

Tuolumne County
Administration Center
2 South Green Street
Sonora, California 95370
Phone (209) 533-5521
Fax (209) 533-6549

Heather Ryan
Clerk of the Board
of Supervisors

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE

David Goldemberg, *First District*
Kathleen Haff, *Fourth District*

Ryan Campbell, *Second District*

Anaiah Kirk, *Third District*
Jaron Brandon, *Fifth District*

Natural Resource Committee Wednesday April 5, 2023 @ 10:00 am Board of Supervisors Chambers 2 S. Green St., 4th Floor Sonora, 95370 Minutes

Call the meeting to order

Chair Brandon called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. and confirmed a quorum was present.
Members present: Jaron Brandon, Supervisor; Jim Phelan, Jim Maddox, Dick Gaiser

Public Forum – The public may speak on any item not on the printed agenda. No action may be taken by the Committee. The amount of time allocated for the public forum is limited to 15 minutes.

A member of the public provided comment regarding an article in the newspaper addressing a Forest Service lawsuit jeopardizing the use of crucial wildfire retardant. He suggested bringing a discussion to the committee and Board of Supervisors in opposition.

Consideration of approving the minutes of the meeting held on February 1, 2023.

Jim Phelan noted an error, Supervisor Kirk chaired the meeting. Jim Phelan made a motion to approve the minutes of February 1, 2023, meeting with the correction noted. Jim Maddox seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Supervisor Brandon requested the membership roster be updated to reflect 2023 Board Member appointments of him and Supervisor Kirk to the Natural Resource Committee.

Partner agencies updates

A. USFS updates

Ben Cossel representing the US Forest Service provided an update on the roads and the USFS buildings after the big storms. He also spoke about the landscape and seral projects. He reported that the informational meeting last week in Groveland was successful.

Committee members provided comments.

A public member provided comment regarding the forest service roads and tracking the damage from one storm to another.

B. TUD updates

Don Perkins representing Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) provided an update on the wastewater treatment plant project, with a completion date of March 2024. He spoke of a funding application for Sierra Pines regional treatment plant and spoke of a number of other TUD water treatment plants. He handed out the TUD newsletter for April-June 2023 and commented on the snowpack and end-of-spills on Lyons Dam.

Committee members provided comments.

A member of the public commented on the Ponderosa Water Treatment Plant.

Committee Business

A. Staff reports and recommendations

Eric Erhardt noted that Andre Rivera resigned and that the County is currently recruiting for the position if anyone knows individuals who might be interested.

B. Committee member reports

Supervisor Brandon provided updates on the recent Board of Supervisor activities including: a comment letter on the Fire Severity Zone; the appointment of Glen Jacobs, TUD Board member; mutual aid agreement with TUD; comment letter opposing AB338 and he requested everyone reach out to the County with identified legislative items they would like addressed. He also mentioned the Board's executive summary on their legislative platform. He announced a meeting in Jamestown today from 2-4 p.m. for a local meat processing program discussion.

A public member provided comment about meat processing options.

A public member provided comment regarding the bio-brick project.

Discussion Items

A. Discussion and approval of next steps with recommendation to the BOS of a draft comment letter to the legislature on wildfire emissions being included in Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Discuss and approve next steps:

Eric Erhardt introduced a draft letter and Supervisor Brandon noted he and Supervisor Kirk had worked on the draft together. He was hoping for direction from committee members on the draft. It was suggested that staff can rework the draft documents provided and bring them back to the committee for discussion.

A member of the public provided comment regarding wildfire admissions.

A member of the public provided a comment regarding the need to be very direct in

the letter.

B. Discussion of California Spotted Owl ESA listing as threatened

Discuss and approve recommendation to the BOS of a draft comment letter
Liz Peterson spoke about the draft letter and provided a redlined draft for committee comment.

Discussion ensued.

Jim Phelan made a motion to approve sending the letter to include stronger and more clear language and data regarding lost owl PACs. Jim Maddox seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved to send the letter to include the added language.

B. Discussion of Resolution in support of Columbia College BS Cooperative Land Management degree program

Discuss and approve recommendation to the BOS of a draft Resolution

Eric Erhardt noted that the letter was already approved by the Board of Supervisors and sent off. Supervisor Brandon provided comment regarding other programs Columbia College is working on.

A member of the public provided comment that this program has potential as long as they stay relevant and are meeting the needs of employers.

Discussion ensued.

Liz Peterson reported on a grant that the County is applying for through CalFire to work directly with Columbia College and Mother Lode Training for on-the-job training for heavy equipment operators and employers.

Open Items

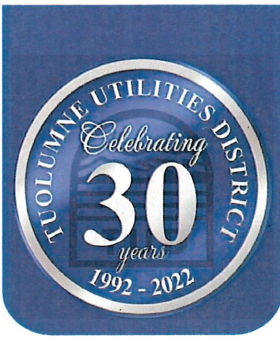
A. Open Carry-on County roads within public lands issue – Update
Jim Phelan provided an update on the purpose of the topic. Eric Erhardt will speak with County Counsel for clarification on the County ordinance and how the Sheriff enforces it in Tuolumne County and report back at the next meeting.

B. At Large member application process to fill vacancy.
Supervisor Brandon stated applications will go the Board of Supervisors to vote on filling the “At-Large” committee member seat.

A member of the public suggested a conversation regarding fire hazard clean-up. This item will be agendaized for discussion at the next meeting and it was suggested to invite a guest speaker from the Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District.

Adjourn

Supervisor Brandon adjourned the meeting at 11:29 a.m. and announced the next meeting scheduled for May 3, 2023.



ON TAP

TUD NEWSLETTER

WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK

Due to this season's series of steady storms, the District's water supply forecast looks good. Pinecrest Lake and Lyons Reservoir will fill nicely due to the abundant snowpack and rainfall, and the District anticipates an end of spill date in July or as late as August this year. Currently precipitation and snow accumulation are at approximately 200% of average in early March for the Motherlode Region. While the rain and snow certainly position our local water supply to be in better shape than prior years and Tuolumne County is no longer in a drought, the State drought declarations will likely remain in effect. For drought status updates, please visit us at www.tudwater.com.

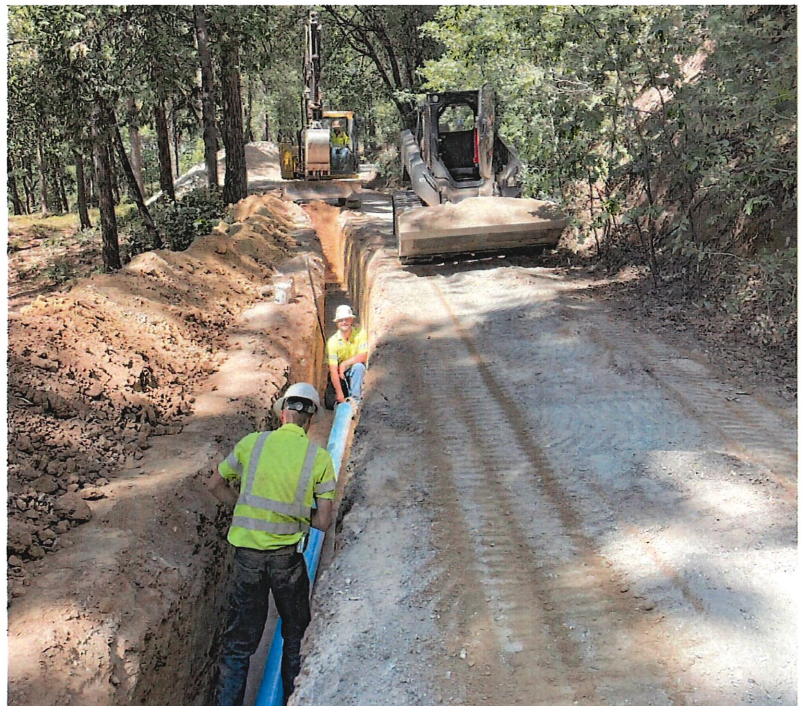


RESERVOIR STORAGE

March 3, 2023	Storage Reading (acre-feet)	% Capacity	% Avg. this date
Pinecrest	10,800	59%	159%
Lyons	4,000	73%	110%

CRYSTAL FALLS/CEDAR RIDGE EMERGENCY INTERTIE PROJECT COMPLETED

The District recently celebrated the completion of the Crystal Falls/Cedar Ridge Emergency Intertie Project. This project intertied the Crystal Falls and the Cedar Ridge Water Systems to increase water delivery reliability and resiliency. The Cedar Ridge Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Clearwell Tank had reached the end of its useful life and needed replacement. Many other components in at Cedar Ridge WTP needed modernization as well. The Crystal Falls WTP, which is also located in Cedar Ridge, had the capacity to supply water to the Cedar Ridge area. An intertie between the two systems allows the District to eliminate the Cedar Ridge Water Treatment Plant providing significant savings in operational costs. Approximately 4,500 linear feet of 6" water mainline, and four (4) new hydrants were installed, adding increased fire protection to the area.



JOIN US AT THE HOME AND GARDEN SHOW



Stop by and visit TUD staff and Board members at the 40th annual Home and Garden Show at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds in Sonora on Saturday, April 15th and Sunday, April 16th. At the TUD booth you will have an opportunity to learn about TUD's latest projects, find out more about the District and ask questions to staff and Board Members. We hope to see you there!

IS YOUR TOILET TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING?

A leaky toilet can have a big impact on your water bill before you even detect there is a problem. Toilets are one of the biggest water users in your home and a leaky toilet can waste about 200 gallons per day. TUD offers free toilet dye tablets for you to check if your toilet is leaking; just stop by our office to pick some up. And, if your home was built prior to 1992, you could be eligible for an upgrade with our Toilet Rebate Program.

For more information, visit us at www.tudwater.com/conservation.

Testing for a Toilet Leak

EASY AS 1 - 2 - 3



GENERAL MANAGER'S CORNER BY DON PERKINS



Weeks of heavy rain and pounding storms in December – January, and heavy snow in February and March hit Tuolumne County this winter and our local reservoirs will fill and spill. However, despite our current water outlook with the snowpack at over 200% of average in early March, and the US Drought Monitor recently changing Tuolumne County to a no drought designation, California state officials report that the drought is not over. The truth of the matter is that although wet seasons fill up our reservoirs, replenish groundwater levels and benefit the environment, much of it simply “goes down the drain,” as TUD and the majority of Tuolumne County lacks the ability to capture and store valuable water for later use. The District currently relies on two reservoirs (Pinecrest Lake and Lyons Reservoir) to store water and sustain our customers each year. For perspective, these two reservoirs’ combined capacity is 1% of the capacity of New Melones Reservoir sitting downstream of our water system. Any extra precipitation via rain or snow that cannot be captured and stored in these small reservoirs is released back into the environment and sent down stream out of the county. As we continue to experience the effects of climate change and more intense periods weather, we need to take serious

steps to better capture and store our winter water to last through future and multi-year dry seasons. Expanding our current reservoirs to boost storage and increase water supply flexibility and reliability and building more upstream reservoirs close to where the snowpack melts are all solutions that are worth considering. Pursuing new or expanded water storage reservoirs is challenging and not cheap but may be what is needed to withstand future climate and weather fluctuations that surely affect our community's water resiliency now and in the future.

On Tap is published to keep Tuolumne Utilities District customers informed about issues and upcoming events.

If you have any story ideas or suggestions, please email ELong@tudwater.com
For more information about TUD, go to www.tudwater.com

Comment Letter for FWS Docket ID No. FWS-R8-ES-2022-0166

Sent via Federal eRulemaking Portal:

Michael Fris, Field Supervisor
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825
telephone 916-414-6700

Re: Comment Letter for Comment Letter for FWS Docket ID No. FWS-R8-ES-2022-0166. Federal Register Number 2023-03526. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: California Spotted Owl; Endangered Status for the Coastal-Southern California Distinct Population Segment and Threatened Status with Section 4(d) Rule for the Sierra Nevada Distinct Population Segment

Dear Michael Fris,

The County of Tuolumne appreciates the opportunity to comment on FWS Docket ID No. FWS-R8-ES-2022-0166 regarding the listing of the California Spotted Owl as threatened in the Sierra Nevada DPS. In particular the County of Tuolumne is especially interested in the 4(d) rule associated with the exemption for fuel treatments and forest health activities. The County of Tuolumne understands the importance of the Endangered Species Act and importance in protecting our wildlife and the interconnected ecosystem.

With the County of Tuolumne having over 77% of land designated as public space, which includes parks and recreational facilities run by various state, federal, regional and local agencies, it is important for the County of Tuolumne to protect our environment, people and resources for generations to come.

The County of Tuolumne currently manages numerous forest health projects that benefit many areas of concern, including but not limited to, wildfire prevention, ecosystem health, and watershed health. The coordination with Sierra Pacific Industries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the US Forest Service, to manage the areas inhabited by the California Spotted Owl in ways that support the continuity of forest health activities, and the health of the species is crucial in a balanced approach that considers the overall impacts as a whole and also benefit multiple parties.

This letter is to communicate the County of Tuolumne's support for the collaboration and coordinated efforts of Sierra Pacific Industries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the US Forest Service in documenting and reporting the information related to the listing of the California Spotted Owl. The use of current data, best available information and methods, and any related conditions (weather, project type, species research, etc.) has alloweds for the responsible continuation-implementation of forest health related projects, such as the Social and Ecological Resilience Across the Landscape (SERAL) project in Tuolumne County that proactively benefits the environment, species, and the public, while also assisting-to-meet-meeting regulatory requirements and protecting our wildlife and the interconnected environment. The County of Tuolumne would not support additional restrictions that would reduce the ability to implement these crucial fuel reduction projects.

Allowing for more flexibility and the use of best available information and methods produces a balanced approach in protecting the environment and the public, while also meeting compliance directives. This is a win for all stakeholders involved. The County of Tuolumne appreciates the consideration of these comments in support of the ESA listing of the California Spotted Owl in the Sierra Nevada DPS as threatened with a 4(d) rule exemption. Implementation of a balanced and collaborative this

recommendation will allow for the continuation of much needed forest health activities while also protecting the California Spotted Owl population. I am available for any questions relating to this matter at arivera@co.tuolumne.ca.us or 209-533-5554.

Sincerely,
Board of Supervisors
County of Tuolumne

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Daniel Kirk, *Third District*
Jaron Brandon, *Fifth District*

February 27th, 2023

Attn: Dr. Tom Hofstra
Columbia College
11600 Columbia College Drive
Sonora, CA 95370

To Whom It May Concern,

The County of Tuolumne Board of Supervisors would like to communicate support for the Forestry and Natural Resources Bachelor of Science degree program in Cooperative Land Stewardship that Columbia College is planning to offer its' students. The fact that the Bachelor of Science degree program builds upon currently offered Associates of Science degree programs makes this offering for students valuable, especially for those students who are planning on staying local. This program addresses many student concerns of obtaining a bachelor's degree without the need to travel long distances and allows students to work and study locally, making the goal of a bachelor's degree possible for many local residents.

There is a current shortage of qualified candidates in the fields of Forestry, Land Use Planning as well as Water. While funding is available for hiring of said candidates, qualified individuals with the required academic backgrounds and having any related work experience are in short supply. The County of Tuolumne currently manages large projects related to forest health and is interested in expanding forest health programs and related projects to include more related fields that include watersheds, interconnected ecosystems and continue to implement forest resiliency by way of fuel breaks, pile management (forest thinning, etc.), prescribed burning and reforestation activities that help with overall wildfire prevention, GHG emissions reductions and improved forest and ecosystem health that benefits wildlife, the public and the environment.

Review of the steps taken by Columbia College to ensure viability of the Cooperative Land Stewardship degree program, the interest in said program by potential candidates (survey was conducted of past related Associate of Science graduates, current students and those who currently work in related fields) and reaching out to partners, related industry stakeholders, local agencies, government and more, shows a thorough vested effort making sure a Bachelor of Science offering would be well sought and that there is sufficient interest in the program to project a number of graduates that would then be well suited to enter the workforce prepared for a career in related fields of work. Survey responses reflect a need for better degree program offerings that allow for entry level workers to be able to move up in their careers and this

Bachelor of Science program does just that. The Cooperative Land Stewardship Bachelor's degree program also includes job training or internship/cap stone project as a required element for graduation which better prepares students by providing work experience as part of the learning experience.

Due to the above due diligence in planning of this exciting and new Bachelor of Science degree program offering at Columbia College, the effort was made to ensure student interest, the need of local industries and the collaborative approach to fine tuning of course offerings and suggestions from all stakeholders, the County of Tuolumne Board of Supervisors supports Columbia College in better preparing our local talent to enter into this much needed field of work to address current issues facing the County of Tuolumne.

Sincerely,



Kathleen K. Haff
Chair, County of Tuolumne Board of Supervisors

I hereby certify that according to the provisions of Government Code Section 25103, delivery of this document has been made.

TANYA BRUCHACEK
Executive Clerk

By: 