

KONA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thursday, August 19, 2021

Meeting Held: ZOOM

Directors Present: Jeff Knowles, Barbara Anderson, Steve Foelber, Keli'ikanoe Mahi

KSWCD Staff: Mary Robblee, Janet Britt, Robin Hill

NRCS Staff: Laura Nelson, Travis Usinger

Guests: Mark Peterson, Lisa DeSautis

I. WELCOME:

The KSWCD Board Meeting called to order 8:09 am by Chairman Knowles.

The Chair introduced:

Robin Hill new Conservationist Aid starts next Monday.

Mark Peterson invited by Janet Britt. Mark worked at the Montana USDA, as well as taught. His knowledge for soil & conservation resources will be an asset to the group. He has a small farm Makai side of Napo'opo'o where he grows cacao and coffee.

Chair informs Mark we are always looking for Associate Directors to join the committee and welcomes him to join.

Lisa DeSautis is introduced and invited by Travis Usinger (Soil Conservationist in Kealakekua). Lisa is the program manager for Kokua Harvest, an island wide gleaning or food rescue program. This is also a program of The Food Basket. The program works with farmers and homeowners to harvest excess produce. A 10-minute call to get property directions, if there are fire ants, schedule a day, etc. Kokua Harvest is invited to the property and with volunteers, they bring tools, harvest what is offered, and preferably wash on site. With CoVid only 5-6 people will come out for 1-2 hours to harvest. Clip and holds usually get the job done, but occasional ladders.

Produced is not sold but donated to Multiple Partners / Distribution Sites: The Food Basket, Kapuna Box, Da Box (CSA), Aina Loa Community Association, Kauilo? Food Bag Distribution, Community Meal Waimea, Pahala Elementary, etc.

Liability Insurance is through The Food Basket. Volunteers agree to the terms for the program, and sign liability waiver each time they volunteer. They register through the website. Can also sign up for text Harvest Alerts with specific district.

Kokua Harvest has been in service since Fall of 2019 – longer in CoVid than not. Lisa's other job is in public health.

Kokua Harvest is a 501c3. The benefits are not only orchard sanitization by removing harvest, but also donating to 501c3 so a tax letter end of the year. Also, a feelgood for donating, comradery, food rescue community, and local connections made.

Lisa DeSautis info@kokuaharvest.org

Kokuaharvest.org

(833)818-5134 text to enroll in harvest alerts

(732)616-2460 Lisa's cell

Awareness of Kokua Harvest came about through the USDA Feds Feed Families drive going on through September and was spearheaded with our gleaning of fruits and veggies.

II. MINUTES:

Thursday, July 15, 2021 KSWCD Board Meeting Minutes approved and available.

III. REPORTS:

Financial / Treasurer – Barbara Anderson / Mary Robblee: Treasurer's Report sent via e-mail to all directors. No questions at this point.

\$51,000 from County was deposited yesterday. Report shows last invoice from NRCS Planner Contract having been paid was \$14,000 and income shows on report.

NRCS – Laura Nelson, District Conservation for NRCS in Kealahakua Field Office: 2021 end of contract season. Total of 33 with 29 in contract. 4 more coming.

29 in contract is a total of \$2.3 million brought into Kona through EQIP and DHP programs. 75% (\$1.8 million) went toward Forestry Contracts – that was about 9 contracts. We have 7 contracts that are focused on improving soil (10% of overall dollars or \$211,000).

CSP contracts are a little harder to categorize: Steward & Maintain = 6 contracts (5% / \$112,000).

AgroForestry emphasis contracts = 5 contracts (5% / \$109,000).

Pasture Contracts = 2 contracts (5% / \$93,000)

Now preparing for 2022, includes Certified Planner and training requirements. Next week onboarding new Conservation Assistant.

Long-Range plan being submitted. Now focusing on Targeted Conservation Delivery Proposal for the next few weeks.

Lots of 2022 interests, and applications starting to come in. Getting ranking pools ready, and targeted conservation delivery emphasis. Getting ready for 2022 EQIP and RCPP.

Impressive amount of dollars NRCS brings into Kona. Great news for public awareness – possibly West Hawaii Today to do an article?

We now have a strong public relations department in the state office, and possible help in getting an article like that.

KSWCD District Planner / Monthly Reports – Mary Robblee reports flooding at a couple recent sites. One off Middle Keei and blockage in the stream created by African Tulip Trees. County notified. Video to Brice Harata at the Public Works Dept., and he forwarded to the Kona Engineering Public Works Dept. The County's Infrastructure is directly impacted by this water event.

Also St. John's Rd. and Kingsley Ditch water cause. The USDA constructed water cause is at the end of its lifespan and causing a lot of problems. This area has a lot of soil that has been dug up and is a significant ditch to have damaged.

Above Kingsley Ditch there is about 13 acres that have been cleared – they said they had a permit - but this did allow for a lot of over land waterflow to enter the ditch and bring down a lot of soil.

Annual Reports to the County and need contract number to add to the report, make edits and review again.

Out of the 4 contracts that have not been signed, 1 of those is Mary's and should be all set tomorrow. All contracts of hers should be done and working on Certified Planner status. Ag Learn Courses are all set. It's a matter of putting a plan together, with all the notes, in a neat package, and sending it off for certification. Good Luck, Mary!

General Reporting - NCRS would like to discuss the flooding in Kona, and address watershed programs to initiate in Kona.

KSWCD references 2002, 2003, and 2004 flooding caused major issues. No jurisdiction for overgrown floodways. Education and county coordination is needed.

100-year flood assumption and expired lifespan of old county ditches – possible NRCS financial and technical assistance. Kupuna knowledge, local expertise (Paris, Nobrigas, McCandless, Unger, etc.) of floodways, as well as history of the area floodways are essential. There is a video about the unique Kona lands of flooding and historical representation.

Group discussions for longer term proposal of Watershed Programs is needed: possible grants; local experts; engineers; conservationist proposals; inventory work; rules and regulations; etc.

Long Range Planner – Janet Britt: Long Range Plan is on track. Agreement extended as precaution. **9/30 is the due date for TCD proposals.**

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

Leo's Club - excited to have Keli'ikanoe (and her educational experience in schools) on-board and helping out: paper to digital e-News Letter to community and schools.

Target number of posters in the community (Choicemart, KTA, washerette, etc.)

Konawaena High School and Elementary Outreach Programs include plantings and weeding. Meeting next week for Middle School.

State Director interested in expanding Leo's Club.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

VI. ADJOURN

Board Meeting adjourned at 9:06 am by Chairman Knowles.