



## CARCD BOARD MEETING MINUTES February 2022

### Attending:

#### Board of Directors

- Brent Plemmons, Central Coast Regional Chair, RCD of Monterey County
- Don Butz, President, RCD of Great San Diego County
- Harold Singer, Treasurer, Tahoe RCD
- Jeannine Giuffre, High Desert Regional Chair, Tehachapi RCD
- Mandy Parkes, District Manager, Southern area representative, Inland Empire RCD
- Rick Gomez, NACD Representative, Inland Empire RCD
- Yvonne Franco, SoCal Baja Regional Chair, Coachella Valley RCD

#### CARCD Staff

- Emily Sutherland, Office Manager, CARCD
- Hannah Tikalsky, Grizzly Corps Fellow
- Jennifer Wood, Soil Health Specialist
- Nancy Wahl-Scheurich, Project Manager, CARCD

#### Guests

- Derek Emmons, Contra Costa RCD
- Elissa Robinson, Contra Costa RCD
- Erik McKee, Napa RCD
- Erika Harris, San Mateo RCD
- Jeff Borum, East Stanislaus RCD
- Jelly Kahler, RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains
- Kellyx Nelson, San Mateo RCD
- Kristen Murphy
- Michelle Katuna, Marin RCD
- Sheena Sidhu, San Mateo RCD

**Opening** - Butz opened the meeting by acknowledge the native people and the land of California in which the virtual meeting was taking place.

While public comment letters were being complied and confirmed, business calendar items were discussed and approved:

- Approval of Past Meeting Minutes (November 2021 & Annual Business Meeting)
  - A motion to approve the both the November 2021 regular board meeting and Annual RCD Business Meeting minutes was made by Gomez; seconded by Plemmons. The rest of the board members approved.
- Budget report as of Q2 for Fiscal Year 21-22
  - Sutherland shared the budget report that was included in the budget report as of the end of the second quarter (December 31, 2021). There were additional reports included as well including the a more current membership dues update as of the end of January; a conference budget summary report (pending a few final invoices from conference consultants and staff hours); a revolving loan fund update including one active loan out and other pending applications being reviewed.

### **CARCD Committee updates**

- Forestry Committee – Sheena Sidhu, San Mateo RCD, committee member
  - See the [written report](#) that was submitted
- JEDI Committee – Nancy Wahl-Scheurich, CARCD staff, committee member
  - See the [written report](#) that was submitted

### **Board JEDI updates**

Butz shared the written report and update on the progress on internal Board JEDI action items and invited questions.

- Sidhu asked about an update on the hiring process of the status of the hiring of the JEDI program manager. Wahl-Scheurich updated that CARCD staff has been receiving applications, but was not happy with the pool of applicants. The job description is also being further reviewed also is working on getting additional feedback from the JEDI description, NRCS and other partners. JEDI committee members will also be involved in the interview process. Borum commented that he was concerned that the folks from the BIPOC community members weren't brought into the process from the very beginning.
- Sidhu also asked how many board members attended the virtual conference session, especially the JEDI tracks. Board members responded with some of the sessions they were able to attend and Butz mentioned that recordings are available for those who were not able to attend live. Hatfield presented at the conference and other board members hosted/moderated sessions
- Murphy noted that the lack of qualified applications could be from where the job was posted and advertised. Butz acknowledged.

### **BIPOC Community Update**

A google drive folder with a compilation of 8 letters from the BIPOC community group was share and time was given in the meeting for review and discussion of the letters.

### **Draft JEDI Committee Charter**

The next steps of the process of the JEDI Committee charter development process were outlined. The Board of Directors will receive proposed JEDI Committee Charter and review written public comments submitted. The Board of Directors will review document during CARCD Board of Directors work session on February 28, 2022 and be in contact with JEDI Committee for next steps after the meeting. The Board of Directors plans on giving their feedback to the committee by March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Singer inquired about what the best process would be for board members to ask questions of the committee during the board review the charter. Butz replied that the board will provide a consolidated list of questions to the committee after the board has time to review as a group. Butz also opened up the floor to questions from the board to the committee members that are present.

- Singer asked for clarification about the BIPOC community approval that is mentioned in the charter.
  - Members of the community and Nelson replied with comments about the decentralized nature of the community group and noted that even though it lacks structure it should be trusted by the board
- Singer asked for clarification around the JEDI charter RCD certification mentioned in the charter in regards to it being voluntary for RCDs and what authority there is from the committee to revoke the certification and both the purpose of the certification.
  - Wahl-Scheurich and Nelson mentioned that she believed the JEDI certification and principles would be incorporated into the Tier system within the Vision and Standards. Robinson acknowledged that the certification would be voluntary since all things that CARCD has for RCDs is voluntary. Butz shared that rather than a separate certification, it would be better if it was just embedded into the voluntary highest Tier system.
- Butz thanked the JEDI committee and board members for their hard work in putting this charter together.

## Public Comment

- Katuna encouraged new board members to reach out to the JEDI committee members and she shared her email address in the meeting chat function
- Robinson shared that she preferred the public comment being shared throughout the agenda rather than only at the beginning and end of the meeting
- Sidhu expressed that she is hesitant to sit on the interview panel for the JEDI program manager after the discussion and public comment
- Borum expressed that he wouldn't want the JEDI Program Manager to be hired until the internal issues within CARCD have been addressed
- McKee asked if it was possible for the applications/resumes received for the Program Manager position to be reviewed by others earlier on in the process

## Meeting adjourned

## CARCD BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, February 23, 2022

### Attending:

#### Board Members:

- Don Butz, President, RCD of Greater San Diego County
- Colleen Hatfield, Vice President, Butte County RCD
- Harold Singer, Treasurer, Tahoe RCD
- Rick Gomez, NACD Representative, Inland Empire RCD
- Jeannine Giuffre, High Desert Regional Chair, Tehachapi RCD
- Brent Plemmons, Central Coast Regional Chair, RCD of Monterey County
- Mandy Parkes, District Manager Southern Area, Inland Empire RCD
- Yvonne Franco, SoCal Baja Regional Chair, Coachella Valley RCD
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#### CARCD staff:

- Emily Sutherland, Office Manager
- Hannah Tikasky, Grizzly Corps Fellow

#### Partners/Guests:

- Mark Fenstermaker, Pacific Policy Group
- Tasha Newman, Pacific Policy Group
- Jenny DiStefano, Department of Conservation

**Opening** - Butz opened the meeting by acknowledge the native people and the land of California in which the virtual meeting was taking place.

### Partner Report – Pacific Policy Group

Pacific Policy Group is reading through hundreds of bills that were just submitted at the deadline to see what is going to be good for CARCD and RCDs. This is the beginning of a 6-month process of bills moving through the legislative process. The budget process is happening in parallel to the legislative/bill process.

CARCD finally has a Division 9 bill in print and processes –AB 1902, (Aguiar-Curry). The key difference between the previous attempts and the current bill is that the RCD certification process that was going to be run by DOC

is not in the current version. The main updates are around what types of services and activities RCDs serve since many of their modern actions and services are out of step with the outdated statuses.

- Butz suggested that we could look into changing the language around providing stipends or compensation to board members.
- Singer also brought up the issues surrounding who can serve as RCD directors in how it relates to JEDI and BIPOC issues.

In addition to AB 1902, Aguiar-Curry will be making a separate budget push for RCD capacity building funding similar 10 million dollars over 2 years through the DOC FAP that was used last time. DOC does not want to manage 50 small grants like last time and is looking into block grant options, potentially through CARCD.

There is also another, larger conversation happening within the 30x30 programs for some more general capacity funding assistance at the local level from other organizations, so the funding assistance ask might move into a larger ask besides the 10-million-dollar budget request.

Singer asked about what PPG needs from RCDs and CARCD and what the timing of all the asks will be. PPG responded that the continued connection between local RCDs and their legislators is important. PPG expects that within the next few weeks there will likely be an ask/letter going around to have RCDs sign on and use to encourage their legislators to sign on.

Singer and Butz suggested that CARCD needs to possibly work on a white paper or outline to share with the RCDs as to the expected timing and what is in the bill, what is the budget ask and when the RCDs will want to get involved, etc. PPG will work on a draft of an outline/white paper and get it to CARCD to review within the next week.

Newman spoke about a new natural resources bond being pursued by Garcia (AB2387) – it's a little over 7 billion dollars and similar to AB 1500 that was proposed in previous years, but not completed. PPG will be tracking the bond and potentially working on amendments and opportunities for RCDs, but with the large budget surplus from last year and this year mean that a bond measure is unlikely to make it onto the ballot in November 2022.

#### **Partner Report - California Department of Conservation – Jenny DiStefano**

DOC has been busy and it's good news for RCDs. DOC has another round of funding in the RFFCP. DOC believes that the success of the program has been because of the large role RCDs have played as either direct grantees, subawardees and CARCD as a capacity building facilitator through their agreement with SNC in the Sierra region. The next round of funding is already beginning as part of the early action funding and many RCDs are being added as direct grantees with DOC. DOC is looking forward to the future success and the projects getting started. RCDs are being seen as an important player and role in implementing these forestry programs across the state (Jenny also hears that for watershed health and ground water sustainability). The guidelines for the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the RFFCP should be out mid-to-late spring for public comment and Jenny encouraged RCDs to give honest feedback about what won't work for RCDs within the grant program. She's finding more and more flexibility within state agencies and other grant programs once they receive feedback from RCDs and from others.

Newman and Singer shared feedback and asked questions to DiStefano about overhead rates and why there is a large variation between state agencies, grant programs, etc. Singer specifically asked about approved federal indirect cost rates being accepted and used by state agencies.

**Partner Report - National Association of Conservation Districts – Rick Gomez**

Gomez has been involved in the scoring and review process of the Urban Agricultural grants applications. There were 39 applications through NACD. The process itself has helped him understand the grant program itself and how the funds are being used across the country.

**Business Items:**

The USLT RCD has a potential land & large donation project from a private winery that needs a non-profit fiscal sponsor. CARCD has been in talks with the District Manager about the project. The board directed either the executive committee or the finance committee to connect with the RCD about details and report back to the larger board as the project progresses.

Speak Off Contest: The board directed CARCD to gather more input from RCDs via the listserv’s on speak off topic suggestions and a vote via email/google form would be done by the board based on those suggestions.

Conference Planning: The decision regarding our current contract with the Hilton in Santa Barbara needs a final decision about a fall 2022 conference by the end of May. Between now and the next board meeting, CARCD staff will survey the RCDs about different options for the conference both in format and virtual vs. in-person.

**Partner Report - Natural Resources Conservation Services – Gayle Berry, Deputy State Conservationist**

There are lots of retirements within the leadership at NRCS and there are also 12 vacancies for District Conservationist positions within the state.

There are lots of upcoming grant opportunities coming up through NRCS for RCDs including the Climate Smart Commodities program

NRCS is beginning its return to the office after working remotely for almost 2 years. The senior leadership will be back in the office starting February 28<sup>th</sup>, by March 28<sup>th</sup> state offices will be slowly bringing staff back with a final deadline with May 22<sup>nd</sup> to have everyone back. They are taking a slow approach to accommodate the nuance around the issues with new employees that were hired during the pandemic who have never worked in the office to parents and guardians dealing with childcare or other school related issues.

**Adjourn Meeting**