



# **Regional Water Management Group**

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

## **MINUTES**

Monday, November 23, 2020 1:30 pm

### **1. The meeting was called to order at 1:31 pm, by Tom Wheeler, chairman.**

Those present included:

Tom Wheeler – Madera County BOS

Al Solis – SEMCU

Jeannie Habben – Madera County

Stephanie Anagnoson – Madera County

Kristi Robinson – Water Wise / Triangle T

Jacob Roberson – RWMG Coordinator

Keith Helmuth – City of Madera

Carl Janzen – Madera ID

Angela Islas – SHE

Jack Rice – MAWA

Igal Treibatch – SEMCU

Mark Hutson – Madera/Chowchilla RCD

Brandon Tomlinson – Chowchilla WD

Joe Fiss – SEMCU / Greystone Equities

Don Roberts – Gravely Ford WD

Eddie Mendez – Madera Public Works

Stefani Dias – Madera County Farm Bureau

### **2. Review & Approval - Agenda & Minutes**

- A motion to approve the November agenda was made by Carl J; Kristi R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
- A motion to approve the October minutes was made by Kristi R; Keith H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Public Comment**

- Igal T commented that the drywell recharge project for SEMCU on the IRWMP Project List in Madera does not have anything to do with their Liberty Groves development. Igal would like to make that clear so everybody understands. SEMCU pushing this drywell recharge project has nothing to do with the development at Liberty Groves. Liberty Groves will have a water plant that will stand on its own without the help of drywells. If it is decided later to install drywells in the Liberty Groves development, then it will be added on as an addition to the drywell recharge project at a later date. The drywell recharge project will benefit Madera County and, in particular, it will help MID because the overall benefit will come from the 215 water that MID is going to be able to deliver to anybody. If anyone has any questions or concerns about the drywell recharge project, please reach out to Igal.
- Mark Hutson commented that at the last Madera/Chowchilla RCD meeting, they decided to go ahead and participate at the Madera RWMG meetings. Mark Hutson or Tim Cuelho will be attending the RWMG meetings for the RCD going forward, and also for projects concerning Arundo.
- Tom W commented that the Sheriff was asked what was going to be done about the 10 pm curfew set by the Governor. The Sheriff sent out a bulletin this morning stating that they will not be enforcing or going after anyone staying out after the 10 pm curfew that the Governor set.
- Tom W also commented that the Creek Fire is now roughly 90% contained. Tom was able to visit his cabin and there were still a lot of trees and stumps burning/smoldering. There are now large holes where the tree stumps used to be from being mined about 80 – 90 years go. People have to be careful where they are walking because the roots

below could have burnt, causing the ground to sink and people may get burned if the roots are still hot and haven't completely burned.

- Items of Interest were mentioned by Jacob R (for more information, reach out to Jacob):
  - USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program is accepting applications through December 11th. USDA is providing free assistance with applying to this program, including preparing and submitting the required paperwork.
  - DWR has released the Prop 68 Implementation Proposal Solicitation Package for the Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program. Round 1 applications are being accepted through January 8th, and there is a total of \$26 million for this round. An assistance workshop webinar is scheduled for December 3rd from 2 pm – 4 pm to review the application process and answer questions. Registration for the workshop webinar is still open.
    - Round 2 applications are expected to open in Spring 2022 and will offer at least \$77 million.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **4. Discussion & Action - Financial Report/Warrant Approvals**

- Carl J commented that \$1,800 was spent this past month for the group, leaving us with a balance of \$25,516.46. We'll have a good end for this year, which will give us a good start for next year.
- A motion to approve the financial report was made by Carl J; Kristi R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

### **5. Discussion – Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement Funding**

- Mountain Counties
  - Jeannie H commented that at the last Coarsegold RCD meeting, they stated that the project construction is completed, and Bobby helped with the permit situation to get everything resolved. They are just waiting for the thumbs-up from the state that everything they needed to do was completed. Julie K will provide photos of the completed project, as well as photos of it being used by the firefighters at the camp setup there for the Creek Fire.
    - Tom W commented that they did talk to Kathy and were able to get the fees waived by the County. Great project they were able to do with the leftover funds, and it has paid for itself already with the firefighters being able to use it at the camp for the Creek Fire.
- San Joaquin Valley Counties
  - Angela I reported that there are currently no updates for this section. The project is still moving forward.

### **6. Discussion – Proposition 1 IRWM Implementation Funding**

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
  - Eddie M commented that this morning was the last discussion that he had with DWR to go over some agreement details that they are making some changes to. Nothing major, they just wanted to review the changes which will mostly affect deadlines and the way some of the claims are going to be processed. DWR mentioned it will be another 2 – 3 weeks before the agreements are finalized on their end. Once they finalize them, they will send the agreements to the County to sign so the projects can begin.

### **7. Discussion – Creek Fire / Forest Management / Watershed**

- Tom W commented that there are 238 people currently working on the Creek Fire. They have 800 miles of dozer line or roads they have built for this fire and are winterizing them to get them stabilized. The fire is currently burning up in the far Northeast corner,

beginning to die out. Rain so far this year has been minimal so that hasn't been a big help with fighting the fire.

- Jeannie H commented that she, Madera County Water & Natural Resources, has been working with DWR regarding flood risks and mudslides due to the Creek Fire, and the DWR is donating a flood trailer with about 12,000 sandbags and other materials/supplies needed to help control floods and mudslides in case that becomes an issue this season. The trailer will be parked at the Public Works Yard (the Roads Yard) in North Fork. We also hired a group called MGO to analyze the geologic hazards of mud flows (next disaster that could be caused after the fire). We have also put together a group in our County that meets once a week with OES, Public Works, Roads, Flood and Natural Resources, Environmental Health, and others. All these groups get together weekly to discuss what is going on and how they can work in the fire area. We are also coordinating with Fresno County and other agencies, meeting twice a week to review what weather is coming in, what we can do, and what is going on in those areas in case of further fire, flood, mudslide, or other disasters. We have been working on the next steps for what needs to be done after a disastrous fire like the Creek Fire.
- Igal T had a question. Before with forest health management, we knew it would help with the ability to recharge water. Is the fire effect going to be positive in that respect?
  - Tom W answered that it will recharge if the ground is not too caked over with ash and debris from the fire. But a lot of the water will runoff since the ground is so slick from the ash and debris. The Willow Fire that happened about 15 years ago in North Fork filled the North Fork Recreation swim hole completely up to the top with ash. When they had to remove the ash, it was like a slurpee. Tom is afraid of what the ash from the Creek fire will do to the San Joaquin River, Mammoth, Redinger, Kerckhoff, and other bodies of water.
  - Jeannie H answered that it could also cause runoff or mudslides, so water quality is another issue to be concerned about. Everything that burned in the fire, including structures and vehicles, can affect the water quality and create issues in certain areas. Tom W shared a photo of a tractor that was burned in the fire to show how it melts the steel, wheels, engine heads, and everything else on vehicles because it's so hot.

## **8. Discussion – Domestic Wells**

- Prop 68 Funding
  - Jeannie H commented that the Chowchilla Subbasin is currently in the data gathering phase with Luhdorff and Scalmanini. Stephanie has been making multiple data requests, so we're bringing that in. The Madera Subbasin has gotten the contract signed with DWR. We currently have an RFP out for the group to do the data gathering. We've gotten a lot of questions unanswered, we have several different people saying they are interested, but the actual proposals are due tomorrow. Tomorrow at 3 pm we will see how many people we have interested in doing the data gathering for the Madera Subbasin and we'll go from there.

## **9. Review & Approval – Stormwater Resources Plan Project List 2021**

- Jeannie H commented that some projects recently added to the IRWMP project list have been proposed to be added to the SWRP project list as well. These projects need to be voted on in order to be added to the SWRP project list. Those projects include:
  - Triangle T Water District – Red Top Subsidence Mitigation project
  - Root Creek Water District – WWTP Expansion – Water Reuse project
  - Root Creek Water District – River Diversion and Pipeline project
  - Root Creek Water District – Reclaimed Water Infrastructure project
  - Root Creek Water District – Recharge Basin Facility project

- Madera Ag Water Association – Madera/Chowchilla GSP Recharge projects
- Madera County GSA – Westside Recharge project
- Madera County – Madera East Grower Group Recharge project
- Madera County Water and Natural Resources / Oakhurst River Parkway Committee – Oakhurst River Parkway Clean Up and Rehab project
- Penny Newman Grain Co. – Clean Groundwater Recharge project
- A motion to approve the project additions mentioned above to the Stormwater Resources Plan Project List was made by Kristi R; Jack R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

#### **10. Review and Approval – 2021 Meeting Calendar**

- Jacob R commented that no holidays conflict or land on the proposed dates for the 2021 meetings, so we are good there.
- Tom W commented that this calendar is always flexible and can be changed during the year. Just good to have it in place so people can put it on their calendars for next year.
- A motion to approve the 2021 Meeting Calendar was made by Carl J; Keith H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **11. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act – SGMA – Report**

- Jeannie H mentioned that the County GSA is considering an allocation approach on December 15<sup>th</sup> at the Board of Supervisors (Board of Directors for the group) for adoption in 2021 with IrriWatch. IrriWatch is a group that we have contracted with for tracking the water use among the agriculture water users. We also have an article showing up right now on Madera Subbasin GSPs and is also in today's [Fresno Bee](#) and [Sierra Star](#), titled "The Future of Madera Groundwater is being Decided. Do Residents Have a Say", that talks about how to make comments on the plan. We have ongoing meetings on the Prop 68 Implementation funds that will be for recharge basins with applications due January 8<sup>th</sup> (mentioned above by Jacob R under Public Comment – Items of Interest).

##### **12. CV SALTS - Report**

- Kristi R commented that they have chosen a Steering Committee as they move forward towards creating their early adoption plan. There are two dairymen on the committee, three irrigated lands program members, a member involved with composting, and a member from the City of Chowchilla. Our next public meeting is December 11<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm. The meeting will be held on Zoom. For more information, please visit [www.maderacountywater.com](http://www.maderacountywater.com) under the [Nitrate Management](#) tab.

##### **13. Implementation Grant Project Updates – Report**

- Round 1 – Arundo/Sediment Removal Project
  - Jeannie H mentioned that this project is from the original grant back in 2012. We are working on the final reports. Jeannie is working on the final Arundo report for project C. Jeannie has completed the final Arundo report for project B and will be sending that in. We are continuing the sediment removal which has to be done by December 31<sup>st</sup>, weather permitting. All final reports for Arundo Sediment Stormwater Pollution Protection for projects B and C are due in January. There are five projects in this one grant. Project A is the administration of all of it. Project B is the Madera County Sediment Removal and Arundo Removal of ash and Berenda Creek. Project C is MID doing the same but for Berenda Creek and some of the other creeks. Project D was an infrastructure project for Root Creek WD. Project E was the Sierra National Forest fuels reductions. Projects D and E

got finished right away. Projects B and C had some issues, causing them to take so long to finish up. The final report is not due until March 2021

**14. New/ Suggested Members for the Madera RWMG**

- Jacob R reached out to Roy Catania with Aliso GSA but did not hear anything back from him yet. Jacob has added Roy to the email list used to send out Madera RWMG meeting information, so Roy will be aware of our monthly meetings and other information sent out.

**15. Future Agenda Items**

- Nothing to add right now

**16. Next Meeting**

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 1:30 pm on ZOOM for now, unless we can meet in person. If we can meet in person, meeting will be held at the Chowchilla location.

**17. The meeting was adjourned at 2:11 pm.**