



Regional Water Management Group

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

MINUTES

Monday, February 22, 2021 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
Don Roberts – Gravely Ford WD
Dina Nolan – Madera ID
Gretchen Heisdorf – Root Creek WD / P&P
Samuel Cunningham – Madera County
Robert Macaulay – Madera County
Eddie Mendez – Madera Public Works
Johnnie Siliznoff – USDA NRCS / Madera RCD / Local Farmer

2. Review & Approval - Agenda & Minutes

- A motion to approve the February agenda was made by Kristi R; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
- A motion to approve the January minutes was made by Carl J; Igal T second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment

- Items of Interest were mentioned by Jacob R (for more information, reach out to Jacob):
 - The next meeting for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) is scheduled for April 14, 2021 from 10 am – 12 pm. This meeting will primarily focus on the CV-SALTS updates to the ILRP General Orders.
 - This is the only information available right now for this meeting. This is just a Save-The-Date notification for those interested in learning more about the CV-SALTS updates for the ILRP. If anyone is interested in attending, please let me know and I will send you more information about the meeting when it becomes available.
 - The USDA has created an updated guide outlining millions of dollars of available funding to farmers. [The 101-page guide](#) covers 62 government programs and has been updated to include program updates from the 2018 Farm Bill. Each program listing provides a description of the program's available resources, information on how to apply, and in some cases, examples of how the funding has been used. The guide also includes basic information on how to design sound projects, find appropriate programs and write grant applications.
 - The [USDA's Corona Food Assistance Program \(CFAP\)](#) is open again for those WHO HAVE NOT APPLIED YET or for those who are APPLYING WITH A MODIFIED APPLICATION. If you have already applied and were awarded, you do not qualify for this round. Your local USDA NRCS office provides free assistance with required paperwork and filling out the application. Please [click here](#) to find your closest USDA NRCS office. The deadline for this CFAP round is February 26th.

- Johnnie S asked Jacob if this CFAP is new, or if this is the same as the program that has been out for a little while now. Jacob answered that this is the second part to round two for the CFAP program. The round closing on the 26th is for people who have not applied to the program yet or are needing to submit a modified application. Some people who applied in the past have to submit a different form due to their citizenship status, so this second part of round two was initially opened for those who would have been disqualified due to not submitting the correct form. CFAP is looking to have a 3rd round, probably sometime in the Fall this year.
- The Madera RWMG Call for Projects is coming up on March 3rd. Jacob will send out an email to the email list he has for stakeholders. The Call for Projects will officially close on April 12th. The Madera RWMG members will have two weeks to review the projects, and the group will vote during the April 26th meeting on which projects to include on the IRWMP Project List for the Madera Region.
- Tom W is not looking to run for Supervisor again after this term.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Election of Officers

- Tom W asked if anyone had someone to elect to replace the current officers, which include Tom Wheeler as the Chairperson and Carl Janzen as the Vice-Chair.
- A motion to keep the Chairperson and Vice-Chair the same was made by Don R; Igal T second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion & Action - Financial Report/Warrant Approvals

- Carl J commented that eight members paid their Madera RWMG member fees since our meeting in January. We received approximately \$27,500 from Prop 1 funding. We spent \$31,000 for administrative assistance, Self-Help, and the county which leaves us with a balance of \$36,321.
- Stephanie A asked if we need to send Root Creek WD the Madera RWMG member fees bill again.
 - Tom W asked Jacob R to have the bill resent to the City of Chowchilla and Root Creek WD.
- Angela I asked if the amount paid to SHE on the financial statement is for projects 12 and 13, and has all the funding been spent for Project 9.
 - Jacob R commented that this payment is actually for the work done in the quarter ending September 2020 for Project 9. Once the invoice is submitted for payment, it takes about half a year to get paid.
- A motion to approve the financial report was made by Carl J; Kristi R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

6. Discussion – Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement Funding

- Mountain Counties
 - Tom W mentioned that Jacob sent out a success story about the North Fork Rec Center Project which included photos of the project. Tom asked Jacob list Outback Materials on the letter so we can show Outback Materials appreciation for the donation they made to this project.
 - Jeanie H is glad we are sending a letter to the Roundtable to show the work that was completed for this project because so often we don't say what we do. It's really great that we are letting people know about the great work we do.
 - Tom W commented that this project was funded due to funding not being used up by other projects. This was kind of a bonus project. There are

projects in the Madera Region that can be done when there is extra money available to fund them.

- A motion to approve the North Fork Recreational Center Project Success Story was made by Kristi R; Jack R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
- San Joaquin Valley Counties
 - Angela I reported that they officially have three people in the coordination group as of now and they are all Madera residents (Maria Mendez, Maria Rubio, and Baldwin Moy). Baldwin Moy is the director for Madera Coalition for Community Justice. Angela asked since this coordination group is technically part of Project 9 which has been invoiced out, can she still report on efforts tied to Project 9. SHE is moving on to Projects 12 and 13. SHE Emergency Services is still working on getting the 10 wells for the CV-SALTS efforts in Chowchilla. After those 10 are finished, they will proceed with having a more scheduled approach to how they are going to complete the 150 well tests that are indicated in Projects 12 and 13.
 - Jeannie H asked if Angela is working on Projects 12 and 13 at all. Angela mentioned that it is mainly Emergency Services staff working on those projects. Jeannie mentioned it would be best if one of the Emergency Services staff could attend meetings to report out on Projects 12 and 13. Angela will ask for the manager of Water Quality to attend.
 - Angela I asked Jacob if she needs to be working on sending the final items over to close out Project 9. Jacob mentioned he will get back to Angela on this outside of the meeting.

7. Discussion – Proposition 1 IRWM Implementation Funding

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
 - Eddie M reported that the final agreement was received last week and have been signed by both parties (the county and DWR) so the projects can begin. There are just a few coordination things to work out with the DWR and Eddie is working with the city on getting the information on record that the DWR needs in order to reimburse. On the county side, Eddie is working on getting the bid documents prepared for each of the projects (Indian Lakes and Parkwood meters, and Parksdale well rehab). The draft documents should be ready to be sent out in the next couple of weeks.
 - Tom W wanted to confirm that the agreements for both projects (valley and mountain) have been signed and Eddie mentioned that it is one single agreement for both projects, and that agreement has been signed by both the county and DWR.

8. Discussion – Creek Fire / Forest Management / Watershed

- Tom W mentioned that the [California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#) came out in January, and it is very detailed. We have been needing something like this for years now. The wildfires in California last year and this year have opened the eyes of a lot of people, both on the state level and the federal level, and they now realize how important forestry management really is. There has been 30-years of non-forest management. There will be a lot of money coming out to help support this action plan.
- Robert M was able to speak with someone over the past week about funds for local projects, and they are working on a more detailed planned for certain components of the action plan. They are looking to release that more detailed plan over the coming week. Robert is also working on their support letter for Assembly Bill (AB) 297 which will increase our fire prevention efforts by removing some requirements for fuel reduction

projects and removing some timber harvest requirements for homeowners creating defensible spaces, among some other things. There is a lot going on at the state right now to address forest health and many issues that we are seeing. Next week, Robert will be meeting with the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection at their monthly meeting, where they will be reviewing some of the updates to their plan.

- Tom W mentioned that a first big step for the plan was increasing the defensible space zone from 300 feet to 500 feet for homeowners.
- Stephanie A commented that the Office of Emergency Services (OES) continues to monitor the weather events, particularly periods of intense rain where there could be debris flows around the burn areas. The Flood Control Agency and OES just put in a couple of different gauges on streams around the burn areas so we can monitor water levels.

9. Discussion – Domestic Wells

- Prop 68 Funding
 - Stephanie A commented that the contract was just signed by the Board of Supervisors last week for the Madera Subbasin project on domestic well inventory. Stephanie mentioned it may be a good idea to ask the consultant to provide a brief update on these two projects at future MRWMG since both projects are using the same consultant.
 - Tom W agreed and asked for the contact information to be sent to Jacob R to include on MRWMG emails.

10. Roundtable of Regions – IRWM Advocacy Template

- Jacob R commented that the Roundtable of Regions (RoR) created a two-page advocacy template for the different regions within IRWM to use. The first page was put together by RoR and is unable to be edited, except for one graphic which you can change out to whatever you would like. The second page is what we can customize specific to the Madera Region and include any information we would like. Jacob is asking the group if this is something they would like him to create and bring back at next month's meeting for further discussion.
 - Tom W thinks it's important to do this and asked Jacob to work with Stephanie A, Jeannie H, and other county staff to come up with some guidelines and information for the group to look at to include on the advocacy template during March's meeting.
 - Igal T asked to have copies sent to the different group stakeholders when it is available.

OLD BUSINESS

11. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act – SGMA – Report

- Stephanie A commented that on February 11th, the Madera Subbasin GSAs met (all seven of them) as part of a workgroup and discussed a number of issues including our data management system, coordination with the Delta-Mendota, and domestic wells. There is a similar meeting coming up in Chowchilla on March 17th which Doug Welch is organizing. This meeting will include the four GSAs in the Chowchilla Subbasin to discuss the progress of over the course of a year. The Madera County GSA is continuing to work on their rate study including the recharge portion of that and the ag land retiring portion as well. They plan on sharing information on the costs sometime next month with a workgroup.
 - Igal T asked how close they are to knowing the cost of provisional water. Stephanie answered that it would be one of the results of the rate study which they have plan on having completed this calendar year. There will be a fair

amount of public outreach and sharing of process and sharing options with the Board of Supervisors and the public before then.

- Carl J reported for MID that they have voted to buy two pieces of property for recharge. They're in escrow right now. One piece is in the north half of their district, and the other piece is in the south half of their district. They will be building recharge ponds on these properties and both are next to their canals.
 - Tom W asked how big MID thinks the ponds may be, and Carl answered that one property is 30-acres and the other is 40-acres.

12. Chowchilla Nitrate Control Program - Report

- Kristi R commented that this coming Friday, they have a Chowchilla Nitrate Control Program public meeting at 1:30 pm. For those interested who have not received the meeting information email and/or would like to be added to the interested parties email list, please contact Kristi Robinson (wwkristi@icloud.com). They are about to submit their early action plan and preliminary management zone proposal. Today is the last day to submit comments on those. All information, including the comment template, can be found on the [Nitrate Management Tab](#) on Madera County's Department of Water and Natural Resources' website.
- Kristi R also commented that they are looking for domestic wells that need to be tested for nitrates, specifically, but will also be tested for other constituents. The wells need to be in the Chowchilla Subbasin which includes a portion of northern Madera County. Kristi asked for the group to please reach out to anyone they know and ask them to reach out to have their well tested. This will help them fill in some of their data gaps.
 - Tom W has a few contacts he can reach out to in Chowchilla and will see if they can help with locating domestic wells to be tested. Tom asked if there is any deadline, and Kristi said they will take the testing requests anytime. Kristi will send information to Tom to share about the testing.
 - They have partnered with SHE to do the testing, so if nitrate is not the issue for the domestic well, SHE can help enroll the homeowners or inhabitants in other programs to help ensure safe drinking water for the users.

13. Implementation Grant Project Updates – Report

- Round 1 – Arundo/Sediment Removal Project
 - Jeannie H said they are getting close to finishing.
 - Gretchen H commented that the final report document from Madera County is being finalized. DWR is accepting video in lieu of a face-to-face inspection due to COVID restrictions. Draft documents of the report were sent to Madera County to review earlier this afternoon. Once everything is approved, it can be sent to DWR to satisfy all of the deliverables and move in to the final report requirement section. Hopefully it will be done by the end of next month.

14. New/ Suggested Members for the Madera RWMG

- Tom W asked Jacob R to resend an email to Indian Lakes and Aliso WD about joining the Madera RWMG.

15. Future Agenda Items

- Jacob R mentioned that last week or the week before, Jason Rogers with the City of Chowchilla told Jacob that they received a notification email from DWR about the award of a Prop 1 Implementation grant for the City of Chowchilla. Jacob asked the group if this is something they would like to have as a running agenda item to report out on.
 - Tom W asked for this to be a running agenda item and to ask for the City of Chowchilla to report out on the project each month at our meetings if they can.

16. Next Meeting

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 22nd, 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 Oakhurst location.

17. The meeting was adjourned at 2:23 pm.