

Board Meeting MINUTES

December 7, 2017
Mokelumne Hill Town Hall
8283 Main Street
Mokelumne Hill, CA 95245



I. Call to Order

Board Vice-Chair Terry O'Brien called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

II. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers

Board Vice-Chair Terry O'Brien administered the Oath of Office to the Speaker of the Assembly appointment Susanna Reyes, and the North Subregion Alternate Representative Mary Rickert.

III. Roll Call

Present: Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez, Terry O'Brien, Bob Johnston, Jeff Griffiths, Doug Teeter, Jack Garamendi, Barnie Gyant, Este Stifel, Randy Fletcher, Bryan Cash, Tom Wheeler, Danny Wan, Mary Rickert, Susana Reyes, and Woody Smeck

Absent: Bob Kirkwood

IV. Closed Session (This portion of the meeting was not open to the public.)

Evaluation of the performance of the Executive Officer by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board. (Government Code, Section 11126, subdivision (a)(1))

Resumed open session approximately 9:30 a.m., Board Vice-Chair Terry O'Brien described the purpose of the closed session.

V. Approval of September 7, 2017, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

ACTION: Boardmember Randy Fletcher moved and Boardmember Tom Wheeler seconded, a motion to approve the September 7, 2017, meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

VII. Board Chair's Report (ACTION)

Board Vice-Chair Terry O'Brien read Board Resolution Number 12-17-02 (Brissenden) dated December 7, 2017, into the record.

ACTION: Boardmember Tom Wheeler moved and Boardmember Randy Fletcher seconded, a motion to adopt SNC Resolution Number 12-17-02. The motion passed unanimously.

Former Boardmember John Brissenden spoke before the Board thanking the Board for the Resolution and urged the Board to carry forward to meet the many

challenges SNC faces. O'Brien presented Brissenden with the Resolution and an SNC backpack.

O'Brien read Board Resolution Number 12-17-01 (Kirkwood), dated December 7, 2017, into the record.

Boardmembers, members of the public, and Mr. Brissenden, provided comments acknowledging Boardmember Bob Kirkwood's contribution to the SNC Governing Board. Executive Officer Jim Branham also acknowledged the significant contributions that Mr. Kirkwood has made over the years.

ACTION: Boardmember Tom Wheeler moved and Boardmember Bob Johnston seconded, a motion to adopt SNC Resolution Number 12-17-01. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair (ACTION)

ACTION: Boardmember Bob Johnston moved and Boardmember Tom Wheeler seconded, a motion to elect Boardmember Terry O'Brien as the 2018 Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION: Boardmember Jack Garamendi moved and Boardmember Jeff Griffiths seconded, a motion to elect Boardmember Doug Teeter as the 2018 Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board Vice-Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. 2018 Board Meeting Schedule (ACTION)

Boardmembers engaged in brief conversation regarding scheduling conflicts they may have with the proposed Board meeting schedule. Boardmember Jeff Griffiths announced that he would have conflict with the September meeting which is to be held in his Subregion. Boardmembers decided to switch the East Subregion meeting to June and the North Subregion to September which would allow Boardmember Griffiths to attend his hosted meeting.

ACTION: Boardmember Tom Wheeler moved and Boardmember Randy Fletcher seconded, a motion to approve the proposed 2018 Board meeting schedule, moving the June Board location to the East Subregion, and the moving the September Board meeting to the North Subregion. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Strategic Assessment and Plan Update (ACTION)

Policy and Outreach Division Chief Angela Avery recognized the SNC staff who have contributed to the Strategic Assessment development process up to this point.

Avery provided the Board with an overview of the Strategic Assessment process history and status update using a PowerPoint presentation (copy provided in Board materials). In Track 1, staff reached out to more than 80 state-wide national and international companies who work outside of the Region but whose business models depend on the values, particularly water, that come from within the Region, with the primary partner being the California Water Action Collaborative. Avery said the primary goal in Track 1 was to gain fresh perspective and innovative ideas from those who rely on the services that come from the Region. Track 1 is considered complete.

Avery updated the Board on the status of Track 2, stating the audience for this track is SNC stakeholders and partners who work in the Region and are responsible for stewarding Sierra resources. As with Track 1, both a verbal and a written input methodologies will be used and the written element was closed at the end of November. Avery continued to say that materials are being developed to facilitate verbal discussions with in-Region partners.

Avery reminded the Board of the planned series of additional discussions with a variety of stakeholders, including six concurrent Subregional stakeholder meetings. The Subregional meetings will all be happening on January 10, 2018, and will have a webinar element while area staff will be facilitating meetings around the Region.

Track 3 is designed with the Board and SNC staff as the audience, stating that the purpose of the third track is to gain perspective and receive input as staff develop strategies that assist the SNC focus on a going-forward basis. Avery added that Boardmembers would have an additional opportunity to provide verbal feedback at the March meeting.

The opportunity for the written element of feedback will be open to the Board the following week and they will receive an email with instructions. The deadline for these comments will be January 2.

Avery summarized project milestones using the PowerPoint presentation and stated that they expect to have all of feedback together by March 9, with the draft strategic plan available to the Board at the June 2018 Board meeting. The final plan will be presented to the Board at the September 2018 meeting which will include an Action Plan based on the strategies previously approved by the Board.

Boardmembers and Avery engaged in conversation about Board participation and the process for feedback in the planning process.

Avery provided a detailed explanation of the policy discussion document provided to the Boardmembers in the Board materials. Avery stated Agenda Item X, Attachment A, used the challenges that the Region is facing to create questions about the implications of these challenges on SNC programs, mission,

organizational structure, and partnerships. This document is intended to be used as a tool in Track 2 of the process. Avery questioned the Board about the challenges outlined in the Policy Discussion document and encouraged feedback.

Additional discussion topics included a question from Boardmember Griffiths as to whether a tourism and recreation focus would be added, based on the possibility of SNC receiving Park Bond funds. Boardmembers requested feedback from SNC staff as to addressing the CEQA and NEPA issues and furthermore encouraged staff to communicate with federal partners to incorporate their input.

Boardmembers continued to engage in brief conversation regarding various aspects of the Strategic Assessment Policy Discussion document and continued to engage in conversation related to the development process and opportunities for Boardmembers to participate, including included discussion on the longevity of the plan and the flexibility to allow for direction.

Public Comment:

John Brissenden addressed the Board and proposed that Boardmembers participate in the Subregional meetings as part of this process.

Steve Wilensky, Humbug Creek Farm, Glencoe, California, spoke on behalf of Calaveras Amador Forestry Team and the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group to encourage the SNC to assist and coordinate with CAL FIRE as they establish grant guidelines and application processes for distributing Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) in the Region. Boardmember Mary Rickert stated that she concurred with Wilensky's comments.

Executive Officer Jim Branham updated the Board on the status of the working relationship SNC currently has with CAL FIRE indicating that there is positive opportunity for ongoing collaboration, including relating to GGRF funding.

- ACTION: Boardmember Randy Fletcher moved and Boardmember Tom Wheeler seconded, a motion to approve the following Strategic and Action plans development timeframe:**
- **June 2018: Draft Strategic Plan presented to the Board**
 - **September 2018: Final Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan presented to the Board**

The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Administrative Update

Administrative Services Division Chief Amy Lussier provided a brief update on the process that SNC has established for accepting and expending the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) grant that SNC received from CAL FIRE.

Lussier also noted that the SNC's budget is now being completed in-house, and explained the efficiencies gained through that new process.

In addition, Lussier provided an update to the Board on changes in SNC's Human Resources department, gave an overview of recent staff changes, and explained how SNC plans to fill current vacancies.

b. Policy and Outreach Update

Executive Officer Jim Branham informed the Board of recent outreach to SNC from the San Francisco Chronicle about an article on greenhouse gas emissions and forests. Branham told the Board that these articles and recent outreach demonstrates the progress SNC is making to get our message out. He acknowledged the great work staff has done to develop the message at a state level, identify the good science, and then develop great communication tools which "are paying dividends."

Communications and Outreach Manager Brittany Covich provided a PowerPoint presentation on SNC's recent communication and outreach activities. Covich highlighted the results of the 2017 Great Sierra River Cleanup and shared graphics and videos that were developed to illustrate California's connection to the Sierra Nevada during Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week.

Boardmember Susana Reyes encouraged her fellow Boardmembers to engage and get involved in the social media platforms that will help to spread the SNC message.

c. Proposition 84 Grant Award under Delegated Authority

Mt. Lassen Area Manager Andy Fristensky provided the Board with a recent grant made to the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, for the project which is titled: Supporting Development of Wood Product Markets Through Construction of a Cross-laminated Timber Building.

Fristensky provided the Board with background stating that in 2015, the California Energy Commission awarded a \$2.6 million grant to the Sierra Institute for the construction of a biomass fire heated system at Plumas County's Health and Human Center in Quincy. Fristensky stated this SNC grant totaled \$35,000 for the purchase of construction materials and supplies and showed pictures from the previous day of construction on this project.

Fristensky defined cross-laminated timber as a relatively new technology and mentioned this will be the first building made of these materials in the state of California and will hopefully serve as an example for other communities throughout the entire state. An added benefit of this project is protecting a woodchip boiler which utilizes biomass from local forest health projects and thus

provides a heat source for community services.

Board Chair Terry O'Brien communicated his enthusiasm for this project and requested that staff provide an update on this project at future Board meetings.

d. Tribal Forum Discussion Report

Branham provided the introduction to the update on the prior day's Tribal Forum Discussion. Branham reminded the Board that they have now completed six discussions, one in each Subregion. Branham acknowledged O'Brien's participation in all of the discussions and the county supervisors who have participated.

Branham stated that the plan moving forward for SNC's tribal program will be re-evaluated given the completion of the Subregional discussions.

SNC Tribal Liaison Julie Griffith-Flatter updated the Board with a summary of the discussion at yesterday's meeting. Griffith-Flatter stated that they had one participant who was a staff environmental specialist from the Tuolumne Band of Mee-Wuk. This tribe has some familiarity SNC having participated in the Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS) Collaborative Process, and have attended one of SNC's grant-writing workshops. Griffith-Flatter said input from the tribe from those experiences was very positive.

Griffith-Flatter summarized the discussions stating that they touched on SNC's grant program and discussed the potential roadblocks for tribes in the state's grants programs, not just the SNC's but statewide, and the possibility of diminishing federal funding to tribes in the future which could result in the potential of more tribes being interesting in funding through state programs.

Griffith-Flatter also said the CEQA process was discussed and how SNC may be able to provide assistance in helping tribes with CEQA when they're looking for state funding.

Boardmembers and Griffith-Flatter engaged in conversation regarding overall tribal concerns expressed in the six tribal forums SNC has held so far. Tribal sovereignty and how to work with the state has been a consistent message that has come up and -- especially in funding. Consultation is another concern and when SNC has discussed its consultation efforts and policies with the grant program, and the AB-52 requirements versus what SNC does in addition to that, there has been positive feedback and SNC's efforts are appreciated by the tribes.

Griffith-Flatter said that health and safety issues as well as forest health concerns have been consistently expressed in our forums.

O'Brien is hoping to hear from Griffith-Flatter at the March meeting a recommendation to move forward from this point. While O'Brien has discussed

his disappointment with the turnout at the meetings, Griffith-Flatter did say that the message does not stay within the one or two tribes who may have attended and word of SNC outreach has spread amongst the tribes.

Boardmember Bernie Gyant said that the United States Forest Service has also had issues in dealing with various tribes simply because of the lack of resources and capacity within the tribes. Gyant urged SNC to continue to make efforts to reach out and keep the communication open with our Regional tribes.

Branham acknowledged Griffith-Flatter and her efforts to pull these forums together and said that these discussions have provided a positive response from our tribal partners.

e. Miscellaneous Updates
Nothing to report at this time.

XII. 2016-17 Sierra Nevada Conservancy Annual Report (ACTION)

Policy and Outreach Division Chief Angela Avery provided Boardmembers with a brief history on how the SNC has developed and utilized the annual report in past years, and outlined the format that would be used to create the Fiscal Year 16/17 Annual Report. Boardmembers discussed the process for developing the current annual report, and identified interest in opportunities for Board engagement during the development and distribution of future annual reports.

Avery said the annual report focuses on highlighting some of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program accomplishments this year, but also meets the statutory requirements for developing the annual report document. Avery offered Boardmembers a “mockup” copy of the annual report and made this copy available to the Board after the meeting. She indicated that staff would be reviewing the entire annual report process for future reports and will be reporting back to the Board with a recommendation at a future Board meeting.

ACTION: Boardmember Randy Fletcher moved and Boardmember Susana Reyes seconded, a motion to approve the proposed approach for completing the 2016-17 Annual Report and direct staff to develop and distribute the report. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Joint Powers Agreement between Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the California Tahoe Conservancy (ACTION)

Assistant Executive Officer Bob Kingman presented and described the proposed Joint Powers Agreement between the SNC and the California Tahoe Conservancy. Kingman said that, with the enabling legislation for both conservancies, neither one has the authority to expend funds outside of their designated regions.

The JPA will be necessary for SNC to fully implement the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Grant we received from CAL FIRE because it's in collaboration with the Tahoe Conservancy and the Forest Service. Branham expanded that the JPA is a two-way partnership that ultimately will result in benefit for both the Sierra Nevada and the Tahoe Basin.

Boardmember Bryan Cash indicated that the Natural Resources Agency was pleased with the coordination and cooperation between the two conservancies.

ACTION: Boardmember Bryan Cash moved and Boardmember Jack Garamendi seconded, a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to enter into a Joint Powers Agreement with the California Tahoe Conservancy to improve coordination, facilitate the sharing of resources, and expedite the implementation of essential management functions across the combined jurisdictions. The motion passed unanimously.

XIV. Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program Update (INFORMATIONAL)

Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Coordinator Mandy Vance shared with the Board some recent developments related to the WIP and provided an update on recent developments with the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI).

Vance highlighted an increased level of participation and commitment from the TCSI Steering Committee, who, with the SNC in a lead role, has been developing funding and communication strategies to ensure that the effort and energy focused on this landscape are leveraging real funding and policy improvement.

Additionally, Vance said, over the next few months the TCSI Steering Committee will be developing specific action plans to engage their staff and other partners, including timelines, specific actions, and desired outcomes in a couple of different the areas. The TCSI partnership is actively looking at project planning, including better ways to use NEPA and CEQA for large landscape restoration.

Vance also highlighted the scientific research component of the project noting that the Steering Committee is nearing resolution of funding the effort and identifying the key deliverables, which will include a scientific framework for resilience that identifies indicators and how they can be applied and measured in forests and ecosystems in the Sierra Nevada.

Vance shared that the partnership is developing a blueprint for progress that outlines spatially explicit opportunities and activities that could move ecosystems within the landscape toward a more resilient condition with the expectation that the blueprint might become a framework that can be extended to the rest of the Region.

Vance continued with a description of an effort underway on the Sierra National Forest to which the SNC is lending its support. Mt. Whitney Area Analyst Sara Campe has been coordinating an effort which is working on a prescribed fire Environmental Assessment (EA) for the forest. SNC is working closely with them to assist in development of a joint NEPA-CEQA approach which could satisfy both state and federal requirements and open the door to more state funding, potentially allowing more prescribed fire on that landscape.

Vance went on to provide the Board with a brief status update on the WIP assessments stating that the assessments have been providing important documentation to support grant application submission. Vance pointed out that there is detailed information included in the Board materials, but in addition, shared a successful proposal which utilized a WIP assessment. Vance said that although the project did not receive funding due to changes to the funding source, it would not have been a competitive or viable application if it were not for the groundwork the WIP assessment provided.

Boardmember Barnie Gyant provided the Board with a status update on the USFS WIP assessments and stated that he will continue to work with all units to continue to pursue GIS mapping of restoration needs that will meet the needs of the TCSI and WIP.

Boardmembers asked for a volunteer to replace former Boardmember Bob Kirkwood on the two-person Board WIP Committee. Boardmember Bob Johnston agreed to participate in this committee moving forward.

XV. Boardmembers' Comments

Boardmember Tom Wheeler provided the Board an update on the North Fork Biomass Plant, a long-term stewardship program in his Subregion. Wheeler stated that considerable progress is being made toward the final steps in this project.

Boardmember Jack Garamendi shared his appreciation for the Board meeting being held in his county and for the partnership his District has had with the SNC. Garamendi said that while he will no longer be serving on the Board, he will continue to stay engaged with activities in the Sierra and the work of SNC.

XVI. Public Comments

No comments at this time.

XVII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:19 p.m.