

Inyo-Mono Resource Conservation District

Meeting Minutes

July 30, 2024

Board Members: Jarret Phillips, Kay Ogden, Graham Meese, Chance Rossi, Katie Doonan-quorum present

Public Attendance: Mikhala Bornstein, Ziani Paiz, Aaron Wilcher, Amy Phillips, Riley Phillips, Kristen Pfeiler, Dustin Blakey, Mikaela Torres

Meeting called to order at 5:32 by Jarret Phillips.

Agenda Items:

Public Comment Period

Kristen Pfeiler reported that they finalized the community wide community wildfire protection plan, which was first drafted in 2005 and is now updated. The plan is a good reference guide for all our jurisdictions and partners for increasing wildfire resilience. Kristen plugged the RCD into a couple projects and there is an opportunity for the RCD to show support. She will be presenting to Inyo County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday and agency partners signing it now. The plan is hosted on Ready Inyo website with story map, project tracker, community risk assessment map, etc.

She reported they had lots of help and a good reference guide, and it may be a good tool in looking for more grants. It bridges the gap between needing formal CEQA but also being broad enough to encompass a lot of things. Now I still think we can update further. I plan to update a lot of the annexes in the projects every year. Plan needs to be updated every 5 years to qualify for certain grants.

Jarret asked where the RCD might play a role or be effective in helping. Kristen reported that they have lots of small fuel break projects that need some CEQA done. The RCD could fill those gaps quickly. Partnering with DWP makes sense as it would bring the lessees into the projects and the RCD could be effective in building out public education in that space. There is a loose time frame on this project. Board agreed to review at next meeting.

Jarret reported that the Benton Music Festival will be happening September 14th and they are looking for vendors, arts & crafts, paintings, etc. \$10 a table.

Aaron Wilcher reported that the facilitation guides on strategy meetings was sent out and a summary on that is on the website.

Inyo-Mono RCD Meeting Minutes

Recommended Action: Approve the minutes from the regular IMRCD meeting of June 10th, 2024.

Reminder that the minutes will now be housed on the website directly in accordance with the Brown Act.

Verdict: Tabled until next meeting for time to review.

Treasurer's Report

Kay Ogden, IMRCD Board Treasurer

Recommended Action: Approve payment for this year's website fees

The IMRCD website fee to Streamline is \$240 annually. A motion was entertained to approve the website fee.

Motion: Katie Doonan

Second: Chance Rossie

Verdict: Motion carries

Kay reported that County representatives are requesting a meeting with the RCD to be in alignment with County procedures. This will inform the RCD what is needed to hire staff. Kay is prepared to lead the effort and requested a meeting for Graham and herself after August 12th to talk with County representatives. Once that meeting is held, she will request further assistance to set up the SAM registration and will need copies of all the grants submitted with the RCD as a partner.

IMRCD Policy Updates

Recommended action: Review IMRCD policy handbook and consider changes. Approve handbook to move forward for legal review and submission.

Katie reported that the draft Employee Handbook is now housed on the website and ready for a thorough review by Board members. The large areas for review are the County procedures to follow, the probationary period, and the employment structure and oversight.

Verdict: Tabled until next meeting

IMRCD Staffing and Grant Opportunities

Recommended Action: Hear reports on grant funding opportunities and staffing considerations.

Kristen reported that there is a county grant opportunity. The accepted grant had to be revised from the original application, which means the next steps for the RCD would be meeting with Amy and getting set up with the auditor. This potentially moved the funding for an RCD staff person, which will most likely be redirected to the county. It is unknown if the capacity will be the same scope as originally intended.

Rick informed Kristen that the SNC grant came through and Kay will take a copy of that grant to the County.

Aaron Wilcher reported that the California Jobs First process is progressing. Dustin and Aaron have been convening partners in the region for ag and food systems and there are two major opportunities on the table. This would align with the RCD for a staff person within the Ag & Food Systems sector, Natural and Working landscapes. The industry coordinator position would be guiding efforts- a 24 month position, handling investments on behalf of the region, \$75,000 for two years as part of a position. The draft RFP and associated materials can be found on the [Sierra Jobs First website](#).

There is also \$9 million available in the region for predevelopment projects. That region will make decisions on what to fund and that money is most likely ready to move forward. No projects submitted from RCDs but similar projects for ag and working landscapes, due by October 31st.

Request for action for the board: review and see what could move forward. There are workshops on August 12th and 13th and Aaron is willing to partner to move this forward. Jarret volunteered to work with Aaron on moving forward in seeing how the RCD may fit in this opportunity.

2024 Society for Range Management Camp

Recommended Action: Ensure payment materials are completed for scholarship.

Payment is moving forward with Ziani.

Riley Phillips presented her experience at the 2024 Nevada Range Camp. She was highly enthusiastic about the experience, and encouraged the RCD to continue funding opportunities in this space.

6:00pm Agriculture Stakeholder NRCS Working Group

Mikhala led the NRCS working group to establish NRCS priorities for funding in the coming years. The agenda and questions are available under meeting documents.

Agenda Development

Recommended Action: Confirm date and prepare agenda items for next regular IMRCD meeting.

Next meeting is set to be held on August 27th at 5:30.

Motion to adjourn the meeting is entertained. Chance moves, Katie seconds.
Motion carries