



# SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

## December 7, 2006 Board Meeting Minutes

### Location:

Wildwood Center  
400 Meadowbrook Loop  
Chester, CA 96020

### I. Call to Order

Chairman Chrisman called the meeting to order at 9:12 am.

### II. Roll Call

Present: Linda Arcularius, Helen Baumann, Louis Boitano, John Brissenden, Mike Chrisman, Brian Dahle, Allen Ishida, Bob Kirkwood, John Lloyd, BJ Kirwan, Byron Sher, Carol Whiteside, Kim Yamaguchi, Beth Pendleton, Bill Haigh and Kevin Cann.

Absent: No members were absent.

### III. Approval of October 5, 2006 Meeting Minutes

Boardmember Lloyd indicated on page 8 under the Attorney General Report, change the word "constitutional" to "policy." There were no other changes to the minutes.

**Action: Boardmember Brissenden moved and Boardmember Arcularius seconded a motion to approve the October 5, 2006 Meeting Minutes with noted change. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Boardmembers Ishida and Dahle abstained from voting.**

Chairman Chrisman invited general discussion about the field trip the previous day; presenters included Collins Pine, the US Forest Service, the Quincy Library Group, the local Fire Safe Council and PG&E. A special thanks was given to Plumas County Supervisor Rose Comstock and Quincy Library Group County Forester Frank Stewart. Topics included ongoing projects and the need for funding in order to implement local projects aimed at reducing the risk of catastrophic fire.

### IV. Election of Vice Chair

Boardmember Kirwan informed the Board that she and Chairman Chrisman served as the nominating committee for purposes of nominating a Vice Chair. The

committee met via conference call and is recommending that Boardmember Brian Dahle be selected as Vice Chair. Kirwan pointed out that the Vice Chair's term will run for a full calendar year.

**Action: Boardmember Arcularius moved and Boardmember Yamaguchi seconded a motion to elect Boardmember Dahle as Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **V. Public Comments**

Jonathan Kusel, Director of Sierra Institute, described a local project funded via prop 13, the "Almanor Basin Watershed Advisory Committee", which was created by the Plumas County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Kusel described the challenges facing Plumas County, including increased development and a growing population, water quality in Lake Almanor, the importance of working landscapes and affordable workforce housing. He referred the Board to two reports from the Committee, the Lake Almanor Watershed Assessment Report and the Lake Almanor Watershed Water Quality Report, which are not yet final but are available on-line at <http://sierrainstitute.us>

Boardmember Brissenden suggested that the reports be incorporated into the SNC electronic database.

## **VI. Chairman's Report**

### **a. Sub Region Representatives for 2007-08**

Chairman Chrisman noted Byng Hunt, Mono County Supervisor, is the newly appointed Boardmember representing the Eastern Sierra Sub-Region for 2007-08. The SNC has not been notified as yet as to who will represent the Central Sub-Region.

### **b. Proposition 84**

Chairman Chrisman noted a special thanks to Michael Mantell and Resources Law Group for their work in support of Proposition 84. Chrisman also noted the voters were very generous to Resources Agency with Propositions 1E and 84 providing \$9.5 billion to fund a significant number of important projects. Chrisman informed the Board that the Resources Agency is working with various state agencies to ensure a strategic approach to implementing Proposition 84. He pointed out that the SNC will receive \$54 million from the Proposition 84 funds.

### **c. Recognition of Assemblyman Tim Leslie**

Chairman Chrisman noted the Board and SNC would like to recognize former Senator and Assemblyman Tim Leslie for his co-authoring AB 2600 the legislation creating the SNC. Mr. Leslie is leaving the legislature at the end of the year. He could not attend this meeting but plans on attending the February 7, 2007 Board Meeting.

## **VII. Executive Officer's Report**

### **a. Staffing/Budget Update**

Executive Officer Branham gave a staff update, introducing Dave Madrigal, Information Technology Coordinator, and noted SNC has extended an offer for an Office Assistant. The SNC has Program Analyst I and II exams scheduled for the week December 11-15. The SNC will then establish lists for each classification and begin hiring in early 2007. The current plan is to hire initial field staff by April 1, 2007, based on approval of the Board of office locations.

Branham noted that the SNC has added new contracts and expects additional contracts in upcoming months to continue implementation of the Action Plan. The SNC continues to work to ensure that Proposition 84 funds are appropriated for 07-08 budget year. Branham noted that several agencies will receive funding from Proposition 84 in subject areas that are consistent with SNC's mission, and the SNC will work with Department of Water Resources, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and others for opportunities to cooperate and partner in addressing these issue areas. He pointed out that non-government partners including Izzy Martin (Sierra Fund), Kerri Timmer (Sierra Nevada Land Trust Council) and Joan Clayburgh (Sierra Nevada Alliance) are actively seeking to leverage funds for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Boardmember Ishida expressed the concern that the Conservancy should marshal its funds to ensure maximum assistance to the communities in the Region, and not to build a "staff empire." Branham assured the Board this is not the intent, SNC will be acting to maximize the positive impact of all funding that is received. He pointed out that the Board concurred at the October meeting on the importance of having staff on the ground in field offices out in the Region, believing this is the most effective and efficient way to carry out the SNC's mission. These positions are funded under SNC's current budget, not by Proposition 84 funds.

### **b. Federal Land Managers' Meeting (March 2007)**

Executive Officer Branham informed the Board that a March 2007 meeting of federal land managers will be held at the SNC Auburn office. This includes managers from the US Forest Service, National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management throughout the Region. Other federal agencies will be invited as will key state officials. The group will discuss opportunities for collaboration with a focus on the Program and Grant guidelines that will be in the development phase at that point.

Branham was invited by Boardmember Haigh to speak at the next BLM State management team meeting.

### **c. Modoc Line Update**

Executive Officer Branham informed the Board that an appraiser has been selected to conduct an appraisal of the Modoc Line. The appraiser will be funded

by Modoc County, Lassen County, the Lassen Land and Trails Trust, the SNC and the American Land Conservancy (project coordinator). He indicated that the appraisal will be completed within the timeline agreed upon with Union Pacific Railroad.

He also indicated that a rail system map is included in the Board materials and that an initial contact with UP has been made to discuss a more systematic approach to deal with potential abandoned railways.

Modoc County Supervisor Dave Bradshaw thanked SNC staff for their important and key role in this project. The possibility of a ribbon ceremony at the May 2007 Board meeting was noted.

**d. Headquarters Office Update**

The current headquarters location was approved as an interim location by the Board in February 2006. At that time, the Board directed Executive Officer Branham to continue to explore options for a permanent office site within a 30 minute drive of Auburn. Branham will continue to review the options, will propose a process and criteria for the Board's consideration at the February meeting, and will develop a recommendation for a permanent office location for Board consideration, and possible action, at the July 2007 Board meeting.

**e. "Saving the Sierra, Voices of Conservation"**

Executive Officer Branham noted the representative could not make this meeting and gave a brief overview of the group. "Saving the Sierra, Voices of Conservation" works with radio stations, Web sites, blogging programs and with Sierra citizens from ranchers to conservation leaders, to present their stories and to connect the people of the Sierra and the heritage of the Sierra. We will schedule the presentation for February meeting.

**f. Presentation of Thesis**

Professor Timothy Duane, University of California, Berkeley, introduced a recent graduate student, Tanya Higgins, who had written a Master's thesis relating a potential decision making model that could be used by the SNC. Ms. Higgins summarized the methodology and conclusions of her study. Board members discussed the potential utility of the model with Duane and Higgins and staff indicated they would consider using this approach where applicable.

**g. Meeting Schedule Change**

Executive Officer Branham proposed a change for the Board meeting schedule for February 2007. He proposed that the business meeting of the Board be held on Wednesday afternoon February 7, followed by a reception Wednesday evening and a field trip on the morning of Thursday December 8. The change is necessary to accommodate Chairman Chrisman's schedule and the Board concurred with the proposed change.

**VIII. Deputy Attorney General's Report** Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul noted that AB 2927 (Leno), which was discussed at a previous meeting, had been passed by the Legislature but was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger. Also, SB 796 (Figueroa), passed in 2005, takes effect in January 2007 and will require a few changes to the Conservancy's website. Boardmembers' annual statements of economic interest (SEI) are required to be filed in the spring. Boardmembers will be informed of the date for filing. Additionally, she advised that conflicts training is required of Boardmembers every two years and can be completed by watching a video or using an interactive website. She will provide further details. Boardmember Yamaguchi discussed recent conflict training for local officials and asked if that would suffice. Ms. Sproul indicated she would review that training and advise boardmembers.

**IX. North Central Sub-Region Counties Report**

Boardmember Yamaguchi thanked the Board for allowing his Sub-Region to host the Board meeting and tour. He extended thanks to Rose Comstock, Plumas County Supervisor and Frank Stewart for their assistance.

Sierra County Supervisor Brooks Mitchell reported that the single biggest threat in Sierra County is catastrophic fire. The Sub-Region hopes that through the SNC some of the issues can be addressed, noting Sierra County has lost population, unlike most Sierra counties. He noted it is also important to work with federal and state entities to get projects going in the region and is looking forward to action on the ground to solve some of these fire issues. Boardmember Yamaguchi noted the importance of listening to the "grass roots" and people on the ground through open lines of communication.

Supervisor Comstock reported Plumas County is encouraging SNC to work to develop partnerships, in order to get things done, urging the SNC to find common ground with other agencies and work towards common goals. The Feather River Watershed is a major contributor (up to 40%) of the water in State Water Project. She noted we need to not only sustain, but also to protect and enhance the water storage.

Boardmember Yamaguchi reported that Butte County is the largest county north of Sacramento, representing about 40,000 people. He described the situation existing near Magalia, where the only main thoroughfare for the residents to leave the area in case of emergency crossed a dam. With a 22,000 daily traffic count across that dam, the potential impacts from catastrophic fire are extreme. This is a community where Yamaguchi certainly looks to the SNC for assistance in seeking solutions. He also discussed future water needs for the county and urged that the area or origin be recognized in state water policy.

**X. Action Plan Update and Implementation Update**

Bob Kingman, Program Manager, updated on the Board on the capacity of SNC, with permanent staff up to 7 combined with retired annuitants and consultants we have 15 employees. Kingman noted additional staff will soon be hired with the Program Analyst I/II exams held December 11-16 to establish an SNC list to hire from. SNC is developing project description to hire an intern to help with the SNC library project with a large amount donated by Sierra Economic Development District.

PM Kingman summarized progress in completing SNC goals. Velocity 7 was the lead contractor awarded the contract to develop the Conservancy's Communication and Education Plan. Velocity 7 is also helping in the administration of the logo project. SNC has executed a contract with GreenInfo, who is conducting a GIS study in two counties initially, and will complete the project for the entire Region. The second GreenInfo project is the production of a refined map of the SNC boundary area, to be presented to the Board for approval. SNC Staff are working on the Grants Database which will be utilized by local communities, agencies, and other partners to help find funding for projects.

**X. Program and Grant Guideline Development**

Executive Officer Branham indicated that it is staff's intent to run parallel tracks for Program and Grant Guidelines development and implementation. The Program Guidelines will broadly address how the SNC will pursue fulfilling its strategic plan and meeting its statutory mission. The Grant Guidelines will be focused on categories of projects and eligible applicants to receive funding from the Conservancy. SNC will hold public meetings in the spring and will have multiple meetings within the subregions. These meetings will provide an opportunity for outreach to local communities. Staff plans to discuss opportunities for Board member involvement in these meetings at the February Board meeting, including possible use of subcommittees.

Boardmember Whiteside suggested that the guidelines have both established categories for competitive grant applications and opportunities for strategic grants. Boardmember Kirkwood asked whether the guidelines would address subregional and regional priority setting. Branham stated the program guidelines will address these priorities. Boardmember Sher asked whether the guidelines on grant limits and grant distribution would be binding once adopted. Branham indicated they would be considered binding, but the language would also provide some flexibility, and staff would be able to return to the Board for any need changes or adjustments to guideline language. Branham noted the program guidelines would address the equitable distribution of Conservancy efforts and resources across the six subregions and the seven program areas. He noted there would be a number of key policy issues on which the board will need to provide direction.

Bob Kingman described the timelines and asked Boardmembers to let him know scheduled meetings or conflicts in schedules, so those could be taken into account in scheduling workshops. Boardmember Brissenden noted the time line is very

aggressive and Boardmember Kirkwood commented on the importance of having good guidelines, while being aggressive. Branham indicated he and staff recognized the challenge but is confident that the timeline can be met with quality guidelines.

#### **XI. Regional Office Selection**

Executive Officer Branham provided the Board an overview of the plan for field offices and proposed staffing allocations. He indicated the region would be divided into two Areas, the Mt. Lassen Area (North, North Central and Central Sub-regions) and the Mt. Whitney Area (South Central, South and East Sub-regions). Ken Jones, Project Specialist, gave an overview and presentation of the process used in considering proposed area office locations. The recommendation from the committee appointed by the Board and staff is to have Area staff located in offices in Susanville, Auburn (existing office) Mariposa, Bishop, and Lake Isabella (non-staffed).

Boardmember Ishida expressed the concern that SNC not duplicate functions that Resource Conservation Districts (RCD) performs. Boardmember Arcularius commented in some areas there is no possibility of duplication, pointing out that the Bishop RCD does not operate within the boundaries of the Sierra Nevada Region. Also RCDs may want to apply for funding and not want to jeopardize that possibility. Chairman Chrisman agreed the Board needs to be cognizant of the groups already in the Region and maximize those relationships, however supports the placement of field staff within the Region. Boardmember Baumann commented on the proposed office locations, stating she thought the strategy would efficiently administer the services of the Conservancy. Branham noted area offices would be funded within the existing base budget and did not represent an "additional cost" to the Conservancy. He also indicated that locating staff in the region would be more efficient and economical than having staff constantly traveling and far removed from many communities.

**Action: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Dahle seconded a motion to approve Area Office Selection proposed. The motion passed unanimously.**

Jan Heid, Executive Director for Lassen Land Trust, thanked the Board for its community outreach. Ms. Heid is pleased that the Conservancy selected Susanville for an office location, appreciates SNC participation in the community and noted it has been a catalyst of collaboration.

#### **XII. SNC License Plate Update**

With the passage of Assembly Bill 84 (Chpt. 454 Stats. 2006), the SNC has the opportunity to obtain a specialized license plate. The statutory requirements of the bill and a timeframe for submitting an application to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) were described. A proposed design template will be presented to the Board at the February meeting. The Board will be asked to approve the plate

design which must be included in the application to be submitted to the DMV. This design would then be incorporated into the Logo Concept Design Contest for the 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade students to use in the contest.

Izzy Martin, President of the Sierra Fund, offered assistance in creating and managing a campaign to obtain the needed 7500 license plate applications and signatures and in working with a new non-profit or foundation for the Conservancy. She pointed out that Sierra Fund has been working on this project for a number of years and is very interested in forming a partnership with the SNC.

Boardmember Kirkwood indicated it would be useful to be able to work with a foundation created to help support the Conservancy broadly, not solely for purposes of a license plate campaign. He suggested reviewing experiences of other agencies receiving support from foundations and non-profit entities. This is a concept for further thought. Boardmember Whiteside suggested exploring the concept with a critical eye to the Conservancy's particular mission, as the Conservancy may have different opportunities than other agencies. Chairman Chrisman suggested authorizing Branham to explore the concept further.

**Action: Boardmember Whiteside moved and Boardmember Arcularius seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to explore the possibility of the creation of a non profit organization and report back to the Board. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **XIII. Recognition of Boardmembers Arcularius and Baumann**

Chairman Chrisman thanked the two Boardmembers who have been outstanding team players on the Board for their efforts, noting they had "rolled up their sleeves" He acknowledged their hard work in assisting in the formative years of the SND.

Boardmembers Linda Arcularius and Helen Baumann each expressed appreciation and their pride in the accomplishments of the SNC to date.

### **XIV. Board Members' Comments**

Boardmember Arcularius, noted the water intake visited during the October field trip, Lower Owens River Project (LORP), was opened on Wednesday December 6, there is now water running for the first time in over 60 years.

Boardmember Boitano noted the February 2007 meeting will be held at the Jackson Board of Supervisor Chambers located at 810 Court Street and will be held on Wednesday afternoon February 7, followed by the reception and the field trip on Thursday morning.

### **XV. Public Comments**

Frank Stewart thanked SNC Board and staff for holding the meeting in Chester and suggested working closely with the Fire Safe Councils in addressing fire issues.



**XVI. Adjournment**

**Action: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Boitano seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Chrisman adjourned the meeting at 12:58pm