



County of Placer
Agricultural Commission

11477 E Avenue ▪ Auburn, CA 95603 ▪ (530) 889-7372

Denise Moore – Nursery
Earl Stephens – Ag Processing
Elisa Noble – Small Farms

Jim Brenner – Fruit & Nut Farm
Larry Jordan – Timber
Patricia Beard - Livestock

Patrick Bollinger – Foothill Farms
Rich Ferreira – Citrus
Wayne Vineyard – Rice

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 10, 2023, 7:00 PM

Placer County Planning Commission Hearing Room

3091 County Center Drive, Auburn, CA

County Contact: Joshua Huntsinger

I. CALL TO ORDER and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair, Wayne Vineyard.

Roll Call

Present: Beard, Brenner, Ferreira, Jordan, Moore, Noble, Stephens, Vineyard.

Absent: Bollinger

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA for April 10, 2023 AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES from February 6, 2023: Motion by Ferreira, second by Stephens, MPUV.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS:

A. Water Supply Updates:

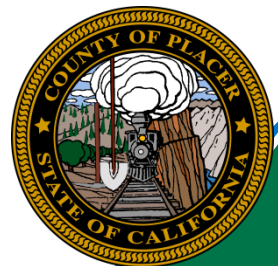
1. Nevada Irrigation District – not present

2. Placer County Water Agency – Darin Reintjes

a. Water Update, as of 4/4/23

- Lake Spaulding: 82.1” precipitation, 135% of average
- Snowpack:
 - American River: 59.9” precipitation, 213% of average
 - Talbot Camp: 45.5” precipitation, 243% of average
 - Diamond Crossing: 41.5” precipitation, 212% of average
 - Miranda Cabin: 67” precipitation, 185% of average
 - Wabena Meadows: 164” precipitation, 171% of average
- Middle Fork Reservoir & Snowpack Storage
 - Reservoir: 249,980 AF, 124% of average
 - Snowpack: 410,060 AF, 213% of average
- Middle Fork Project Combined Storage:
 - 249,980 AF
 - 99% of average
 - 73% of capacity
- Lake Spaulding/Fordyce Combined Storage
 - 60,000 AF
 - 105% of average
 - 48% of capacity

The Agricultural Commission is composed of appointed community members whose purpose is to advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters pertaining to agriculture including recommendations regarding California Land Conservation Act/Williamson Act applications. Residents are encouraged to attend and provide input. Placer County is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided the resources to participate fully in public meetings. If you require disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, to attend or participate in this meeting, please contact the Placer County Agriculture Department at (530) 889-7372.



Daryl Hensler, Director of Field Services for PCWA, reported on water deliveries. PCWA will be able to supply all upcoming demands this summer. PCWA has been getting the orifices ready along with installing dams soon in Auburn Ravine and scheduling water deliveries soon. PCWA recently updated the rules and regulations with the raw water system as the main focus, setting the priority for new allocations of water, placing an effort on commercial scale ag. Other than a culvert failure in Alta, the system is doing well.

B. Resource Conservation District Update.

Andrew Justus Fritz reported on programs and funding for agricultural producers in Placer County – “We Help People Help the Land.”

Celebrating 75 years in conservation – Placer Resource Conservation District (RCD) is a community driven source of conservation. The four main “legs to the stool” are to: 1) provide technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, and communities; 2) implement conservation projects on public and private lands; 3) provide workshops and public education opportunities with partners; and 4) connect Federal, State, Local, and private funding to implement projects. All four are not possible without RCD’s partners.

The RCD budget is comprised of 8% property tax revenue and the remaining 92% of funding comes from grants and contracts. For every \$1 of property tax revenue, RCD brings in \$9 of conservation technical assistance and conservation programs into Placer County, excluding the Chipper Program and existing contracts.

Andrew reported on various programs in forestry and natural resources. One of the most popular programs is the Placer County Chipper Program, funded by Placer County and Cal Fire. The program is available to residents as a cost-share program providing low-cost residential chipper service for its residents. The Chipper Program incentivizes fuels reduction and promotes defensible space adherence and fire prevention activities. The cost is \$80 per hour where residents can utilize a crew that will chip and broadcast piled vegetation.

This year at the Placer County 2023 Ag Tour, attendees will visit growers and operations who are navigating the challenges of modern agriculture with innovative practices and strategies, taking Placer County agriculture to the next level.

Learn more about the Assistance for Backyard and Community Ag at:

<https://placerrcd.org/technical-assistance/for-backyard-and-community-agriculture/>

Submit an interest form regarding Climate Resilience Through Habitat Restoration on California Lands at: <https://placerrcd.org/projects/pollinatorhabitat/>

To learn more about RCD programs and projects, go to: <https://placerrcd.org/projects/>.

Find technical assistance at: <https://placerrcd.org/technical-assistance/what-is-technical-assistance/>

For more information about Placer Resource Conservation District’s programs and services, go to: www.placerRCD.org.

V. REPORTS

A. UCCE Farm Advisor Update:

Dan reported that on April 1, 2022, at the Sierra Foothill Research and Extension Center, there was 2600 pounds to the acre of forage production during a declared drought. This year, there is 1200 pounds per acre of forage production – the grass is extremely short. The dilemma is how to communicate this to the drought monitor that 2023 was worse than 2022. The grass will be shorter causing it to be a tougher year.

The survey results of NID's route water customers will be reported this summer. One interesting find is that if prices reach a certain threshold, people will quit irrigating or leave agriculture altogether since there is less flexibility shifting to a higher-value crop when water prices increase.

Dan reported he is excited and proud to be part of a Regional Cooperative Extension Team to have received two grants, one from Russell L. Rustici Rangeland and Cattle Research Endowment and the other from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), for cattle operations for virtual fencing. The grants will fund a virtual fence system using a GPS collar from a company named Vence. The collars emit a Radio Frequency (RF) signal that is used to automatically create a virtual fence around the cattle. The Vence app will keep track of the cattle's location and send alerts if the cattle attempt to leave the virtual fence. Hopefully, there will be an opportunity to have virtual fencing for sheep and goat operations in the near future.

Two Livestock and Range Workshops are scheduled with Cordi Craig at RCD, who manages the prescribed burning program, to start at the Kramer Ranch in Nevada County, controlling barb goatgrass. Fire is one of the few things to control the grass and need to burn two seasons in a row. The Tahoe Cattlemen's Association is hosting their inaugural Spring Ranch Tour on May 6th. Three ranches will be visited on the tour to learn about irrigated pasture management and artificial insemination. Three Livestock Pass Trainings for new registrants are scheduled for the end of May to early June, in partnership with Cal Fire and local law enforcement. A two-day day Targeted Grazing School is scheduled in June for new farmers.

Cindy Fake has several workshops scheduled in the next six weeks before retiring at the end of June: Citrus Field Day on April 13th, Irrigation Field Day on 4/27, Citrus Pest Management on 5/18, Grape Growers Field Day/Class on 6/1 and 6/2, and Beginning Farming Academy on 6/7.

B. Agriculture Department Updates: Josh Huntsinger, Agricultural Commissioner

Josh Huntsinger reported on the recent Ag-Urban interface west of Roseville with geese who feed on the oat hay fields at night, and a farmer having to use a Zon gun at night to scare away the geese.

A crop field was scheduled for pesticide spraying, and the latest aerial imagery in the area is from May 2022, showing no homes in that area. There is now a new neighborhood built up to the hay field with no buffer. A Roseville resident reached out to their Roseville City Council who directed them to contact the Agricultural Commissioner, Josh Huntsinger.

Josh reported he worked with the husband and wife who were concerned about the spray application and thought their property was drifted on by another crop duster plane recently. It was learned the previous plane was applying a granular fertilizer, not pesticides, and it was explained to the couple that not all planes are applying pesticides and planes are fairly far away and unlikely to drift. Further explanation provided was that the reason for using a crop duster plane is due to the ground being too wet to use a tractor through the orchard right now. The end result was the department was able to put some restricted materials permit conditions on the pesticide application, including a department staff person onsite during the application, a crop dusting company staff onsite with a radio to the airplane, and burning tires to create a smoke column so department staff and crop dusting staff could watch the wind moment by moment. The department used 20-30 hours staff time to complete the application. This will continue to be challenging with all the new building in Placer County. Josh stated he does and will continue to serve both the farmer and county residents and find ways to work together so the farmer can farm and residents feel informed and comfortable.

As Interim Director of Parks and Open Space, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) just approved construction plans and specifications and authorized the county to go out to bid for the new parking lot for the Twilight Ride Access and Parking/Trailhead project, part of the Hidden Falls Regional Park Trails and Open Space Expansion Project in North Auburn. The BOS decided to purchase the property as a secondary access point to Hidden Falls and much of the land trust property that will go up to the Bear River. The BOS approved the design on the new parking lot, and Parks hopes the project is complete this year.

Parks is in the final stages of a commercial cattle grazing contract on the 1200 acres of Hidden Falls. For those interested, there will be an informational update on Hidden Falls in the Planning Commission Hearing Room on the eve of April 18th.

The Agriculture Department is recruiting for an Agricultural & Standards Inspector, so everyone is asked to invite any interested parties to apply for the position.

The BOS approved a contract with Vibrant Planet, the company who owns Land Tender software, a GIS-based planning tool where you feed it data to help build out projects based on a set of priorities such as protecting communities, natural resources, and wildlife habitat, combined with the condition of the forest and fire risk as some examples. The plan is to build out the next ten years of the county's efforts around forest health treatments and increase the scale. Recently, the North Yuba River and Downieville area was recently granted over \$100 million, due to having a good plan in place, to do forest health treatments. Placer County would like to be in the position to transition from treating thousands of acres to tens of thousands of acres per year. The BOS has directed the department to look at projects to start immediately. Regional Forest Health (RFH) is working on the Baker Ranch project, located on the west and north sides of Foresthill, and is an approximate 28,000-acre project. The department has submitted a request for Federal funding and is in the process of completing the NEPA and CEQA as a first step.

One of the outstanding issues with forest health is the lack of infrastructure, such as a shortage of mills, biomass facilities, trucks, and qualified personnel – it is a challenge to manage and rebuild the infrastructure as the timber industry has declined over the last 20+ years.

Future of agenda items are as follows: 1) Economic Development and General Plan Addendum; 2) Sustainable Groundwater Management Update; 3) General Solar Discussion with Planning Division; 4) Discussion on Policies: Agricultural Mitigation, Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP), Understanding Processes, and Williamson Act; and 5) PCCP Update

C. Agricultural Commissioner's Reports: No reports

VI. ADJOURNMENT – 8:13pm