

# Board Meeting MINUTES

March 8, 2018

California Department of Food & Agriculture

Auditorium

1220 N Street

Sacramento, CA 95814



## I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

## II. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers

Oaths were administered to Supervisor Sherri Brennan, Supervisor Paul Roen, and Boardmember John Brissenden.

## III. Roll Call

Present: Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez, Terry O'Brien, Bob Johnston, Jeff Griffiths, Este Stifel, Todd Ferrara, Tom Wheeler, Mary Rickert (for Elizabeth Cavasso), Susana Reyes, Sherri Brennan, John Brissenden, and Paul Roen (for Doug Teeter)

Absent: Elizabeth Cavasso, Doug Teeter, Barnie Gyant, Danny Wan, Woody Smeck, and Randy Fletcher

## IV. Approval of December 7, 2017, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

**ACTION:** Boardmember Tom Wheeler moved, and Boardmember Jeff Griffiths seconded, a motion to approve the December 7, 2017, meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

## V. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

Board Chair Terry O'Brien acknowledged the passing of Boardmember Bob Kirkwood and asked for a moment of silence in his honor. Boardmembers and Executive Officer Jim Branham provided reflections of the relationship Kirkwood had with staff and the Board.

## VI. Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Terry O'Brien acknowledged the SNC staff for an informative Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program Summit, and shared his thoughts on the outcomes of the event. O'Brien noted the challenges and opportunities California will be presented with following the 2017 wildfire season.

O'Brien also shared thoughts with the Board on his experience at the Strategic Action Plan input meetings held during the previous quarter, and discussed some of the feedback that was shared by stakeholders who attended those meetings.

**VII. Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program Proposition 1 Grant Award Recommendations (ACTION)**

Executive Officer Jim Branham acknowledged SNC Staff and the excellent job they have done in getting to this point in the grant process. Branham identified the area staff team, Kristy Hoffman, Lynn Campbell, Chris Dallas, Michael Pickard, and Sarah Campe who are on the ground working with partners to help them bring the best projects forward to us. Branham also mentioned Andy Fristensky and Shannon Ciotti who worked diligently to ensure that the grant applications were all processed in a timely manner despite some rollout hiccups.

Grant Program Coordinator Shannon Ciotti provided a background and status of the Proposition 1 Grant funding.

In the 2017-2018 round, SNC received a total of 32 proposals requesting \$8,955,323: 24 for the Mt. Lassen Area and eight in the Mt. Whitney Area. Of the 32 proposals received, 23 projects scored above the 80-point threshold, totaling just under \$7 million. Those that scored above the threshold were split between 18 in the Mt. Lassen Area, five in the Mt. Whitney Area, with 13 Category 1 implementation grants, and 10 Category 2 planning grants that met the threshold.

Ciotti stated that staff is still communicating with the projects that scored below the threshold and is working closely with them to assist with further development of their project, or identification of a more appropriate funding source for them.

Ciotti stated a total of 15 projects have been brought to the Board for consideration at this meeting, totaling \$2,964,338. These are the 15 projects that scored above the threshold that have all of the CEQA compliance in place. The eight remaining are still going through the CEQA analysis and may be brought to the Board at a future date once all requirements are met and complete.

Mt. Lassen Area Manager Andy Fristensky provided the Board with a presentation which highlighted information for the 15 projects being recommended for approval. A copy of the presentation was provided to the Boardmembers in the Board meeting materials package.

Before reading the staff recommendation, Fristensky disclosed to the Board that the SNC was delayed in notifying tribal representatives of the proposed projects. All notifications have now been made, but to honor and satisfy legal requirements, staff will not execute any grant agreements until any requests for a consultation are completed, and that period should end in a couple weeks or so.

Fristensky then read the staff recommendation to the Board as presented followed by Board Chair Terry O'Brien's request for Boardmember and Public Comments.

**Boardmember Comments:**

Boardmember Sherri Brennan complimented staff on the grants presentation, stated that it was very concise and to the point, and she appreciated the backup information.

Boardmember Tom Wheeler commented on project #1005 stating that the funding kept this project moving and thanked staff.

Boardmember Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez also complimented staff for doing site visits prior to the final applications coming in. Wong-Hernandez noted that she believes it is helpful in building those relationships and making sure that grants fund the best project and not just the people who prepared the best grant application.

**Public Comments:**

Greg Jones, Assistant General Manager at the Nevada Irrigation District, expressed his gratitude for considering their project and stated the Nevada Irrigation District is well equipped to be partners with SNC and the other stakeholders in the Region.

Mark Egbert, District Manager for the El Dorado Resource Conservation District, spoke about project #1043 and provided the Board with some background information on this project and explanation of the visuals provided in the PPT presentation. Egbert also commented on the Summit that took place the previous day and provided the Board with background on the Fire Adaptive 50 project that they are currently working on stating that he believes this project is keeping up with the pace and scale. Egbert expressed gratitude and stated that he appreciates SNC staff time.

Luke Granton, Hydrologist, Tahoe National Forest, spoke on behalf of the Yuba River Ranger District on the Tahoe National Forest. Granton spoke in support of two projects that are working with partners to implement and further the goals and objectives of the Prop 1 funding program. Granton said they are working with a great partner in the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County where they will work to continue the fuels work around Scotts Flat Lake just to the east of the Nevada City/Grass Valley Area to protect communities.

**ACTION:** Boardmember John Brissenden moved, and Boardmember Tom Wheeler seconded, a motion to (a) authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Exemption for the Childs Meadow Fuel Reduction and Forest Resiliency Project (SNC1002), the Wagner Ridge Watershed Protection Plan (SNC1004), the Pre-Development / Acquisition Planning for a Biomass Utilization Campus at the Auberry Mill Site (SNC1005), the 'Inimim Forest Restoration Project (SNC1006), the Lower Steephollow Watershed Restoration Implementation Plan (SNC1013), the Upper Deer Creek Healthy Forest and Fuel Reduction

**Implementation Plan (SNC1014), the Crossroads project (SNC1020), the Planning for Resilient Forests in Mining-Impacted Landscapes: Fuels Reduction and Erosion Prevention project (SNC1027), the Yuba Headwaters Healthy Forests Project (SNC1035), the Onion Ridge Fuel Reduction and Forest Health Improvement Project (SNC1040), and the Improving Landscape and Watershed Health through Restoring Fire Regimes in Lassen Volcanic National Park project (SNC1047); and (b) approve findings concurring with the Negative Declaration and Mitigated Negative Declarations and authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Determination as a Responsible Agency for the Western Nevada County Community Defense Project (SNC1000), the Butte Creek Forest Health Project (SNC1024), the Trestle Forest Health Project (SNC1034), and the Fire Adapted 50 – Sly Park Vegetation Management Project (SNC1043); and (c) authorize a grant award to each of the projects listed above and in Agenda Item VII - Exhibit A, for the amounts recommended by staff, and further authorize the staff to enter into the necessary agreements to move forward with these projects. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VIII. Discussion Regarding Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Summit (INFORMATIONAL)**

Executive Officer Jim Branham and WIP Coordinator Mandy Vance provided an overview of the WIP Summit that took place the previous day. Branham said he would like to use this time to summarize the discussions yesterday, but mostly wanted to engage with the Board and get their reaction and feedback, and answer questions or hear their thoughts about where to go from here with the program.

Vance summarized some themes that came up throughout the day: the first was the importance of continuing to craft the forest carbon story, particularly to engage legislators but also to empower partners to convey that message to the general public. Also noted was engaging with non-traditional partners, and the importance of showing people successes in the field. Vance noted the increased alignment and intensity of the partnerships with agency partners. She also reported that CAL FIRE Chief Ken Pimlott acknowledged that there are a lot of good efforts in the state, but the WIP is leading the way. Chief Pimlott also identified the need to continue to consolidate and prioritize funding on-the-ground projects at the watershed level, and to make sure that WIP is implementing projects that will make a difference on the landscape as a whole.

Vance said that the overall message from the Summit is that the WIP is important, is working, and needs to keep moving forward and grow. Boardmember Mary Rickert noted that Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was not mentioned much at the WIP Summit and wondered about the

potential for collaboration with them. Rickert told staff that NRCS does a lot of fuel reduction projects up and down the state and suggested a discussion with them about how dollars could be leveraged and be more effective with some of those projects.

Boardmember Bob Johnston said that, we were shown that pretty good research is in place now; that's an advance from previous years' summits.

Johnston suggested that perhaps SNC's research people could start looking at the broader category of research called social change or political change research, and figure out how to motivate people.

Boardmember Sherrie Brennan and Branham engaged in conversation around the Summit and work that is currently being done on landscapes that have been untreated for many years, and what is possible for these landscapes in the future.

Boardmember Susana Reyes urged the SNC to reach out to local communities and messaging, saying that all these projects have the capability of creating jobs and opportunities for recreation and tourism. She would also like to see these local communities take ownership and stewardship of these projects. Reyes asked the staff to report back on the outreach to tribal members, and felt that these relationships need to be worked on.

Branham summarized the Summit stating that when the WIP started out they had defined three pillars to this program, and that the Funding pillar is making progress. He would like to expand working with the California Natural Resources Agency and the Department of Finance to determine a more strategic approach to state investment. This includes considering alternatives to solely using competitive grants to distribute money and he would like to look at ways to be more strategic and coordinated. Branham suggested that WIP can bring other state agencies together to make smarter investments. Branham also spoke about the Policy pillar of the WIP and said that he feels that SNC has been engaging as much as it can. This includes the exploration of streamlining processes and using existing processes more efficiently. The third pillar that Branham brought up was Infrastructure, noting that the infrastructure challenge has been difficult to conquer and feels that if the legislature does not act, there are pieces of the infrastructure that will no longer be operational in the future.

Branham said WIP is trying to use the existing processes differently and perhaps more efficiently, but that honest conversations are needed about where to look at doing things differently. Branham also said that he heard a message of "urgency" at the Summit and feels like it is a more widespread feeling than it has been in the past.

Johnston suggested that the projects being worked on should become part of a research database, that projects should have an established baseline and be revisited to start gathering research on effectiveness of treatment. Branham responded by saying that WIP is looking at not only its projects, but all projects performed in watersheds to build knowledge and support funding. Boardmember Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez responded by offering her assistance in facilitating strategic investment.

**IX. Strategic Assessment and Plan Update (ACTION)**

Executive Officer Jim Branham provided background on the SNC Strategic Assessment process via a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation was provided to Boardmembers in their Board materials package. Branham highlighted the WIP, Proposition 1, and the Policy engagement activities that SNC has been working toward and summarized the lessons learned since SNC's conception. He indicated this experience would help shape the strategic plan being developed and the future architecture of the WIP.

Angela Avery, Policy and Outreach Division Chief, introduced Theresa Parsley, who has been instrumental in coordinating the strategic planning process. Avery provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation which summarized the Strategic Assessment Process and the status of the Plan development. SNC contacted more than 400 individuals, representing 300 organizations, and received over 250 written responses in addition to a large amount of verbal feedback. Avery mentioned staff is still synthesizing all information and feedback received.

Avery presented a project timeline for Board engagement that includes Draft Goals in March 2018, Draft Strategies in June 2018, Draft Five-Year Strategic Plan in September 2018, and a Final Strategic Plan and an 18-month Action Plan in December 2018. Avery said that this timeline has been adjusted based on the potential to receive additional funding in June and November.

Avery provided a proposed plan structure and Regional goals based on previous Regional assessments. The detailed structure and the goals were outlined in the PowerPoint presentation. Avery then opened the conversation to the Board and asked for input concerning the Regional goals.

Avery said staff ultimately came up with this proposed plan structure that includes a set of Sierra Nevada Conservancy and Sierra Nevada Regional goals. These are broad desired outcomes for the entire Region that will not change with funding allocations. Avery said they're not goals that the SNC can achieve alone, therefore staff will need to work with partners.

Avery indicated a set of Sierra Nevada Conservancy strategies will be the next component of the plan to be brought to the Board in June. She indicated strategies will focus on the activities that SNC can undertake in the next five

years and acknowledged strategies will change based on the outcomes of elections in June and November. She indicated money and the resources could remain the same, or increase to intermediate or even high level of funding. Avery stated possible funding scenarios will be considered by staff as strategies are developed and said that staff will also include a set of SNC cross-cutting activities which will support all goals and strategies.

Avery outlined and summarized the proposed Regional goals for the Board – healthy forests and watersheds, vibrant recreation and tourism, strategic land conservation, resilient Sierra Nevada communities, and impactful Regional identity – and continued by encouraging the Board to share their thoughts with staff about the proposed Regional goals.

Assembly Member Brian Dahle addressed the Board during this agenda item and said he is available to help the Board push legislation that will assist the SNC to achieve long-term goals and build the bridges necessary to be successful. Boardmembers engaged in conversation with the Assembly Member. Dahle would like to partner with the Board to build relationships outside of its district and suggested to invite those outside of the district to educate them.

Boardmembers engaged in thoughtful conversation concerning the proposed Regional goals. Boardmember Este Stifel commented on the Impactful Regional Identity goal and said that now is the time to figure out a path using different images and messages.

Boardmember Bob Johnston questioned what new challenges and opportunities are informing changes to the strategic plan. Avery responded the goals are a combination of SNC's understanding of the Regional needs and the feedback received. Avery highlighted the holistic approach staff has taken.

Boardmember conversation took place around defining goals and the criteria for a specific goal. Jim Branham explained that these goals are meant to be interconnecting, so some are going to help implement others and vice versa; while these are meant to be stand-alone goals, understanding the interconnection is equally as important to many stakeholders.

Boardmember Susana Reyes asked for the staff to consider capacity building, especially with the possibility of new funding sources, increased partnerships, and more outreach.

Board Chair Terry O'Brien expressed appreciation for the timeline changes especially considering SNC may get different funding depending on election results. He also stated when the final plan is drafted to be sure to include clear, concise, and bold messages that signify where SNC needs to go.

Avery reviewed the Annual Action Plan goals – staff and Boardmembers engaged in conversation about measurement of goals and accomplishments. Branham acknowledged an important function will be to measure SNC performance and, of equal importance, how SNC wants to be a catalyst for its partners developing resilient landscapes and communities.

Boardmember Tom Wheeler expressed a desire for the SNC to concentrate on forest health and to look at public access when considering grants.

Boardmember Sherrie Brennan stressed the importance of incorporating flexibility into the plan.

Johnston questioned if the goals will change based on potential funding. Avery responded to say that the goals will not change however the strategies to implement these goals will.

#### **Public Comment**

Paul Mason, Pacific Forest Trust, addressed the Board to express his support for the strategic planning process and for looking at opportunities for conservation and working landscapes moving forward.

Mason complimented the Board and the staff on how helpful the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has been to the broader discussion of forest health and the importance of watersheds. Mason also complimented the accomplishments of SNC in working with various policy components.

Marty Coleman-Hunt, President of Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council (Council), noted that over the last 80 years, the Council has protected over a million acres. Coleman-Hunt told the Board about the importance of the SNC strategic plan to her organization and stated that they can shape their own organizations goals around ours.

Coleman-Hunt said she would like to see focus on habitat protection as a climate mitigation measure and feels it is just as important as protecting land from development. She also asked that the Conservancy reestablish conservation acquisition as a funding priority and perhaps work more closely with land trusts in collaboration to identify ways to pair restoration activities with acquisition.

Nancy Fluharty, Sierra Foothill Conservancy, provided an update on the publicly accessible Stockton Creek Preserve which is a 410-acre acquisition in Mariposa that SNC provided the initial funding for in 2011. Since that time, they've had great success in working closely with the land owner to continue to expand and enhance the preserve. The preserve now features robust outdoor education and recreation programming that serves a wide cross-section of the local community and tourists as it's right outside of Yosemite National Park.

Fluharty said that acquisition projects like this preserve have endless opportunities for restoration and expansion but also for engaging powerful community support for local conservation efforts and conservation concerns on a larger statewide scale. Fluharty provided thanks to SNC for initially investing in the Stockton Creek Reserve.

**ACTION: Boardmember Jeff Griffiths moved, and Boardmember Susana Reyes seconded, a motion to approve the following Strategic and Action plans development timeframe:**

- **September 2018: Draft Strategic Plan presented to the Board**
- **December 2018: Final Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan presented to the Board**

**X. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

**a. Executive Officer Update**

Executive Officer Jim Branham provided the Board with an update on new funding opportunities that the SNC is considering, including acting as a grant applicant under CAL FIRE's California Climate Investment grant program for projects within the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative, and as a potential distributor of fire settlement funds. Branham also updated the Board on the pending release of the Forest Carbon Plan and noted that the Plan calls out the WIP as an implementation program.

Branham notified the Board that Randi Jorgenson, who had been SNC's Mt. Whitney Area Manager, had recently retired, and noted that staff would be reviewing options for filling that position.

**b. Administrative Update**

Administrative Services Division Chief Amy Lussier provided the Board with a budget and personnel update. Lussier discussed the process by which SNC can accept and expend funds from federal partners and other grant sources. Lussier also introduced SNC's two newest employees, Julia Hart and John Tangenberg, and updated the Board on plans to fill the vacant position in the East Subregion.

**c. Policy Update**

Branham mentioned to the Board the state of California is facing a state of emergency regarding tree mortality and wildfire threat. He reported the Governor has announced that he will establish a task force to address forest health given on the ongoing impacts of the current conditions. Boardmembers asked if SNC will participate on the taskforce. Branham replied he is confident SNC will be involved in some capacity, but no direct communication on the matter has occurred.

Policy and Outreach Division Chief Angela Avery noted the large amount of state legislation currently looking to address fire and fire-related forest health issues. Avery highlighted bills on prescribed fire, including legislation to address the insurance liability associated prescribed fire. She noted introduction of mass timber bills looking to incentivize the wood/biomass market. She also addressed climate bills that support the use of California Climate Investment funding for forest management and a variety of other activities.

Avery believes with all the new state legislation, there's an interesting opportunity potentially developing with the federal fiscal year 2018 Omnibus Bill. Partners are reporting and rallying to action around a comprehensive wildfire funding fix. Avery's report included some potentially reasonable federal reforms on forest management such as Good Neighbor Authority projects, including road reconstruction and allowing for categorical exclusions in high-risk wildfire areas. She discussed another proposal to add ten years to stewardship contracts, thus creating 20-year contracts.

Avery said the ten state conservancies and The Wildlife Conservation Board have come together to request California Climate Investment funding to develop a regional climate resiliency program. That ultimately would provide for planning, adaptation, and mitigation for regional climate resiliency in accordance with the Governor's executive order and California's climate plans that are in place. Senators Bill Dodd and Ben Allen are bringing a letter in support of that idea to the Senate in hopes of getting support. She noted that if it were to gain some traction, the program would serve as a critical component of the Resources Agency Natural and Working Lands Climate Implementation Plan.

Avery also informed the Board that the staff is working on clean-up legislation. The clean-up language has three components: codify the Watershed Improvement Program, expand the tribal definition in SNC's statute so that it's consistent with the California Native American Heritage Commission list, and revisiting the legislative liaison legislation that was passed in 2015. Avery said that as of now they have still not received approval from the Governor's Office for sponsoring such a bill.

Avery quickly touched on Proposition 68 and the Merrill Initiative which are potential funding sources for SNC in the future. Prop 68 will bring a total of \$142 million into the Sierra Cascade Region including \$55 million to the SNC (\$30 million for funding in support of SNC's programmatic areas of activity, and \$25 million in forest health). The Tahoe Conservancy will get \$27 million in direct funding, and the Wildlife Conservation Board will get an additional \$60 million for investment in the Sierra Cascade watersheds.

Avery reported the Merrill Initiative is an \$8.9-billion-dollar bond, with the SNC receiving \$200 million for watershed improvement activities and \$50 million for forest health projects. The Tahoe Conservancy would also get \$60 million for watershed improvement and \$40 million for storm water and river and parkways work. Avery stated the Merrill Initiative has currently received all the signatures needed to be placed on the November ballot.

Avery finished by noting that Board Chair Terry O'Brien and Boardmember Susana Reyes joined staff to meet with Assembly Member Brian Dahle, Senator Anthony Portantino from Southern California, and Michael Jarred from the California State Assembly Committee on Natural Resources. She also mentioned a partner meet and greet was conducted. Reyes said it was a very productive set of meetings and was glad to see the full support of the folks that were met with. Reyes said it just goes to show the importance of being consistent and working with the key decision makers. She encouraged her colleagues on the Board to explore and build relationships with their local politicians and legislative folks.

Branham stated that SNC is prohibited from taking positions on, or from expending any resources on ballot measures.

**d. Communications Update**

Communications and Outreach Manager Brittany Covich provided the Board with a Communications update highlighting SNC social media efforts in support of the 2018 Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Summit. Covich shared SNC-developed graphics and summit materials – which included a quote from Governor Jerry Brown's State of the State address – that demonstrate the important role Sierra Nevada forests play in meeting California's greenhouse gas reduction goals. Covich also highlighted the Little Hoover Commission Forest Management Report which identifies the Watershed Improvement Program as a model of successful collaboration.

Covich highlighted activities that staff have been undertaking to support the Prescribed Fire MOU and provided the Board with a list of future communications opportunities associated with the MOU partnership. Additionally, this summer, SNC will be doing a lot of work in support of the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative, as well as starting to prepare for the tenth year of the Great Sierra River Cleanup this September.

Covich showed the Board a LiveCast video filmed earlier in the week which featured Reyes and Branham.

Boardmembers engaged in brief conversation about the video clips and SNC messaging urging continued focus on motivating action and utilizing messages

based in good science, jobs, and recreation and tourism to reach audiences. The Board also discussed the importance of keeping up outreach to tribes.

**e. Proposition 84 Grant Award Report**

Assistant Executive Officer Bob Kingman introduced Kerri Timmer from the Sierra Business Council (SBC) and recalled the September 2017 Board Tour that took SNC Boardmembers to the Loyalton Co-generation Eco-Tech Park – a leading effort to establish wood products infrastructure in the Sierra Nevada and create an outlet for use of dead and dying trees and other biomass from the Region. Kingman also reminded Boardmembers of their re-delegation of authority to the Executive Officer to award remaining Proposition 84 grant funding on small projects that support and promote the WIP and increasing of biomass utilization at that same September 2017 meeting. Kingman then announced that the SNC had recently authorized a grant to the Sierra Business Council in the amount of \$100,000 for the development of a master plan to guide buildout of the Loyalton site.

Timmer's presentation covered all aspects of the Loyalton Biomass project and emphasized several benefits of the project. Timmer identified Steve Frisch as the primary contact for this project. Timmer's presentation highlighted many benefits of biomass economy products noting that the entire suite of products includes electricity, heat, biofuels, pellets, compost, soil amendments, and more. She also discussed economic benefits and the jobs in the research field, technology, manufacturing, and forest restoration, which are critical to forested communities like Loyalton and the surrounding areas.

Timmer highlighted the SBC Small Business Development Center which is a major partner in this effort. SBC took over as the northeastern small business development center a couple of years ago, and since then has been able to have quite an impact in a seven-county region in the north central part of the Sierra Nevada. Timmer concluded by noting that this project meets all the SNC goals and strategic planning efforts.

**f. Update on Future SNC Grant Program**

Branham advised the Board that the Governor's budget includes funding for what is now Proposition 68, even prior to it passing. The appropriation proposed for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy would be available in the coming fiscal year, contingent upon the bond passing. SNC will plan to combine remaining Prop 1 money and new Prop 68 money, and do a single grant program.

Kingman advised the Board that staff is currently preparing guidelines for review in June and will reflect the outcome of the election.

**XI. Boardmembers' Comments**

Boardmember Susana Reyes recognized International Women's Day, she asked the group to take pause and think about a woman that has inspired each of them.

**XII. Public Comments**

Lauren Hubert, Sierra Foothill Conservancy, addressed the Board to thank them and provide an update of what has been accomplished with \$3,600,000 in grant funds they have received from SNC. Hubert said that these funds have assisted rural communities, improved the water and air quality, and have contributed to the local economy.

Hubert encouraged SNC to take a holistic approach when developing its strategic plan to include all habitats, including the conifer forests. Hubert stated that addressing these issues will contribute to solutions.

Steve Haze, Sierra Resource Conservation District of Fresno County, expressed his appreciation for the grant award and appreciates the confidence in his organization. Haze also specifically pointed out Boardmember Tom Wheeler's efforts in finding solutions to the critical issues taking non-merchantable and non-commercial timber and transforming it into usable products.

**XIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m.