

Draft CARCD Annual Business Meeting Minutes 2010
November 18th and 20th

November 18th

4:45 Call to Order

Present: Mike Yalow (Glenn County RCD), Donna Thomas (Eastern Kern RCD), Patrick Truman (Trinity County RCD), Ron Rolleri (Sotoyome RCD), Glenn Franklin (Mariposa RCD), Pete Lounsbury (MDRCD), John James (El Dorado RCD), Sherman A Boone (East Stanislaus RCD), Joe Lopes (Sloughhouse RCD), Richard Campbell (Antelope Valley RCD), Michael Albert (Mariposa RCD), Phil Schafer (Western Shasta RCD), Doug Rayner (Excelsior/ Kings River RCD), Tom Wehri (Placer RCD), Karen Buhr (CARCD), Paul C Williams (Inland Empire RCD), Leroy Scolari (Cachuma RCD), Carlan Meyers (El Dorado RCD), Ed Chambeau (Butte County RCD)

Quorum Report

Wehri gave a summary of how Quorum is determined for the annual conference general business meeting. He referenced 2003 when it was determined that any voting RCD is considered present for quorum if a board member from that RCD is registered for and attends any portion of the event . 47 Districts registered to be in Ventura, 57 Directors are present representing 26 voting districts. 21 are needed for quorum. Thus a quorum has been reached and was approved by the board on November 17th.

Wehri went on to explain voting procedure. Candidates will be nominated today, give a speech, and voting will occur on Saturday. Wehri clarified that according to the bylaws, officers can not hold 2 positions. Thus a regional rep can not also hold an executive position except the NACD representative.

Introduction of Election Inspectors

The election inspectors were introduced as Nancy Helsley, Ron Rolleri, and Ed Chambeau

Nominating Committee Report

Donna Thomas provided the nominating committee report. The candidates for office are as follows:

President: Tom Wehri (Placer RCD)

Vice President: Sherman Boone (East Stanislaus RCD)

Treasurer: Mike Yalow (Glenn County RCD) and Dennis Washburn (RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains). Yalow immediately withdrew his name in order to remain regional representative.

NACD Representative: John James (El Dorado RCD) and Patrick Truman (Trinity RCD)

Nominations from the Floor

Thomas called for nominations from the floor for all the above positions. None were brought forward for any of the positions. The floor was closed for nominations by the following people:

President moved by Washburn, 2nded by Yalow;

Vice President moved by Yalow, 2nded by Franklin;

Treasurer moved by Williams, 2nded by Yalow;

NACD Representative moved by Roller, 2nded by Franklin

Candidates Address

The Candidates were asked to address the floor.

Wehri listed his experience as a State Conservationist for the NRCS in Arkansas, Executive Director of CARCD, Chairman of the Placer County RCD, and Vice President of CARCD. He feels that his experience would help to move the organization forward. He wishes to create a plan to reinvigorate the RCDs, get directors involved, strengthen partnerships, build RCD leaders, and meet an obligation to our landowners. He welcomes input and suggestions. Please call him if you need anything.

Boone listed his experience. He has been Chairman of the East Stanislaus RCD for 10 years and chair of the Bay Delta Region for 3 years. He is a retired almond grower and now works as an agricultural real estate agent. He spent 43 years as a producer and harvester of pecans. Boone wants to invigorate board members to have greater representation in the regional and state meetings. He wants to encourage their participation in strategic positioning and thinks feedback is very important. He asks that if anyone has feedback please call or email him.

Washburn thanked Yalow for his years of service to CARCD as treasurer. He then stated that he has been a director at the RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains for 26 years. Reagan was also a board member there. Washburn was inspired by Ed Burton's comments about growing conservation in California and strengthening the NRCS partnership with the RCDs. Washburn wants to strengthen that partnership and hold Burton to his promises. He also wants to keep CARCD's finances transparent. Money needs to begin to come from the local level since funding from the State and Federal Governments is dwindling. He will work with Wehri, Boone and the staff to ensure that California RCDs get the resources they need.

James provided his background. He became a director of the El Dorado RCD in 1997. He worked as an engineer for CalTrans for decades. In that role, he worked with stakeholder groups to deliver high quality transit systems in Ca and reached consensus on challenging issues. James spearheaded the strategic plan in 1997 and is ready to do it again. Both a new strategic plan and the capacity building effort are crucial to CARCD right now. James attends the NACD events. NACD has been very effective at influencing the farm bill. Other states are much more involved on the national level. Ca only brings 2-3 representatives while other states bring 20-30. There is no representation from the Ca NRCS. Our voices can increase the NRCS' ability to increase the budget to Ca and get Ca NRCS folks to the national meetings. District directors need to attend to strengthen Ca's voice. Last year the NACD coastal committee was going to be disbanded. There was no leadership until the BP oil spill.

Now the committee is being reinvigorated, but is being lead by Colorado. He sees an opportunity for Ca to strengthen its role here. He also sees an opportunity to get involved with the Western Coalition. CARCD removed itself from the coalition years ago. He wants to provide a stronger voice for California Ag and strengthen our role in NACD.

Truman provided his background. He was president of CARCD for 2 years, Vice President for 1 year, and NACD representative for 2 years. He became a director on the Trinity RCD board in 1984. He distributed his 2010 officer report. Truman's #1 priority is to secure funding for Ca. We've been very successful. Ca received \$120 million from the NRCS alone last year. 2012 farm bill is coming up. It is important that Ca has strong leadership in the Farm Bill legislation. In the 2008 Farm Bill money was excluded from being spent on RCD property. Truman then elaborated on his background. He grew up in Southern California, went to school in the bay area and now lives in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. He spent 9 years with the forest service, was a watershed coordinator, was an executive director of a social services organization, sells real estate, and was a property manager. He encouraged everyone to talk to him if they have questions.

Wehri encouraged officers to talk with the candidates. He reviewed the agenda for Saturday and then suspended the meeting until Saturday.

Saturday November 20th 8:00 AM

8:15 Wehri reconvened the meeting

Locations of Upcoming Annual Meetings

Approval of San Joaquin County 2011, Nov 10-13

RCD of Greater San Diego 2012

Will look into 2013- potential regional Sacramento

2014- RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains

Membership Discussion

Wehri presented a summary of dues paid both this year and over the past decade. He stressed that options need to be equitable, encourage people to pay the maximum and maintain a bottom line for the organization.

Thomas spoke on behalf of the dues committee and presented three options:

1. \$500 flat fee with an option to pay more. Districts would be able to assign their dues towards certain CARCD activities essentially voting for services with their dollars.
2. Set fee for a range of incomes (i.e. if your income is between 10,000- 20,000 the district pays x amount of dollars). The range would be based on income not pass through.
3. Wait. Utilize the strategic planning and capacity building effort to guide the new dues structure.

Wehri reminded the membership that dues are set by the board, not the bylaws.

Thomas continued that one core questions that needs to be answered is what is income? Is it total project budget or is it the overhead collected on grants? Fair share becomes more difficult when based on total project costs.

Franklin is an advocate of the \$500 base structure. He has been attending Annual Meetings for 18 years. There used to be 500 people attending, 20- 30 resolutions, and 70 districts. Now that the numbers have dwindled, it is important to get people involved again. He hears people asking what CARCD is doing for the districts. A \$500 fee would help encourage participation. Scholarships would also help.

Claudia Smith expressed that a \$500 flat fee would not help CARCD meet its bottom line. She suggested writing CARCD an overhead percentage into grants might be an option.

James stressed the need to 1) maximize participation and 2) maintain a budget. The Transportation Association has a 3 tier system based on income that works well. More importantly, CARCD needs to work on branding. The cost itself isn't the issue, the question is what are people getting in return? We need to address the total approach.

Yalow agreed that we need to build a sustainable CARCD. We need to get the message out of all the great things CARCD can do, but also need to express the cost of those services. He hears that the current cost is too much. CSDA has a tiered dues structure. We don't want to discourage full dues paying members. Everyone wants CARCD to survive, but we have to be able to sell it. There has to be a reason to support the organization. We need to build the organization in order to build the dues.

Williams said that we need to stick to the support for the organization. Adding admin into grants would be an easy solution. He said he's been paying full dues, but the problem comes in transition. What happens when the next guy comes in? What is his incentive to pay full dues?

Skardoff has been getting a lot of push back on paying full dues because the RCD is hurting financially. They have had to freeze staff pay. If things don't turn around they will be forced to pay minimum dues. They can't sacrifice to help others when their staff is facing layoffs and wage reductions. He stressed the importance of building benefits into belonging. He said we need to find a way to get RCDs involved even if it means allowing in-kind match in place of dues. Capacity building will help. There needs to be a sense of equity and fairness.

Franklin wanted to clarify net income would be used in the proposed dues structure not all pass through.

Wehri said that dues have been decreasing over the last 10 years. We need to set two priorities 1) What services is CARCD providing and 2) What is a fair contribution. The dues structure will be decided at the next board meeting in February.

McKenna said that the RCD bias toward bottom up makes it difficult to get districts to pay dues. They don't see a need when they are doing all the work. The culture needs to shift more top down with the perspective "What can CARCD take off our plate?" There needs to be a value added. We should be building our branding and spreading the awareness of CARCD. There should also be scholarships to get people involved.

Scolari is opposed to making changes right now. A flat rate won't help. Raising the fee to \$500 when people aren't paying the \$300 won't get more districts involved. Quarterly reports from CARCD would be helpful. People want to know what CARCD is doing. The newsletter can be used for lobbying.

Dupree expressed the importance of sponsorships. He felt the tier method would make things easier for everyone. We need to market ourselves. There should be banners from sponsors all over the event.

Smith said a tiered structure would work and the bottom tier could be eligible for scholarships for conference.

Wehri again told the membership that the decision would be made in February at the next board meeting. He then introduced the board and asked people to have further discussions with the board.

Wehri then expressed the need for more education. NRCS is volunteering to help out by offering some of their staff and resources to assist our efforts. Would districts be willing to put in money toward the effort?

Speak-off Topic

3 topics were presented to the membership for a vote:

- 1) What can RCDs do to educate the public about estuary habitat?
- 2) What can RCDs do to educate the public about plastic bag consumption and pollution?
- 3) What can RCDs do to help bridge sustainable conservation practices with food safety practices?

7 votes went to topic #3, 2 votes for #2 and 3 votes for #1.

Officer Reports

President/ Vice President

Wehri addressed the membership on behalf of both Quist and Wehri. He said most of what has occurred over the past year has been covered in the discussions at conference. He is happy to report that the new financial system is up and running. The capacity building grant will be a really important effort going forward. He expressed that the organization is moving in the right direction and he is excited to be part of it. He then thanked the staff for all their hard work over the year.

Treasurer

Yalow gave a quick overview saying that the financial status of the organization is in good standing. He is pleased with the new financial system and feels that the financial status of the organization is much clearer now. He gave a quick overview of the current numbers that show a positive return.

Wehri listed the various accounts CARCD maintains. He said a clearer balance sheet will be distributed to all RCDs along with a summary of grants.

Executive Director

Buhr stated that a list of annual accomplishments is listed in her officer's report so she would like to take a minute to express thanks to everyone for coming to conference and for having such vibrant conversations. It takes a lot of resources for members to come and participate, your contributions are appreciated. She said that it was refreshing to hear the ideas, thoughts, suggestions, concerns, and successes of the RCD community throughout the last few days. She is particularly pleased with the ownership people are taking in the organization and the energy of the participation. Multiple times she heard people say "our organization". She feels this is particularly important to the future of CARCD. This is "our organization." The progress we are making is important and through the participation of all of our members we will have a stronger CARCD. She went on to summarize the themes of the last few days and encouraged members to keep the discussion going. She is willing to help wherever needed and encouraged folks to call her with suggestions, thoughts and ideas.

Scolari moved to accept the Executive Director's report with great thanks and gratitude for a job well done. The membership unanimously agreed.

Partner Reports

Department of Conservation- Jenni Di Stefano

Nancy Dagel was hired as the new watershed liaison. She is revamping the watershed portal and would like feedback. Please check it out on the DLRP website.

Jan Holder and Barbara Dela Marie are the new grant managers for the prop 84 grants. For the new round of Watershed Coordinator grants, 115 applications were received requesting over \$20 million. There is only \$9 million in funding. About 40-50% of the applications came from

RCDs. Most likely a lot of RCDs will receive funding. The goal is to announce recipients mid February. Funding will be available approximately 2 months later.

Washburn- What is Brown's influence going to be on the future of conservation?

Di Stefano- Not sure, not a lot has been said. Bridgette Luther resigned her position of Director a few months ago and Leahy is still in his appointment. A new director of the division of land and resource protection could be appointed, but also may not be.

Washburn- Brown should be pro-conservation but we don't know yet. He suggested that we need to look at ways to recover a tax base for all RCDs.

Di Stefano- The budget is currently at a \$25.4 billion deficit. They put \$10 million back in the Williamson Act. The \$10 million is $\frac{1}{4}$ of normal funding, but is a step in the right direction.

The updated info sharing information is up on the DOC website. It includes policies, procedures, and reports that have all been updated since the CDs that were distributed 5 years ago. Everything is now 2007 or later.

Washburn requested that Buhr send a link of resources to attendees.

Election Results

Rolleri announced the election results for NACD representative. 24 ballots were distributed to delegates. All were received back.

John James received 11 votes

Patrick Truman received 13 votes

Patrick Truman will continue on as NACD Representative.

Rolleri announced the new executive Officers:

President: Tom Wehri

Vice President: Sherman Boone

Treasurer: Dennis Washburn

NACD Representative: Patrick Truman

Wehri thanked the new board. He also acknowledged the hard work James has put in on the strategic positioning effort, his dedication to CARCD and his very important role going forward. He encouraged James to stay involved as his voice is important and appreciated.

Partner Reports Continued

NRCS- Luana Kiger announced that she was glad the capacity building effort is underway. She is glad the NRCS can be part of it by contributing funding. NRCS will be offering training in conjunction with the area meetings. They will partner with the area offices to help them get other federal agencies to RCD meetings including BLM and others. The NRCS wants the RCDs to have a bigger role in the landscape level planning. Landscapes are an important theme in the Federal Government currently. These efforts should combine with the RCD Capacity Building efforts.

The NRCS recently held a meeting for all NRCS, RC&D and Rural Services Agency staff in Sacramento. We should have a similar meeting and include RCDs.

Kiger has been tasked with assisting RCDs. Call on her. An educational liaison is really important to getting youth engaged in conservation. Give them the opportunity to get out there. SLEWS program is a great example.

Wehri commented that Ed Burton laid out a clear effort at the board meeting Wednesday night to get out there on the local level. Burton will be holding meetings within the NRCS similar to our capacity building effort. His goals are to:

- 1) Get back to the grassroots of assisting producers and
- 2) Partner with the RCDs

RC&D- Valerie Kleinfelter

Kleinfelter thanked CARCD for allowing her to participate in such a great meeting. Her goal for the year is to outreach and build partnerships. She feels there is a natural partnership between the RCDs and the RC&Ds. If we work together we can get a lot accomplished. This is particularly true in California. We have one of the largest economies in the US. She sees a particular opportunity in partnering for EQIP monies and in other grant opportunities at the local level. RC&Ds hold 501 C3 status and can provide strong partnerships in the local communities. She looks forward to working with the RCDs over the upcoming year.

Resolutions

Resolution #1- Allows a delegated staff person to vote on behalf of a board member at CARCD regional and statewide meetings.

Wehri motioned to bring the resolution to the floor for a vote so that discussion could ensue. Campbell seconded

Wehri expressed support for the resolution saying that the resolution would bring greater participation in CARCD. Board members that are unable to attend meetings can send a proxy with specific voting instructions.

Pete Lansbury stated that he is not in support. We need to hold the line in keeping CARCD a director run organization.

Nancy Helsley also disagreed. While it might be acceptable to send a yes or no vote, votes rarely go that way. Allowing staff to do the wordsmithing and changes to the resolutions would be giving up fiduciary responsibility.

Mike Yalow did not agree with giving up an elected responsibility. We are elected officials and can not delegate that responsibility any more than a Mayor or County Supervisor.

Igor Skaredoff said he was conflicted. He understood the motivation to increase participation, but felt that it is a slippery slope. Approving the resolution would be a move toward letting staff run the organization rather than directors.

Sherman Boone agreed with increasing participation but felt that the better way to accomplish this is through building the organization and better "branding." We should improve the organization to improve participation not allow staff to take it over. If we show a value added for participation, people will participate. While our current numbers may not be large, we do maintain a good cross representation of the State. He hates attending meetings that are entirely staff and he is the only volunteer. Since staff is paid, there is no cost of attendance for them. If they are allowed to vote, they will overrun people who have to give up time from their other responsibilities to volunteer to be there. It's better to invigorate directors.

Question was called on the motion to allow staff to vote on behalf of board members.

The resolution was overwhelmingly defeated. No count was taken.

Resolution #2

To support the position of promoting RCDs and placing RCD branding, messaging and promotion as a top priority in order to maintain the RCDs relevancy in this quickly changing world.

Leroy Scolari moved to approve, Nancy Helsley seconded

Jim McKenna reaffirmed the resolution saying that it is really important that we adopt the resolution and make a serious effort to promote ourselves. We take our jobs seriously and can't get complacent that the rest of the world knows we are here and knows what we are doing. We need a unified message and voice if we want to stay relevant. This will assist us in finding funding and getting recognition to promote on the ground restoration.

Igor Skaredoff stated that this resolution reflects the branding message we have been talking about all week long. RCDs should be branding individually, locally, regionally, and statewide. He thinks this resolution is healthy for the organization and he supports it.

The resolution was called to question and unanimously approved.

Resolution #3

To support the use of existing rail lines in the creation of a corridor for high speed rail.

Rich Cambell moved to support the resolution in order to open discussion. Pete Lounsbury seconded

Paul Robins said that he is in support.

Glen Franklin expressed concern for the safety of the urban environment. While a new line will cause inconveniences for agriculturists, they will cause grave danger for urban dwellers. Also elevating tracks will cause problems in cities, but not as much on ag land.

Marilyn Huntamer said that there is not enough information and thus Greater San Diego County will vote no.

Bill Johnson stated that this is a matter of regional concern and thus shouldn't be decided by the statewide organization.

John James said that he worked at CalTrans for 20 years and has been working on high speed rail since 1989. He said that the ag organizations are split on the issue: some feel that it will spur local economies which is good for the community, others worry about safety. Anything hit by a train moving 220 mph will be vaporized. Safety precautions will be installed. In some cases farmers will have to go long distances out of their way to get to adjacent properties. He feels that this resolution is premature. There is still a lot of work to be done in setting and deciding upon routes. Since there is still a split opinion in the ag community and the work is still continuing, he feels the resolution should be tabled.

Glenn Franklin agreed that tabling the resolution would be best and motioned to do so. Mike Yalow seconded. The motion was unanimously tabled.

Oath of Office

The new officers were sworn in.

Tom Wehri addressed the membership and asked them to call him if there were any questions, issues, concerns, or ideas. He passed out his business card. He said that it is going to be a busy year filled with many important objectives, but talking with the membership is a top priority for him.

Dennis Washburn asked that a board roster be sent out to the membership. He asked that we keep our communication going and not wait until next year to continue the conversation.

Sherman Boone agreed.

Patrick Truman asked members to call him anytime with questions or concerns and reminded folks to join the listserve.

Tom Wehri took a minute to recognize John James for his work on strategic positioning and to invite him to stay involved as an integral member. He then thanked the Ventura RCD and Marty Melvin for all their work.

Mike Yalow thanked everyone for coming.

- 11:15 Sherman Boone motioned to adjourn, Leroy Scolari seconded the membership unanimously approved