



# **Regional Water Management Group**

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

## **MINUTES**

Monday, January 25, 2021 1:30 pm

### **1. The meeting was called to order at 1:32 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 – Gravelly Ford WD  
Eddie Ocampo - SHE  
Clyde Wheeler – Indian Lakes  
Roy Catania – Aliso WD  
Dina Nolan – Madera ID  
Kim Witten – Madera County  
Gretchen Heisdorf – Root Creek WD / P&P  
Joe Hopkins – P&P  
Samuel Cunningham – Madera County  
Robert Macaulay – Madera County  
Jason Rogers – City of Chowchilla  
Julie Konno – Coarsegold RCD  
Jim Brohm – Member of the Public

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

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

### **3. Public Comment**

- Tom W commented that we have had 4” of snow up to now and looking like another 3-5” by the end of this week in Oakhurst. Could be good or bad. We’ve had years where there was snow like this and then a warm storm came through and caused flooding.
- Jeannie H introduced two Madera County Department of Water and Natural Resources employees. One is Samuel Cunningham and the other is Kim Witten. Samuel is one of our new Water Specialist and Kim, who was already in our department, has been promoted to Water Specialist and will be starting that position on February 1<sup>st</sup>. We invited them to this meeting to see what was going on with the IRWM and introduce them to this group.
  - Igal T asked what the position does, and Jeannie H answered that they will be split between flood and SGMA. They’ll be working on grants and all of the projects we have going on currently. Water market, simulation, recharge basins, Prop 68 grant, and all the stuff coming up.
- Jeannie H also wanted to let everyone know that on February 8<sup>th</sup>, she will be speaking at a symposium that compares the IRWM with SGMA. They’ll have three other speakers on the panel and the event is called “Collaboration Across IRWM and SGMA: Coordinating Project Development”. It is open to the public via Zoom. Jeannie H will send the meeting information over to Jacob so he can email the information to everyone and [the registration link](#).

- Clyde W asked when the Prop 1 grant for Indian Lakes (Water Meters) will get started. Some residents have been charged gallons as if they were cubic feet and have had enormously large bills because of this.
  - Jacob R commented that Eddie Mendez would be the one to contact about this. Jacob mentioned that Eddie M commented during the November meeting that they were still working on finalizing the contract with DWR. Jeannie H said once this is done then the work can begin on installing the meters.
    - Tom W asked Robert M to make a note about this so they can check on the status of the contract being finalized.
- Items of Interest were mentioned by Jacob R (for more information, reach out to Jacob):
  - The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced that approximately \$4 million in funding is available through the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) for those impacted by California's recent wildfires. Applications will be accepted through Friday, January 29th. Rapid response applications can be submitted through your [local field office](#).
    - This funding will support projects that address erosion, invasive noxious weeds, and dead hazard trees that threaten life, property, and other infrastructure. Please [click here](#) for the 17 practices supported through this funding.
    - Interested applicants are being instructed to contact their [local field office](#).
  - The DWR is hosting two upcoming webinars for preparing [Urban Water Management Plans \(UWMPs\)](#). The deadline for submitting UWMPs to DWR is Thursday, July 1st for urban water suppliers that either provide over 3,000 acre-feet of water annually or serve more than 3,000 urban connections.
    - The first webinar will be on Wednesday, January 27th, from 1 pm – 4 pm and will cover the different elements that are required for developing a water shortage contingency plan. [Click here](#) for more information, including registration and the link to the YouTube site where the recording will be uploaded the week following the webinar date.
    - The second webinar will be on Wednesday, February 10th, from 10 am – 12 pm. This webinar will cover the specifics of preparing, adopting, and submitting a UWMP. The registration and link to the YouTube site for the recording can be found by [clicking here](#).
  - The USDA is doing another round of their [Corona Food Assistance Program \(CFAP\)](#). If you haven't applied for this funding yet or you are needing to upload a new/modified application, it is open now through February 26<sup>th</sup>.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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

- Carl J commented that Page 1 is for the entire year last year, and we ended with \$21,846 in our account. On Page 2, nothing has been spent for January 2021 and nothing has come in. Carl spoke with Jennifer this morning and the membership fee bills have gone out to everyone so they should be getting them soon. Hopefully in February we'll show we had a whole bunch of money come in.
- A motion to approve the financial report was made by Carl J; Jack R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

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

- Mountain Counties
  - Julie K reported that they have completed the North Fork Rec Center project and almost everything went perfectly. Julie thanks Tom W and Robert M for their help with the permit process. We are just waiting to receive the final payment to send to the Boosters for the project.

- Tom W asked if they have heard when they might receive the final payment, and Julie answered they were told it would be faster than our first invoicing which took about 6-weeks and it has been a little longer than that already. Julie will reach out to Zoe Watson with the Sierra Institute to check on the final payment status.
  - Julie K sent photos of the completed work to Jacob R and it looks great.
    - Jacob is going to share a success story of this project with the Roundtable of Regions. Just waiting for the project to officially be marked complete. Next meeting for the Roundtable is in April. Jacob will run the success story by the group before submitting it to the Roundtable.
- San Joaquin Valley Counties
  - Angela I commented that for the Coordination Group, she was able to recruit two residents so far and they are both from the City of Madera and they had previously participated in our Leadership Institute. They are fully up to date on the IRWM section of the program that they need to know about. Maria Mendez and Maria Rubio are the two residents and are both interested in participating and being a part of that Coordination Group. Angela just needs to confirm with two more people if they are interested as well. Angela is hoping to have them confirmed by the February meeting so she can start with getting that group involved with these RWMG meetings.
  - Angela I commented that with the Phase 2 Water Sampling project, she is still working with SHE's emergency services to get the first 10 wells tested in the Chowchilla Subbasin for the CV-SALTS efforts. Emergency services is getting a lot of requests for water testing to be done, especially in Tulare County. With that in mind, Angela is trying to get the 10 wells on the testing schedule as soon as she can.

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

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
  - Jacob R mentioned that there are no updates for these projects besides what was mentioned at the beginning of the meeting during the Public Comment section on the agenda.
  - Keith H commented that the City of Madera is waiting for the reward of the grant to be received. There is no timeline. Jeannie H commented that the City of Madera's project is on the same timeline as the mountain counties as previously mentioned.

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

- Tom W commented that after the high windstorm that came through, there was a thick layer of dust that settled over the valley and it seemed like fog when you were driving through it. A lot of this dust was created by the ashes from the Creek Fire. Tom also mentioned that there is a lot of worry with all of the rain that is coming from the storm in a couple of days. About 15-20 years ago there was a big fire with a big rainstorm (gully washer) that followed not too long after the fire and a pond at the North Fork Rec Center that gets dammed off every year completely filled up with ash. North Fork was able to get a permit to allow the locals and their machinery to scoop it all out. If the coming storm is a gully washer, you can imagine what the San Joaquin River is going to look like, especially Redinger and Kerckhoff, and maybe some parts of Mammoth.
- Jeannie H commented that Water and Natural Resources is on the Creek Fire Watershed Task Force and they have a call every Thursday. Stephanie A is currently on a call with the Task Force and NOAA discussing the big weather event that is coming this Wednesday and Thursday. There are a lot of Fresno individuals on this task force, state individuals, and other members too. On the Madera side, we got a report from

ENGEO with mapping layers which was used for the community meeting held for those in high-risk areas for mud and landslides. Joseph Wilder with Madera County OES is currently heading a group of Sheriff deputies who are going to go out and knock-on doors that are in areas that could be affected by this rainfall because of the Creek Fire. We have signs out on the roads warning people of possible mud and landslides, we've also been working on getting fencing installed to keep debris off of the roads and out of houses. We are working on trying to stay on top of the disaster that can be caused by mud and landslides.

- Julie K mentioned that if any off those doors that the Sheriff deputies are knocking-on are directly affected by the Creek Fire, they will qualify for those EQIP funds mentioned by Jacob R under the Items of Interest section on the agenda. Those property owners can contact Julie K directly or the Madera NRCS field office and we can get that application submitted. This funding is not just for trees, it is also for erosion and many other things.
  - Robert M asked Julie K if this funding was only for private landowners or if private businesses could apply as well. Julie answered that it is primarily for private landowners. She has never tried for private businesses before, but she can look into it and let Robert know.

## **8. Discussion – Domestic Wells**

- Prop 68 Funding
  - Jeannie H commented that they are working on the applications for the Prop 68 funding. We are also working on the annual reports for SGMA for both the Madera and Chowchilla Subbasins which are due on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Both of the Madera and Chowchilla Subbasins domestic wells projects for Prop 68 got turned in by the January 8<sup>th</sup> deadline. We also have the domestic well inventory that we've been working on where Chowchilla had already started. Madera is just starting due to some issues that got resolved but caused a delay in getting the project started. The Chowchilla grant was for \$500,000 and the Madera grant was for \$400,000.

## **9. Review & Approval – IRWM Project List**

- Aliso Water District Project Proposal – Cottonwood Recharge Project
  - Jacob R commented that Aliso WD would like to get this project on both the IRWM Project List and the SWRP Project List. Joe Hopkins and Roy Catania are on the call today to answer any questions about this project that the group may have before voting on it.
    - Don R asked where the water was coming from for this project. Joe H answered that they have a temporary water right on the Chowchilla Bypass. Don mentioned that the project proposal mentions Cottonwood Creek, so it had him confused. Joe mentioned that it is adjacent North of Cottonwood Creek.
    - Carl J commented that it's too bad we don't have too much water because this project does no good if we don't have any water.
  - A motion to approve the addition of the Aliso WD project proposal to the IRWM Project List and the SWRP Project List was made by Don R; Carl J second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

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

- Stephanie A commented that in the Madera Subbasin the joint GSP is reviewing their annual reports which are due April 1<sup>st</sup>. They include updates on everybody's projects.

The Chowchilla GSP will have its annual report done right after Madera's since they have some of the same consulting team.

- Igal T commented that there is a large amount of water that is going to fall down in a short period of time, and you can expect that most of that water is going to pass us by.
  - Stephanie A commented that according to the National Weather Service, the soil is so dry right now that much of the water will be absorbed. That's great news for groundwater. This is the only good thing about having dry soil.

#### **11. Chowchilla Nitrate Control Program - Report**

- Kristi R commented that the program is having a public meeting this Friday on Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm via Zoom. If you are interested in attending, you can reach out to Kristi Robinson or go to the [Nitrate Management](#) section on Madera County Water and Natural Resource's website. They will be going over the draft of the early action plan during this meeting and also their preliminary management zone proposal.

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

- Round 1 – Arundo/Sediment Removal Project
  - Jeannie H commented that this project is almost completed. The sediment removal has been completed. All of the goals for this project were met. They removed more than 304,000 tons of sediment. The final report is being worked on and will be done by March. In a few months the final report will finally go in since the project began in 2012.
    - Mark H asked if there are any grants or funding sources available to do this project all over again. Jeannie H mentioned that they are currently working on the 1602. They have submitted it to the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. The 1602 is a stream alteration permit so that we can do Arundo removal in the waterways. We have a 1602 currently for sediment removal, but not Arundo. Once that 1602 is approved, we can start looking for funding once again. Funding usually comes from CDFA, or maybe from DWR's implementation funding round 2 that will come out later this year.
      - Stephanie A mentioned that there have been a number of grants to remove Arundo, but this is kind of a normal operations and maintenance issue that needs a really steady funding source. When you get a grant, you're able to go in and clean-up to how it was. Jeannie H said that is what they are experiencing right now. They did what the grant said they were going to do, and it's all back again before the final report is done to close out the grant.
      - Mark H thinks if we can calculate how much water that the Arundo actually takes, then the GSAs and other agencies will be more willing to go after funding.

#### **13. New/ Suggested Members for the Madera RWMG**

- Jacob R commented that Indian Lakes was sent the packet to join the group as a DAC. Clyde W mentioned that this is on the to-do list for them once they are able to get together to go over the packet.

#### **14. Future Agenda Items**

- Carl J mentioned that we need to re-elect officers for the group during the February meeting.

#### **15. Next Meeting**

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 22<sup>nd</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 Madera location.

**16. The meeting was adjourned at 2:19 pm.**