

**Board Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2007**

**Board of Supervisor's Chambers
Eric W. Rood Administrative Center
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959**



I. Call to Order

Chairman Chrisman called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM.

II. Roll Call

Present: Louis Boitano, John Brissenden, Mike Chrisman, Brian Dahle, Byng Hunt, Allen Ishida, Bob Kirkwood, John Lloyd, BJ Kirwan, Byron Sher, Robert Weygandt, Kim Yamaguchi, Mike Chapel, Bill Haigh, and Steve Schackelton

Absent: Carol Whiteside

III. Approval of July 26, 2007 Meeting Minutes

There were no changes to the Meeting Minutes.

Action: Boardmember Boitano moved and Boardmember Kirkwood seconded a motion to approve the July 26, 2007 Board Meeting Minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Boardmember Brissenden abstained from voting due to his absence from the July meeting.

IV. Public Comments (non-agenda items)

There were no public comments.

V. Chairman's Report

a. SNSIT

Chairman Mike Chrisman asked Executive Officer Jim Branham to update the board on recent SNSIT activities. Branham noted that as a follow up to the initial SNSIT meeting, SNC will be holding quarterly meetings with the Wildlife Conversation Board to discuss opportunities for project coordination and collaboration. He also indicated that the SNC is entering into an agreement with the Department of Fish and Game for detailed vegetation mapping for a portion of the Sierra foothill region.

b. Legislative Process

Chairman Chrisman explained that the legislative process is a clearly defined process for state agencies. He asked Branham to explain the process that the SNC follows relating to legislation, noting that Boardmembers Sher and Ishida

raised the issue at the previous meeting. Branham explained the process whereby the SNC coordinates positions on proposed legislation through the Resources Agency and that positions must be approved by the Governor's Office. Chairman Chrisman notes that Resources uses the process to resolve any conflicts between Resource Agency departments. Boardmember Sher asked for clarification on whether this is the process with all Conservancies statewide. Branham stated it is the current practice for the Coastal Conservancy and the Tahoe Conservancy. Chairman Chrisman stated Resources Agency encourages the conservancies to connect with the appropriate legislative staff and keep Agency aware of issues of concern. He indicated that if members of the Board wish for the Conservancy to take a position on legislation they should alert Branham so that it can be placed on the agenda for discussion.

c. Subregional Representatives

Chairman Chrisman stated three Boardmember terms expire on December 31, 2007 and SNC will need written notification of the newly appointed Boardmembers (North Central, South Central and South). Boardmember Yamaguchi stated that the North Central subregion should have a decision by mid-January.

VI. Climate Symposium

Chairman Chrisman commented on a great turnout and complimented staff on the organization of the event, noting the SNC has set a high bar on the types of conversation we need to have on the issue. Chrisman also stated it is a work in progress. With the Global Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) essentially mandating carbon levels, it is important to develop a plan to meet the levels. He noted that AB 32 strives to establish market mechanisms to encourage progress in meeting targets. Chrisman stated he thought starting the symposium off with a visit from John Muir (Lee Stetson) kicked it off on a good note.

Boardmember Kirwan stated she was also pleased with the turn out, asking for clarification on calling it 'climate change' and not global warming. Kirwan noted she thought the conference was set up extremely well, questions were asked by the panel chair and encouraged the audience to speak and she engaged them. In closing, Jim Branham did a fabulous job of chairing it and the staff did a great job pulling it together.

Boardmember Brissenden concurred with Chrisman and Kirwan noting the advance work was amazing and all around a very vibrant and exciting symposium to attend.

Boardmember Kirkwood, stated that panelists did well in staying within the timelines and rather than leading canned presentations, he was pleasantly surprised by the nature of the audience participation.

Public Comment:

Brett Storey, Placer County stated that he and others in attendance appreciated the opportunity to participate in the event and felt it was very informative and beneficial.

Izzy Martin, The Sierra Fund: thanked the SNC for tackling a difficult issue by creating a safe place for everyone to discuss climate change.

Addie Jacobson, Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solution and representing Ebbets Pass Forest Watch: thanked the SNC for “walking the walk” by using biodegradable cups, plates, napkins, and providing shuttles.

The Board discussed next steps with Chairman Chrisman noting that he will ask Deputy Secretary on Climate Change, Tony Brunello, to work with SNC staff to explore the feasibility of creating a climate change action plan for the Sierra Nevada.

VII. Executive Officer’s Report

a. Staff and Budget Update

Branham indicated that he anticipated that the Governor’s Budget would propose full funding for the SNC, including \$17 million in funding from Proposition 84. He stated that the State is facing serious budget challenges, but because the SNC does not have General Fund we have not been directly affected as yet.

Branham informed the Board that a number of new staff had been hired since the last Board meeting, including: Kim Carr, Mt. Whitney Area Manager in the Mariposa Office; Julie Bear, Mt. Whitney Senior Area Representative, Bishop Office; and Brandon Sanders, Mt. Whitney Area Representative, Mariposa Office; Linda Hansen Mt. Lassen Senior Area Representative, Susanville Office; Joan Keegan, Assistant Executive Officer and Angela Avery, Program Coordinator, Auburn Headquarters Office.

Branham gave a brief overview of the status of the grant program, which will be presented in detail to the Board later in the agenda.

Branham indicated that the SNC had been approached by the Sierra Business Council regarding a joint meeting in Mammoth Lakes the first week of October. He recommended that the Board move the September meeting to October 2, 2008 and approve the meeting schedule with that change. A meeting schedule for 2008 was approved by the Board.

b. Permanent Headquarters

Branham discussed the staff report distributed in the board packets stating that staff will initiate the process to identify potential sites soon and anticipates providing the Board with a recommendation at the June Board meeting.

c. 2007-08 Action Plan

Assistant Executive Officer Keegan identified the changes since the July meeting: staff took two of the actions off of the Action Plan by incorporating them into one broad action and changes were made in regards to due dates. She pointed out that the implementation of the grant program had taken a great deal of time and effort, but staff remains committed to making progress on other key Action Plan items. Boardmember Kirkwood noted that the changes to the previously approved Action Plan should require approval by the Board.

Action: Boardmember Dahle moved and Boardmember Kirkwood seconded a motion to approve the revised 2007-08 Action Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Indicators and Performance Measures

Keegan stated the contract for the project has been awarded and a kick off meeting with consultants will occur shortly. The plan is to bring a preliminary list draft measures and indicators to the Board in March with a public comment period to follow the March meeting. The final draft is anticipated to be presented to the Board in June. She indicated that interim measures have been developed for the projects before the Board today. These represent basic reporting requirements for all projects and some specific requirements for each project.

Boardmember Kirkwood expressed concern that the measurement of collaboration and cooperation seemed to have been an ancillary objective and does not recall it in strategic plan or legislation. Noting if it is selected as one of the four fundamental measures then we are saying is more important than our legislative established objectives. Also noting that improved capabilities was explicitly stated as a secondary objective in legislation and it appears this moves those second tier objectives to the first tier and gives them equal weight. Keegan stated these are by not criteria to award grants but things we would like to hear how or if the project touched any part of the established objectives and if it is not applicable then they would state that.

Boardmember Sher underscored how important the performance measures are because we will be judged by how well our funded projects go. He questioned what recourse the SNC has if requirements are not met after the funds are awarded. Branham indicated that much of the funding will be disbursed in the form of reimbursements, ensuring that work is being done. Where advances are used, the SNC will make every effort to ensure that the entity is capable of carrying out the work being funded.

Boardmember Kirkwood suggesting adding language that asks the grantee three questions 1) did you implement the project you described and 2) what were the benefits from it and 3) if you did not do what you said you were going to do, what did you learn that made you change the way you were doing the project. Other Boardmembers concurred and Keegan agreed to add this information per Kirkwood suggestion.

Boardmember Brissenden asked whether staff had consulted with other conservancies or departments in development of the interim measures. Keegan indicated no, but will do so in the development of permanent measures.

Action: Boardmember Brissenden moved and Boardmember Kirkwood seconded a motion to approve the Interim Indicators and Performance Measures with noted changes. The motion passed unanimously.

e. Sierra Nevada Conservancy License Plate Update

Branham informed the Board that staff continues to work with The Sierra Fund In developing a marketing plan for the license plate. The Sierra Fund has hired Velocity 7 as consultants to develop a plan. Izzy Martin, CEO of The Sierra Fund, stated there will be a marketing plan distributed at the March Board meeting. Branham noted the discussions with DMV have been positive and timely.

f. Information Technology Needs Assessment

Bob Kingman informed the Board that the consultant has provided the SNC with the result of their assessment. Staff is currently reviewing the information provided and will be indentifying actions that can be taken. The Board will be updated at a future meeting.

VIII. Deputy Attorney Generals Report:

Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul informed the Board that conflict of interest statements will need to be filed early next year. Most are due on April 1st, with county supervisors' statements due on March 1. Theresa Grace will send information to the Board in January, 2008.

IX. Education and Communications Plan:

AEO Keegan described the development of a 5-year plan and how the Conservancy can increase the understanding of the importance of the Sierra Nevada within the Region and throughout the state. Noting the plan highlights include three primary audiences: inside the Sierra Region; outside the Sierra Region; and Local state and federal decision makers. A consistent set of core messages is included in the plan to be reflected across all program areas and audiences. The plan also outlines specific strategies and tools for each of the three major audiences.

Keegan stated that staff recommends approval of the plan as presented.

Action: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded a motion to approve the Education and Communication Plan with noted changes. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Strategic Opportunity Grants

Branham informed the Board that staff had received 82 applications for \$8,507,774 worth of funding. He indicated that projects which best meet the SNC's mission and the goals of Proposition 84 represent what is being recommended by the staff. Branham commended SNC staff for the hard work and the constant effort to assist applicants.

Branham introduced Bob Sleppy of the Department of General Services who provided the Board with an overview of the CEQA process.

Branham introduced Bob Kingman, Kerri Timmer, and Kim Carr to present the Board with the recommended projects (Board approved project list attached).

Boardmember Kirkwood pointed out that there were a large number of interpretive, educational, visitor center, guidebook publication, and signage projects and has difficulty seeing the relationship to water. He expressed concern about the proportion of these grants versus grants for on the ground work, noting that in some subregions about one-half of their million dollars is going to these types of projects. He pointed out that by June, when we are reviewing our third round of applications, we could find ourselves in a difficult situation.

Kingman pointed out that this first round of Strategic Opportunity Grants (SOGs) included a large number of projects that do not include "on the ground" activities, primarily because of the tight timelines. However, he added that the Competitive Grants will all be used exclusively for on the ground projects and Round 2 of SOGs will likely include a number of such projects.

Kirkwood stated he just wanted to be certain that staff had been thinking about the distribution of funds to cover education type of projects as well as on the ground work.

Boardmember Ishida stated that some of the board members will not be here when the final grant awards are made in 2008. He urged that Board to give the subregions that did not have a large number of projects some time to bring projects forward. He suggested that if a subregion does not receive \$1 million of funding in this year, the funds should "roll over."

Kingman stated that funds not encumbered this fiscal year would need to be reappropriated, so staff is recommending that all available funds are encumbered

by June 30. Branham stated that there could be an adjustment in next year's allocations if necessary to address this issue.

Exhibit A to this document is the list of approved projects.

Action: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded a motion to approve Strategic Opportunity Grants as proposed in Attachment A to the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Public Comment:

Izzy Martin, Sierra Fund: Ms. Martin thanked the Board and the SNC staff and stated that in her 25 years of grant writing she has never encountered such a friendly, open, and simple, but effective process.

Laurie Oberholtzer, Sierra County Land Trust: offered thanks for the grant they received for appraisals and stated there will be acquisitions coming in as a result of the grant.

Stevee Duber, High Sierra Rural Alliance: thanked the SNC staff for all of their assistance and thanked the Board for their consideration.

John Vanderveen: thanked the SNC staff and stated this was by far the most rewarding grant process he had been involved in. He also indicated that the staff was helpful and provided guidance through the process.

Don Ryberg, Chair, Tsi-Akim Maidu Tribal Council: thanked the Board for the opportunity for the tribe to share some of their knowledge and culture.

Tom Esgate, Lassen County Fire Safe Council: thanked the board and staff for their support. He indicated that he knew it had been particularly challenging and that he was sort of the guinea pig for the on the ground work. He thanked staff for overcoming the challenges.

Valerie Klinefelter - Representing CHIPS Project in Calaveras County and Sierra Nevada Alliance: thanked the board for the grant and indicated that training of the chipping crews will begin immediately with the result begin a healthy forest.

Mary Herdegen, Placer County: thanked the staff for the assistance and direction provided.

Steve Kistler, Tuolumne County RCD: thanked the staff and Board stating the funding will help in the continued effort to monitor the Stanislaus and Tuolumne county watersheds.

Nita Vail, CA Rangeland Trust: commended the Board and staff for starting from scratch and creating a grant process that was the most straightforward her staff has been through. She congratulated everyone on a job well done.

XII. Boardmember Comments

Boardmember Kirkwood distributed information relating to an upper watershed natural storage project. Chairman Chrisman asked what the timeline for the project was and Mr. Kirkwood noted that by the next meeting the SNC should see some funding requests.

Chairman Chrisman thanked Boardmembers Ishida and Boitano for their service on the Board and presented them with a resolution. He asked if they had any comments.

Boardmember Ishida stated that the two years had gone by quickly and that he is pleased to have been a part of approving this first round of Proposition 84 grants. He thanked his fellow boardmembers and staff and indicated that the experience has been very educational. He stated he hoped to stay involved as Tulare County's liaison.

Boardmember Boitano also stated that the time on the Board seemed short and he had enjoyed his service. He appreciated making some good friends and thanked the staff for their efforts.

XIII. Adjournment

Chairman Chrisman adjourned the meeting at 1:10 PM.