



Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD)  
Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday September 13, 2023

Windfall Farms Conference Room, 4710 Flying Paster Lane, Paso Robles

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 3:00PM by Dana Merrill

Directors Roll Call:

Dana Merrill – present  
Lee Nesbitt - present  
Jerry Reaugh - present  
Hilary Graves – present  
Herb Rowland - absent

Others present:

Blaine Reely – SLO County Director of Groundwater Sustainability  
Loni Lyttle – Advanced Viticulture Consulting  
Mark Greenspan – Advanced Viticulture Consulting  
Willy Cunha – Shandon-San Juan Water District  
Brent Burchett, SLO Farm Bureau  
Patricia Wilmore, PRWCA  
Guests (in person and videoconference)

**ITEM 2: REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF JULY 12, 2023 MEETINGS**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR JULY 12, 2023 MEETING made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Lee Nesbitt, roll call vote:

Dana Merrill – yes  
Hilary Graves – yes  
Jerry Reaugh – yes  
Lee Nesbitt – yes  
Herb Rowland - absent

Motion passed 4-0.

**ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was presented.

**ITEM 4: UPDATE ITEMS**

**a. Real-time Groundwater Levels Monitoring project**

Jerry Reaugh reported that the two continuous monitoring devices in service are producing hourly readings, with 10-20 fluctuations in levels daily. Data started being collected in May. Other telemetry and data-collecting systems were discussed including WellIntel and bubbler technology. Hilary Graves reported that the bubbler measurements on a well at her jobsite is allowing for fine tuning of pumping for irrigation.

**b. SWEEP grant update**

Loni Lyttle reported that the District was not successful in obtaining one of the grants. The process was more competitive than expected, with more grant applications submitted. The Upper Salinas Las Tables Resource Conservation District was not chosen either. The winning proposals included more outreach and support for disadvantaged farmer. There is another \$27M that will be available for programs yet to be determined. The entire Board expressed its gratitude for the work Loni did in preparing and submitting the grant proposal.

**c. SLO County Board of Supervisors meetings July 18, August 8, August 22 and September 12, 2023**

An interesting note is that the Board of Supervisors has chosen to withdraw support for Prop 13.

**d. Groundwater Levels Network Monitoring program**

Jerry Reaugh reported that we are nearing the end of three years of readings collection, with the next reading schedule post-harvest in November. The last readings in August showed five wells trending downward in the August 22 – August 23 period, and 17 wells trending upward.

**e. Paso Basin Cooperative Committee meetings July 26 and September 7, 2023**

(Herb Rowland joins at 3:21PM)

The PBCC is really a loose confederation of entities, not an agency in and of itself. Funding for any projects will likely come from grants. The State Water project, initiated and funded by EPCWD, is now going to be transferred to the PBCC to move the project to next steps. The technical advisory committees have had varying attendance, with sometimes what seems an unwieldy number of participants. Paso Robles City is moving ahead with drilling its pipeline for recycled water under the Salinas River and directed to points east; this water could be used for the Blended Water project. There is unallocated State Water purchased by SLO County that could be used for recharge or sale, and if the State declares a “spill” (as happened this year), any stored purchased water is lost. If a project to utilize unallocated State Water were to be initiated, it would take an RFP from one of the PBCC entities as the PBCC is not standalone. A request for an update from consultants Provost & Pritchard at the next meeting was made. It would be interesting to look at using the Shandon turnout to deliver dechlorinated water to the upper Estrella and see the results.

Development of a PBCC website was discussed, with the Board expressing support for the idea. Blaine Reely agreed that the existing website is underutilized.

Hilary Graves brought up using a crop water use model and Jerry Reaugh responded that the PBCC staff is looking at several options

**f. WRAC meeting September 6, 2023**

Lee Nesbitt reported that there was a discussion of the recent SLO County Grand Jury Report about the Paso Basin. The potential for a desalination plant at Diablo was discussed. The Committee Bylaws have been rewritten. Dana Merrill asked about whether there are any vacancies on the WRAC.

**g. State Water Subcontractors Committee meeting September 1, 2023**

See discussion above.

**h. PBCC Technical Advisory Committee meetings (MILR, Groundwater Measurement, Blended Water)**

Jerry Reaugh reported on Groundwater Measurement TAC. There is a goal to identify 100 sites for the Network, with a meeting scheduled for September 19 to discuss. Another goal is 40 real-time monitoring wells, with a focus on rural residential areas. Hilary Graves asked about approaching people whose wells have continuous monitoring equipment in place. There was a

discussion about at what point, well data becomes a matter of public record. The monitoring wells would record levels only and not usage.

A general discussion followed regarding meters and usage monitoring with different methods looked at including flow meters, evapotranspiration measurements, conversion of pump electrical data and more. There are positives and drawbacks to each approach.

Dana Merrill reported on the MILR TAC meeting. Where would the money come from to fund such a program as following? Water use? Grants? If land is retired from production, for how long? What kind of compensation for retirement? The next MILR committee meeting on September 19 should flesh some of the responses out with the results of research done.

**ITEM 5: TREASURER'S REPORT**

**a. Monthly Financial Status Report**

No questions arose from the report presented by Jerry Reauch

**ITEM 6: NEW BUSINESS**

Hilary Graves requested a presentation by Provost & Pritchard on the State Water project, as well as a discussion of support from the District for the PBCC website. Staff was asked if there could be a PBCC tab on the District website that would provide members with up-to-date info on the PBCC's meetings and actions (yes).

**ITEM 7: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – OCTOBER 11, 2023**

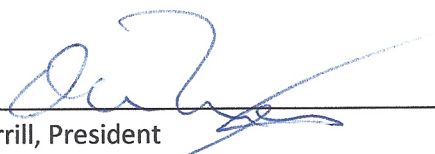
**ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT**

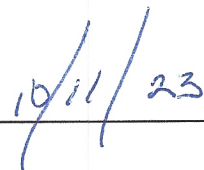
MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Jerry Reauch, voice vote:  
Motion passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 4:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Jerry Reauch, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:

  
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Dana Merrill, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date