



Board Meeting Minutes September 5, 2019 — Sacramento, CA

Board Meeting

California Department of Food and Agriculture – Auditorium
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM.

2. Oath of Office for New Board Members

Board Chair Terry O'Brien administered the oath of office to California Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot and Matt Almy (Department of Finance)

3. Roll Call

Present:

- Terry O'Brien
- Wade Crowfoot
- Matt Almy
- Susana Reyes
- Mary Rickert
- Richard Anderson
- Stacy Corless
- Sherri Brennan
- Barnie Gyant
- Ruben Leal
- Jim Richardson
- Bob Johnston (joined the meeting at 9:13 AM)
- Jennifer Montgomery (joined the meeting at 9:39 AM, taking the place of Secretary Crowfoot)

Absent:

- Paul Roen
- Tom Wheeler
- Danny Wan
- John Brissenden

4. Approval of June 6, 2019, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

ACTION:

Boardmember Stacy Corless moved, and Boardmember Sherri Brennan seconded, a motion to approve the June 6, 2019, meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously. Boardmember Bob Johnston was not present for this vote.

5. Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Terry O'Brien introduced the Secretary for California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Boardmember Wade Crowfoot who addressed the Board highlighting CNRA and Governor Newsom's priorities and areas of focus.

Board Chair O'Brien highlighted the tour that took place the previous day noting that discussions about ways to increase capacity and workforce across the Region were very much needed.

6. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

Item 6a: Executive Officer Update

Executive Officer Angela Avery expressed her appreciation for Secretary Crowfoot's attendance at the meeting. Avery summarized the tour from the previous day, provided a quick review of the agenda, highlighted the bonds SNC is currently tracking, provided an update on Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI). She also said she hopes to preview the resilience dashboard staff is working to develop at a future meeting.

Avery updated the Board on the Action Plan she submitted to them when taking the new role of Executive Officer. Avery has spent the last year traveling throughout the Region to build relationships and trust. Avery has met all the goals outlined in her action plan. She has met with over 70 partners and visited all six of the SNC Subregions.

Avery will continue to work collaboratively with partners to look at a holistic approach to so many of the issues that the Sierra Nevada Region is facing. Avery thanked the Board for choosing her to serve in this position.

Item 6b: Administrative Update

Administrative Division Chief Amy Lussier was unable to attend the meeting. Avery asked the Board if they had any questions regarding the written Administrative Update contained in the staff report. There were no questions.

Item 6c: Policy and Outreach Update

Policy and Outreach Branch Manager Brittany Covich updated the Board about current legislation and initiatives affecting the SNC. Covich also provided an update on the California Water Resilience Portfolio, the resilience dashboard, and highlighted stories in the news that have featured SNC's projects and issues.

Covich announced the upcoming Great Sierra River Cleanup (GSRC) on September 21 and presented a video to the Board that will be used to promote the GSRC and Sierra

Nevada Water Protection Week. Boardmembers and staff engaged in further conversation discussing opportunities to support and expand volunteer efforts across the Sierra, including the upcoming National Public Lands Day on September 28.

Item 6d: Field Operations & Grants Update

Field Operations and Grants Branch Manager Andy Fristensky announced that two managers had been hired to support his division. Shannon Ciotti was promoted to the Grant and Reimbursements Manager and Luke Hunt was hired as the Field Operations Manager.

Fristensky provided the Board with a status on the grants program and advised the Board that he would have a lot more content to present in the coming months. Avery mentioned that the Board will also need to discuss how to spend the rest of the Proposition 68 appropriation at a future meeting.

The Board discussed ways to ensure that applicants know whether they are eligible for other grant programs and asked staff to look into options for sharing applications that cannot be awarded by the SNC with state partners.

7. Update on Relevant Science and Research Related to Forest Health and Resilience (INFORMATIONAL)

SNC Regional Science Coordinator Nic Enstice gave a presentation on current science related to forest health and resilience.

Boardmembers discussed the information and acknowledged that there are many studies on this subject. The Board also discussed emissions from a wildfire compared to emissions from prescribed fire and expressed interest in communicating these issues and the science behind them.

8. SNC Grant 1033 Cabbage Patch Restoration Project Amendment (ACTION) – Attachment A // Attachment B

Field Operations and Grants Branch Manager Andy Fristensky presented a summary to the Board describing the work that has been completed to date on the project and the reason additional Board approval is needed.

ACTION:

Boardmember Sherri Brennan moved, and Boardmember Susana Reyes seconded, a motion to:

- a. Approve findings concurring with the Negative Declaration and authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency for the Fore Project Restoration Area;***
- b. Authorize a grant amendment for Cabbage Patch Restoration Project (SNC 1033) to include the Fore Project Restoration Area; and***
- c. Direct staff to take the necessary actions for its successful implementation.***

The motion passed unanimously.

9. Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Block Grant Implementation (INFORMATIONAL) – Presentation

Boardmember Jennifer Montgomery recused herself from this item and left the dais.

Deputy Executive Officer Julie Alvis and Partnerships and Community Support Manager Alex Vance provided an overview and background of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Block Grant Implementation. The presentation included details about program objectives and responsibilities, the results of capacity interviews, and the role of leadership organizations.

Boardmembers identified potential barriers faced in Phase I and discussed possible resolutions to those issues. The Board also discussed on the ground work with the grants, commenting on the ways these grants could be a good start for programs in the small communities in the Region.

10. CAL FIRE California Climate Investments (CCI) Agreement Authorizations (ACTION) – Projects Map

Reimbursements Program Coordinator Andrea Williams provided the Board with the background and status of CCI project implementation. Williams stated that the projects brought forth today are the last two agreements to be implemented under the grant.

ACTION:

Boardmember Richard Anderson moved, and Boardmember Stacy Corless seconded a motion to:

- a. Authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Exemption for the King Fire Restoration project (933-CCI) and the Revenant project (931-CCI); and***
- b. Authorize staff to enter into the necessary agreements to implement the projects described in this report, pursuant to CAL FIRE – SNC Grant Agreement 8GG18601.***

The motion passed unanimously.

11. Boardmembers' Comments

Boardmember Jennifer Montgomery reminded the Board that this Saturday is National Biodiversity Day and encouraged staff and Boardmembers to get out there and take note of the biodiversity in their area.

Boardmember Sherri Brennan mentioned support for undertaking large-scale landscape NEPA documents.

Boardmember Stacy Corless encouraged the Board and staff to look at how Inyo has communicated to local communities about the Springs Fire.

Boardmember Mary Rickert asked that focus be placed on the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Boardmember Richard Anderson suggested a presentation about what SNC is doing to assist small communities related to creating defensible space in the WUI.

12. Public Comments

Izzy Martin – The Sierra Fund: Martin thanked the Board for the sponsorship of the upcoming Sierra Fund, Reclaiming the Sierra conference. Martin summarized the conference tour and topics that will be covered at the conference.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 PM.