SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

JOINT MEETING OF THE
GRASSLAND WATER DISTRICT
GRASSLAND RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
GRASSLAND GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY DISTRICT
GRASSLAND FUND
BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Los Banos, Merced County, California

The joint meeting of the Board of Directors of the Grassland Water District (GWD), Grassland Resource Conservation District (GRCD), Grassland Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GGSA) and Grassland Fund (GF) was called to order by GWD President Snyder Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 3:05 p.m. by teleconference under Executive Order N-29-20 from Governor Newsom.

GWD DIRECTORS PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Pepper Snyder, Jeff Kerry, Byron Hisey, Bob Nardi, Fritz Reid. Each Director was asked to verbally confirm their presence. All directors responded as present.

GWD DIRECTORS ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: None

GRCD DIRECTORS PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Dennis Campini, Dale Boust, Keith Toon. All directors responded as present with the exception of Director Whitehead.

GRCD DIRECTORS ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Dan Whitehead

STAFF PRESENT: Ric Ortega, General Manager; Veronica Woodruff, Treasurer/Controller; Ken Swanson, P.E., District Engineer/ Water Master; Ellen Wehr, General Counsel; Candace Sigmond, Environmental Education Outreach Coordinator; Becky Terranova, Scribe.

GUESTS/ PARTNERS/ CONSULTANTS: Mark Smith, Consultant, Smith Policy Group; Sean Allen, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW); John Goddard, ; Mark Erreca, Double D Duck Club; Bill Woods, Gable Land and Cattle; Liatnip.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: President Snyder asked if members of the public would like to address the Board on items under the jurisdiction of the Board. Mr. John Goddard wanted to ask if GWD could release the harvest survey from last year, Mr. Ortega responded that it is in the finishing stages and when complete it would be sent out.

CORRECTIONS OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: President Snyder asked if there were any corrections or additions to the agenda. Mr. Ortega responded that there were none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Moved by Director Hisey seconded by Director Nardi, the motion passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2020 GWD Board Meeting. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did.
GWD PAYMENT OF BILLS: A motion was made by Director Hisey seconded by Director Reid and unanimously carried to pay the September 15, 2020 bills. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did.

GWD FINANCIAL REPORT: Mrs. Veronica Woodruff, Treasurer/Controller, reviewed the Financial Report for September 15, 2020. A motion was made by Director Hisey seconded by Director Reid and unanimously carried to accept the financial report for September 15, 2020. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did.

APPROVAL OF THE FY 2020 GRCD BUDGET: A motion was made by Director Boust seconded by Director Toon and unanimously carried to approve the Fiscal year 2020 GRCD budget. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did. Director Whitehead was absent.

APPOINTMENT TO FILL VACANCY ON THE GRCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Mr. Ortega noted that on May 23, 2006 Bill Parham was appointed to the GRCD board representing Coast Cattle to replace Director Don Dawson. Bill served on the RCD board diligently for over thirteen years and he was last reappointed on May 17, 2020. Sadly, on January 31, 2020 we lost our long time Director and friend Bill Parham at 78 years of age. Pursuant to government code 1780 the remaining members of the RCD board of directors noticed the intent to appoint a successor on August 31, 2020 at the September 15, 2020 board meeting. Notices were placed at the GWD headquarters, the intersection of Santa Fe Grade and Gun Club Rd., the intersection of Almond Drive and Santa Cruz Gun Club Rd, and the intersection of Santa Fe Grade and the Santa Fe Canal Cross Channel. Staff received notifications, letters and qualifications from a few very qualified candidates for the Parham seat vacancy on the GRCD board through November 20, 2022. A nomination was made by Director Campini seconded by Director Toon and unanimously carried to appoint Mark Erreca of the Double D Duck Club to sit on the GRCD board through November 20, 2022. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did. Director Whitehead was absent.

GWD RESOLUTION 2020-013 Authorizing the execution of a groundwater purchase agreement with the Fields Club LLC. A motion was made by Director Hisey seconded by Director Reid and unanimously carried to authorize the execution of a groundwater purchase agreement with Fields, LLC by the general manager. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did.

CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONS REPORT

GWD OPERATIONS WATER SUPPLY- Mr. Swanson reported that GWD has 160,612 AF total water supply for WY 2020 which is 89.42%, he reported that currently the contract water in the system is 852 CFS with 81 CFS being delivered to the CDFW and USFWS. The use to date is 15,538 AF of the WY total is 30,210 AF which leaves 114,864 AF for the remainder of the year.
GROUND WATER—Mr. Swanson reported that through August 3, 175 AF of L2 and 4,892 AF of L4 have been pumped. Scheduled for the WY 2020 is 18,541 AF.

LOCAL RAINFALL—Mr. Swanson reported that local conditions have not changed, and rainfall is still at 7.44 inches which is about 74% of average.

CVP WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK—Mr. Swanson reported that current storage in Shasta is 2.26 MAF, fifteen-year average is 2.5 MAF which brings storage to 90%. The accumulated inflow is 3.18 MAF, fifteen-year average is 5.01 MAF which brings it to 63%. Accumulated precipitation at Shasta is 34.51 inches with 63 inches being the fifteen-year average so its at 56%.

RECYCLATION PROJECT UPDATE—Mr. Swanson reported that the construction is complete, the power is on and is waiting for Tesco to test the pump station. The fencing is scheduled and will be completed at the end of September. This completes the project and all three pumps will be online and will be operating at 100%.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

MAINTENANCE REPORT—Mr. Ortega reported that maintenance staff have been working diligently on finishing projects, mowing, spraying or removing aquatic vegetation and responding to emergencies. GWD had two backhoe buckets and an excavator bucket extended and perforated to assist in the floating aquatic vegetation fight and the excavator is back in action after what turned out to be a minor mechanical failure. The Challenger tractor is in the shop for a power steering pump replacement. We are looking into the potential lease of a new 400 series backhoe or a used backhoe. The rationale being to have a newer, larger and more mobile backhoe to do the heavy lifting since the older equipment is struggling to keep up with the workload during the short construction window.

In the North staff worked with DU and contractors to replace the sixty-inch overflow gate and pipe in Los Banos Creek on the Lone Tree Club. Staff excavated the Kesterson ditch, and the Rubino ditch. They removed aquatic vegetation at the head of the Carter Harrison, San Luis canal, and at weirs one through five in the Santa Fe canal. They rebuilt the east bank of the Mosquito and repaired the Ingomar drain in the Mosquito ditch. They repaired the first set of weirs in the Eagle ditch north of Gun Club and excavated sediment in the Gun Club Rd ditch. Staff repaired the metal bridge at Los Banos Creek north of the Mosquito ditch. They added elevation to the 240 ditch, did bank work at the head of the Rubino, and fabricated and installed a stairwell, platform and guardrail at the sixty-inch gate on Lone Tree. They sealed off weirs on the Mosquito and removed debris pile at the head of the Kesterson and backfilled the head of the Kesterson ditch. In the south they repaired the Camp 13 ditch near the main canal, repaired screw gates in Mud Slough at the big water drain, excavated the Bennet ditch, and repaired the structure at the Terminus of the Britto into the Camp 13 ditch. Replaced the weir at the end of the Almaden ditch, and the weir board guides on the number two weir of the Sorsky ditch. In total they backfilled over forty screw gates and five weirs to avoid erosion and water loss.

Last Friday night Mike Boffa and Mark Frietas quickly responded to a blow out on the Mosquito ditch around 8pm. Mike acted quickly to close the Authority’s
gate at the head of the Mosquito allowing Mark to mobilize the backhoe and address the issue before much water was lost. The repair took over five hours but they were able to get it fixed around 2am. Really appreciate them both responding without hesitation or direction and going above and beyond to avoid what could have been the loss of the bank and a significant amount of water.

CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT OPERATIONS- Mr. Ortega reported that relaxed Delta standards and increased Delta inflow resulted in Jones pumping at capacity for the majority of August. Last week one unit was however shut down in response to power concerns during the last heat wave and to remove aquatic vegetation from the pump trash racks. Jones has since come back up to capacity and is anticipated to remain there into October. San Luis has been refilling since early August and the federal share is expected to fill by mid-March if the hydrology is average.

NORTH GRASSLANDS WATER CONSERVATION- Mr. Ortega reported that GWD staff continue to assist with the recirculation project to help keep our contractors on schedule, utilizing their equipment after hours and working overtime on weekends all reimbursable by San Luis Water District.

LOS BANOS CREEK WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM- Mr. Ortega reported that Rain for Rent was selected as the contractor for the temporary pipeline needed to introduce water into Los Banos Creek from the San Luis Water District lifts out of the Aqueduct. Rain for Rent will be mobilizing in a couple weeks and the installation will be done within a week. The lift will only occur during daylight hours to avoid any blowouts or avoidable erosion. If we are successful with introducing and recovering the water next water year, participants will decide whether to go forward with the more permanent environmental compliance and design for the larger pipeline, pumps and facilities. The ultimate goal would be to re-operate the reservoir to draw it down to assist in fall flood up and to accommodate the introduction of 8 TAF to be used in the following water year. The Exchange Contractors are only interested in the water in Shasta critical years to avoid a call on the Sand Joaquin River from the Friant Contractors. In most years GWD would split the 8 TAF yield with San Luis Water District. This project’s yield is above the benefits of the weir diversion of flood flows into the Delta Mendota Canal but the two projects would work together to maximize the yield of both projects. San Luis maintains that they still are good with development and construction costs, at least for this pilot effort, in exchange for a share of the yield we receive to recovery capital outlay on our behalf.

TRANSFERS- Mr. Ortega reported that United States Bureau of Reclamation has provided an update to the South of Delta Refuge Incremental Level 4 Water Supply which included the North of Delta transfer water. A table from Reclamation outlining each of the different blocks of water acquired. In summary it is projected to develop or receive 32 TAF (58%) of IL4 in addition to the 125 TAF of Level 2 brining the overall allocation to the GRCD to 157 TAF or 87% of the 180 TAF contract totals.

LOS VAQUEROS RESERVOIR- Mr. Ortega reported that staff continue to work with the Bay Area and Ag participants on the formation of the Los Vaqueros JPA. The group is leaning toward allowing representation to be either directors from the participating agencies or staff which GWD support. The partners understand that no costs beyond GWD staff and legal in-kind support will be required. GWD are also working with Contra Costa Water District on the Project’s Cost allocation and more specifically the refuge benefits.
ENCROACHMENT—Mr. Ortega reported that a site plan for a proposed battery storage facility just over a mile away from the south grassland eastern boundary (Coyote Creek) has been made available. The landowners initially proposed twenty-acre solar array seven years ago which GWD intervened in through the Merced County permitting process. They seem very willing to accommodate any requests GWD may have in terms of design or mitigation and are open to restrictive use easements. Staff is looking for direction on whether to continue mitigation discussions with these landowners and the county on the proposal.

Mrs. Wehr reported that the new proposal has a much smaller footprint and has the potential to be compatible with GEA protections.

GGSA UPDATE—Mr. Ortega reported that GWD staff continue to coordinate with the five other GSP groups in the Delta Mendota Subbasin on the implementation and collection of water level and water quality data from the representative monitoring network outlined in the GSPs. Season low depth to water measurements are being collected through the end of October and water quality samples were collected starting in May. A number of production and monitoring wells identified in the GSP as monitoring sites have either been destroyed or are no longer functional so sample collection is no longer possible. Staff has identified replacement monitoring sites and those changes will be reflected in next year’s annual report.

COVID-19—Mr. Ortega reported that the office remains closed to the public although some meetings are occurring with appropriate safety protocols. All staff are still required to wear face masks in all common areas, sanitize anything they touch and maintain safe distances. Regular and heightened sanitation is occurring and staff is doing a great job working under these unfortunate circumstances and keeping each other safe. Some employees have notified the District of potential exposures and in those instances have been directed to get tested immediately and to work from home or independently in the field until they receive a clean bill of health.

LEGAL UPDATE—Ellen Wehr, General Counsel, reported on the following:

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION—Mrs. Wehr reported that GWD and GRCD submitted lengthy comment letters to the BOR regarding the new Guidelines for CVPIA Restoration Fund accounting and collaborated with other groups who will also submit comment letters. GWD will be challenging the method by which BOR will calculate this reduction every year and challenge the decision to reclassify Level 2 refuge water supplies. This would not immediately affect GWD funding, but could threaten funding reliability in the future.

LITIGATION—Mrs. Wehr reported that there is not much new happening on litigation and she will continue to follow and stay engaged.

GROUNDWATER—Mrs. Wehr reported that the California Supreme Court recently ruled that some new well permits statewide will require CEQA review.

GSP—Mrs. Wehr reported that GWD received positive feedback from Audubon regarding the GSP. GWD’s plan is one of the only plans that includes managed wetlands.

WASHINGTON D.C.—Mr. More reported that water infrastructure legislation remains one of the few bipartisan legislative priorities with a realistic shot at enactment before the election.

Congress is back in session for a couple of weeks and will try and get done the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) that includes significant funding for clean water infrastructure.
Senator Feinstein has also been actively engaged in advancing Western Drought and Water Supply legislation.

Federal Surface Transportation, the High-Speed Rail provisions could have a major impact on GWD habitat and could provide millions of dollars in mitigation funding to GWD. Congress is not prepared to consider a comprehensive Surface Transportations Bill and will likely do a one-year extension.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - Mr. Smith reported that The Legislature adjourned on September 1, 2020, but may return to an emergency session if Governor Newsom calls one. Talk has started regarding a stimulus package since congress has failed to come up with a new COVID package. Mr. Smith informed GWD which Bills that GWD were tracking died out, one being the Nesting habitat (AB2106).

CDFW - Mr. Smith reported that CDFW service-based budgeting continues to move forward. This budget is scheduled to be wrapped up next year. Its expected to show that CDFW is underfunded and over mandated.

SAN LUIS DELTA MENDOTA WATER AUTHORITY - Mr. Smith reported that SLDMWA is working on a WIFIA fix that they hope to introduce this month.

WIIN Act - Mr. Smith reported that this will expire in 2021.

Mr. Smith also reported that the refuge partners are working on CVPIA comments to Reclamation, and also on Great American Outdoors Act spending on CA refuges.

AGENCY/ ORGANIZATION REPORTS

CDFW - Sean Allen reported that September 1, 2020 was the traditional half day dove hunt which was successful, it also gave a sneak preview on how operations will work with the new COVID restrictions and how the public will be handled. A new statewide plan has just been published and is available on a website, that details what is proposed at each location. In addition to the new plan CDWF is trying to design new software that will allow scanners to be used in the check in stations.

Mr. Allen noted that the Hunter’s Forum (Annual outreach meeting) held on August 15, 2020 using Microsoft Teams went very well with around 90 participants.

Mr. Allen reported that the SCU complex fire caused the shutdown of the upper and lower and San Luis Reservoir wildlife area.

Mr. Allen reported that a dissolved oxygen dip occurred which caused a loss of fish in the San Luis canal. GWD was able introduce some fresh water in which it caused the dissolved oxygen levels to come up substantially.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Grassland Hunters Annual Meeting - Winter 2020 TBD. Headquarters 200 W. Willmott Ave. Los Banos, California

DIRECTORS REPORT - Director Byron Hisey reported that a major outbreak of botulism in the Klamath Basin caused the death of about forty thousand birds, Mallards and Teal.
**GEECe**-Candace Sigmond reported that she has been working on a grant application to fund transportation costs of students to the GEECe and is getting ready to submit them.

**APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS TO THE GRASSLAND FUND:** Mr. Ortega explained that the GWD and GRCD boards would each need to appoint two directors to sit on the Grassland Fund Board and that either board could nominate the fifth director. He then opened the floor for nominations.

**GCRD**-Dale Boust nominated Dennis Campini; Keith Toon nominated Dan Whitehead. The motions carried unanimously with the exception of Dan Whitehead who was absent.

**GWD**-Pepper Snyder nominated Jeff Kerry; Fritz Reid nominated Pepper Snyder. The motions carried unanimously.

Bob Nardi nominated Ric Ortega, seconded by Byron Hisey and unanimously carried. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did with the exception of Director Whitehead who was absent.

**RESOLUTION 2020-01- APPROVAL OF THE GRASSLAND FUND BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021**

Mr. Ortega gave a summary of the proposed budget. A motion was made by Dennis Campini, seconded by Pepper Snyder and unanimously carried to approve the budget Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did with the exception of Director Whitehead who was absent.

**APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS:**

Pepper Snyder nominated Dennis Campini as President. A vote was put forth and unanimously carried. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did with the exception of Director Whitehead who was absent.

Pepper Snyder nominated Jeff Kerry for Vice President. A vote was put forth and unanimously carried. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did with the exception of Director Whitehead who was absent.

Pepper Snyder nominated Ric Ortega as Chief Financial Officer. A vote was put forth and unanimously carried. Each Director was asked to verbally respond with their vote in which each did with the exception of Director Whitehead who was absent.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 4:55 p.m.
GRASSLAND WATER DISTRICT

Pepper Snyder, President

Ricardo Ortega, Secretary

GRASSLAND RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Dennis Campini, President

Keith Toon, Board Secretary

GRASSLAND GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Pepper Snyder, Board Member

Dennis Campini, Board Member

Ricardo Ortega, Secretary

GRASSLAND FUND

Board Member

Ricardo Ortega, Secretary