the studies. Every February CWSD staff meets with the county staff to set priorities for projects in the coming year. Director Penzel suggests CWSD can set a policy in the future that requires recommendations for county projects must be approved by their Board of Commissioners, prior to any funds being spent. This brought a robust discussion by the Board members. Director Thaler had concerns having individual commissioners and supervisors deciding what flood studies should be pursued. Director Penzel gave a history on the last project including the litigation involved. Director Penzel trusts Mr. James expertise in recommending the project move forward. The consensus was that this study was a necessary requirement by FEMA to move forward. The biggest expense is getting the LiDAR data. We want to get the LiDAR done before snow falls. The scope of the project can be modified if needed.

Director Thaler made a motion to authorize the General Manager to sign the Agreement with JE Fuller regarding Ruhenstroth ADMP in an amount not to exceed \$124,451. The motion was seconded by Director Gray and unanimously approved by the Board.

Item #11 – For Possible Action: Authorize General Manager to sign the Agreement with Precision Water Resources Engineering, LLC for Flood Mapping in Churchill County in an amount not to exceed \$27,770

Mr. James explained that this project was recommended by Churchill County staff to remap the floodplain below Lahontan Reservoir. The original flood mapping was done in the 1970’s. To calculate the hydrology, it was proposed that we use the Riverware model instead of the stream gauge. The main reason to use Riverware is the change in the Lahontan Reservoir operation over the past 30 years. The flows out of Lahontan Reservoir depend on how much water is being stored. The Flood Mapping is estimated at \$280,000 and would be Phase 2. The LiDAR is already done from the dam all the way to Stillwater.

Director Walsh made a motion to authorize the General Manager to sign the Agreement with Precision Water Resources Engineering, LLC for Flood Mapping in Churchill County in an amount not to exceed \$27,770. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Jardine and unanimously approved by the Board.

Item #12 – For Possible Action: Authorize General Manager to sign the Agreement with Kimley-Horn for Flood Mitigation Plan for the West Side of Carson City in an amount not to exceed \$148,000

Mr. James talked about the project and explained that the Agreement is a Kimley-Horn produced document and reminded the Board that he is working with Patrick King, Catrina Schambra, and Committee Member David Griffith to standardize our agreements/contracts to be used in the future.

Director Bonkowski made a motion to authorize the General Manager to sign the Agreement with Kimley-Horn for Flood Mitigation Plan for the West Side of Carson City in an amount not to exceed \$148,000. The motion was seconded by Director Gray and unanimously approved by the Board.

Item #14 – For Discussion Only: Presentation of the 2019 Water Year

Item #15 – For Discussion Only: Update on Lost Lakes

Director Stodieck made a motion to table Item #14 and Item #15 due to computer issues. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Jardine and unanimously approved by the Board. These items will be placed on the November Board meeting agenda.

Item #16 – For Discussion Only: Staff Reports –

Mr. James reported the following:

- There will be a modification to the Budget which will be brought to the November meeting. We are in the middle of the FY2018-19 audit now.
- The 2nd Leviathan Mine Tour is scheduled for October 24. Meet in Markleeville at 9am for a 3-hour tour. Director Gray says he'd like to attend.

Brenda Hunt reported the following:

- Annual "Snapshot Day" is October 18. The event includes local 4th Grade and High School students. A total of 11 sites along the Carson River (near USGS gauges) will be sampled. These samples are sent to the lab for analysis and literally give a snapshot of the health of the Carson on that given day and time. It is a valuable tool for data collection and a great day of fun on the river for the kids!
- CWSD will host a Carson River Seminar at WNC next week – October 23 in Marlette Hall from 1-4pm. She distributed flyer and invite everyone to attend.

Legal – Patrick King discussed the proposed standardized language we want in our contracts.

Correspondence – None

No action was taken.

Item #17– For Discussion Only: Directors Reports –

Director Walsh:

- Regarding the Centerville/88 Slaughterhouse proposal, he wonders if this is something we want to be involved in? Mr. James responded that it is in the Floodplain area and there are regulations in place. NDEP would be the lead agency dealing with water quality issues.

Director Workman:

- Regarding ADMP, as an ex-staff person he'd like to mention that having a tool like this is important. It provides a road map of where you are going. Studies are frustrating and seem redundant. He has seen presentations, but when do we see action on identified needs? Simply put, things validated by staff reports of studies never get started. This is very frustrating. Mr. James says this is a good point: We give the counties some great tools. But we can't make the counties implement the tools to move forward with projects. Director Bonkowski believes that political pressure from the various counties is needed to start implementing projects. Director Thaler agrees.

No action was taken.

Item #18 – For Discussion Only: Update on activities in Alpine County –

Committee Member Griffith reported the following:

- The Alpine Biomass Committee will meet Nov. 5 at 6pm at Turtle Rock Park hosted by the CA Division of Fish & Wildlife. They will discuss the impact of beavers in the area.
- Committee Members Griffith & Jardine attended the Leviathan Tour. There were lots of people in attendance, but there seemed to be no urgency to fix the site. They are looking at maybe 2025.

- Caples Lake was a prescribed burn. It was a low intensity burn under control that grew to a wildfire. There is an app for your phone, called “Smoke Sense” to keep up on the progress.

Committee Member Jardine reported the following:

- The Caples fire is now 40% contained.
- The Washoe Tribal Veterans requested a Veteran’s Memorial Highway along Highway 88. The dedication was yesterday. Committee Member Griffith interjected that it would not have happened without Don Jardine! Kudos to him!

No action was taken.

Item #19 – For Discussion Only: Update on activities in Storey County –

Committee Member Austin Osborne Reported the following:

- Thanks to Debbie Neddenriep for attending the Highlands Mitigation meeting!
- Now working on Phase 2 of the Highlands Project.
- Storey County recently approved the ADMP for the Dayton Valley area. The Mark Twain Project is a priority; several phases are being budgeted for; the residents are happy!
- Updating codes for water use and storm water.

No action was taken.

Item #20 – For Discussion Only: Public Comment – None

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Erquiaga adjourned the meeting at 8:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catrina Schambra
Secretary to the Board