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## **MEETING MINUTES**

**September 13, 2010**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority was called to order by Chairman Gary Thomasian at 1:05 p.m. in the Board Room of the County Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon Street, First Floor, Riverside, California, 92501.

### **2. ROLL CALL**

#### **Board Members/Alternates Present**

Marion Ashley  
Bob Buster  
Kevin Bash  
John Denver  
Steve Di Memmo  
Maryann Edwards  
Jordan Ehrenkranz  
Bonnie Flickinger  
Mike Gardner  
Jim Hyatt  
Robin Lowe  
John Machisic  
Eugene Montanez  
Jeff Stone  
John Tavaglione  
Gary Thomasian  
Mark Yarbrough

#### **Board Members Absent**

John Benoit  
Melissa Melendez  
Mark Yarbrough

### **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- 1) Bud Spresney of Cerritos, California, spoke about: 1) His proposal to increase the Burrowing Owl population by the application of appropriate habitat enhancement technology submitted to RCA on July 19, 2010; and, 2) Future fire fighting methods and practices. (A written testimony was submitted to the Clerk of the Board.)

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- 2) Daryl Hickman, City of Lake Elsinore Councilmember, presented a proposal for a lot line adjustment or an equitable land trade of 50.3 acres in order for the City to place some land back into their development program. He requested that this matter be placed on the Executive Committee's agenda for discussion and to submit a recommendation to the RCA Board. (A copy of the written comment was submitted to the Clerk of the Board.)

#### **4. BOARD MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Board Member announcements.

#### **5. ADDITIONS/REVISIONS**

There were no additions/revisions to the agenda.

#### **6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

***M/S/C (MACHISIC/GARDNER) to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2010 meeting of the RCA Board of Directors.***

#### **7. CONSENT CALENDAR**

***M/S/C (HYATT/STONE) to approve the following Consent Calendar items:***

##### **7.1 COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY AND THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, PARTNERS FOR WILDLIFE, FOR RESTORATION OF HABITAT ON THE REYNOLDS PROPERTY**

- 1) Approve the Cooperative Agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority for restoration of habitat on the Reynolds property; and
- 2) Authorize the Executive Director, pursuant to legal counsel review and approval, to execute the agreement.

#### **8. SECTION 6 MATCH FUND UPDATE AND LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

David Kennett, RCA consultant, reported that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has finally addressed and resolved RCA's concerns regarding the policy on non-federal match to Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grants. Upon receipt of the policy update, Charlie Landry wrote a letter to USFWS to clarify the policy as follows: 1) local fees can serve as a match; 2) Section 6 funds will be used to acquire land that meets the federal obligations; and, 3) local match funds can be used to acquire land that meets the federal obligations. A response was received from USFWS indicating that RCA's accounting and understanding of the new policy is correct. He credited the offices

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of Congressman Ken Calvert and Senator Dianne Feinstein for their assistance and efforts to resolve the Section 6 matter. There are other Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) entities within the State requiring clarification and requesting changes to the Section 6 match fund policy. He iterated that their proposed changes will not affect RCA. A meeting is scheduled on Wednesday in Sacramento with the HCP proponents suggesting the changes and the USFWS. He and RCA staff will monitor the Section 6 policy to make certain that RCA is protected.

David Kennett continued and said that he will continue to work on the Loan Program. There has been no opposition to this proposal; this is just a matter of cost. He stated that as of this time, the State Legislature has not approved the budget. He then informed the RCA Board that there are five (5) counties in Northern California contemplating proposing a surcharge to vehicle registration fee for transportation and air quality.

In response to Chairman Thomasian's question regarding the date to release the RFP for Section 6 grants, David Kennett said that the USFWS plans to release the RFP next week.

### **9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Charlie Landry, Executive Director, thanked Dave Kennett, Senator Feinstein and Congressman Calvert for their efforts toward resolving the Section 6 local match funds.

At this time, he introduced RCA's new hires - Laurie Correa, Director of Reserve Management and Monitoring, and Emad Gewaily, Administrative Services Manager.

### **10. BURROWING OWL HABITAT ENHANCEMENT UPDATE AND POTENTIAL FUTURE ACTIVITIES AT EL SOL**

Dustin McLain presented an update on the current activities and potential future activities on Burrowing Owl habitat enhancement at the El Sol property, which is located south of Lake Skinner. Past activities included installation of fifteen (15) artificial burrows by the Boys Scouts, ten (10) artificial burrows by the County of Riverside, and five (5) artificial burrows by Bloom Biological, Inc., and Jared Bond. The artificial burrows are inspected three times a year to ensure that the habitat is in proper condition and the burrows are functional. Pictures were shown depicting installation of the burrows, management of vegetation through cattle grazing, and the cameras used for detecting activities at the burrows.

Jeff Stone asked if the habitat at El Sol was created for the Burrowing Owl or if the Burrowing Owls were historically located at this site. In addition, he asked where RCA is in bringing back the Burrowing Owl population to the satisfaction of the Environmental Agency. Dustin McLain said that it is his understanding that the site was somewhat created with cattle grazing in the area in the 1920s which provided habitat for the Burrowing Owls. With the joint efforts and collaboration, RCA is on its way to bring back the Burrowing Owl population to the area.

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Charlie Landry added that RCA is working with the RCHCA and the County of Riverside on expanding the Burrowing Owl habitat to add other sites in the efforts to be successful in the criteria of the MSHCP.

Jim Hyatt asked about Mr. Spresney's proposal to have a capacity of 100,000 Burrowing Owls and the ability to be able to provide habitat for that population. Dustin McLain stated that every habitat has a carrying capacity. At this time, there is no documentation available. He said that there could be 100,000 artificial burrows but the resources could only carry 100. Unless there is documentation that there is capacity in this specific habitat to place artificial burrows, it may prove to be inefficient.

In response to Jeff Stone whether all of the artificial burrows are occupied, Dustin McLain said that the artificial burrows are always occupied whether it is to incubate the eggs or for refuge.

The RCA Board Members thanked Dustin McLain for presenting an excellent presentation on current and future activities on the Burrowing Owl habitat.

### **11. REPORT ON THE CACTUS VALLEY FIRE**

David Driscoll, RCA consultant, reported on the Cactus and Red Mountain fires on July 15, 2010. The fire spread toward the east and moved uphill, and to the west of the Goodhart property. Pictures showing the effects of the fire, such as damage to the stock pond, vegetation, and a 92-year old Manzanita, were shown. Multiple agencies responded and provided resources, including fire engines, crews, water tenders, dozers, airtankers, copters, and 207 personnel.

Chairman Thomasian, on behalf of the RCA Board, thanked David Driscoll for the presentation.

### **12. LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE**

Brian Beck, Land Acquisition Analyst, reported that since the last meeting, RCA acquired two additional properties (91 acres), bringing the total reserved land to 42,162 acres.

### **13. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Board Members are invited to suggest additional items to be brought forward for discussion.

At this time, Chairman Thomasian adjourned the meeting to Closed Session.

**14. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS:**

**14.1 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION**  
**Pursuant to Subdivision (a) of Government Code Section 54956.9**

- **RIC 10004733 Calvary Chapel**
- **RIC 10015716 Wilhelm Ranch**
- **RIC 37-2009-00094633 Vail Lake**

There were no announcements from the Closed Session items and the meeting reconvened.

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other items to be discussed, Chairman Thomasian adjourned the meeting. The next meeting of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors is scheduled for Monday, October 4, 2010, at 1:00 p.m., at the County of Riverside Administrative Center, Board Room, 4080 Lemon Street, Riverside, California.

Respectfully submitted,



Honey Bernas  
Clerk of the Board