



# **Regional Water Management Group**

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

## **MINUTES**

Monday, March 22, 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  
Angela Islas – SHE  
Jack Rice – MAWA  
Igal Treibatch – SEMCU  
Mark Hutson – Madera/Chowchilla RCD  
Brandon Tomlinson – Chowchilla WD  
Don Roberts – Gravelly Ford WD  
Dina Nolan – Madera ID  
Gretchen Heisdorf – Root Creek WD / P&P  
Eddie Mendez – Madera Public Works  
Gretchen Murphey – CDFW  
Stefani Dias – MAWA/Madera Farm Bureau  
Sam Cunningham – Madera County

Clyde Wheeler – Indian Lakes  
Martin – Public Member  
Kim Witten – Madera County  
Chris Montoya – DWR  
Jenny Nunez-Rodriguez – Madera County  
Pete Leffler – Luhdorff & Scalmanini  
Sarah Woolf – Triangle T  
Jason Rogers – City of Chowchilla  
Greg Rodgers – Madera Valley Water  
Jennifer Winstead – Blackburn Consulting  
Christina Beckstead – Madera Farm Bureau  
Madeline Harris – Leadership Council  
John Peairs – XiO  
Laura Satterlee – SHE  
Josh Dowell – Water & Land Solutions  
Clay Daulton – Local Farmer  
Tami McVay – SHE  
Bill Diedrich – Local Farmer  
Dave Loquaci – Public Member

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

- A motion to approve the March agenda after moving item 8 up on the agenda to be done as item 5 was made by Igal T; Kristi R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
- A motion to approve the February minutes was made by Kristi R; Keith H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Public Comment**

- Clyde W asked Jacob R to correct a misspelling in his email address
- Items of Interest were mentioned by Jacob R (for more information, reach out to Jacob):
  - The Call for Projects to include on the Madera IRWMP Project List is now open. The deadline to submit a project proposal to the group will be Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, at 5 pm.
  - CAL FIRE has two upcoming workshops for their Fire Prevention and Forest Health Grant Programs. The Fire Prevention workshop will be on March 25<sup>th</sup> from 11 am – 2 pm. And the Forest Health workshop will be on April 7<sup>th</sup>, from 1 pm – 2:30 pm. Recordings of the workshops will be available online.
    - Fire Prevention Grant Program applications are due by 3 pm May 19<sup>th</sup>.
  - DWR released the draft California's Groundwater – Update 2020 (Bulletin-118) for public comment, and the public comment period will close on April 26<sup>th</sup>. DWR will host a public webinar meeting to present an overview of the draft on March 30<sup>th</sup> from 12 pm – 1:30 pm.

- The California Department of Fish and Wildlife released its Cannabis Restoration Grant Program, 2021 Draft Watershed Remediation and Enhancement Solicitation for public review and comment. Public comments are being accepted through March 31<sup>st</sup> at 4 pm.
  - They will also be hosting an online meeting open to the public on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 11 am.
- The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program stakeholder meeting will be on Wednesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am – 12 pm on Zoom, and is open to the public. The meeting will focus on CV-SALTS updates to the ILRP General Orders and implementation elements of CV-SALTS.
- The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board is accepting written comments on the Preliminary Management Zone Proposals and Early Action Plans within Priority 1 Management Zones to comply with CV-SALTS Nitrate Control Program. Written comments may be submitted to the board via email or mail no later than April 14<sup>th</sup>.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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

- Jacob R commented that the remaining three group members paid their dues for the year. SEMCU is the remaining member to have a balance but they usually make quarterly payments. They have made one payment this year already. The only decrease for the past month is the \$1,800 for Jacob's position.
- A motion to approve the financial report was made by Jason R; Kristi R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

### **5. Discussion – Domestic Wells – Prop 68 Funding**

- Madera / Chowchilla Subbasin Domestic Well Inventory Projects
  - Please [click here](#) for a PDF copy of the presentation slides used for this agenda item. This presentation is a draft and is subject to change
  - Stephanie A introduced Pete L who is with Luhdorff & Scalmanini, consulting engineers, and working on these two projects. Pete will be providing a more in-depth look at these projects to help others understand what is being done with these grants. We'll cover some background, what domestic well inventory is, what outreach has been done, what refinements to impact work are being done, assessing additional monitoring needs, and we'll talk through monitoring well construction, instrumentation, and how that works. These projects are funded through Prop 68, where \$500,000 was awarded for the Chowchilla subbasin and \$400,000 for the Madera Subbasin. Our motivations are to avoid significant and unreasonable adverse impacts to beneficial users including drinking water users, and many of the GSPs include domestic well mitigation plans. What we learned during GSP development from 2017 through 2020 is that we have a data gap and a need for improved understanding of well locations and density as well as construction of wells that are active. There was analysis in the GSP but what we are trying to do is improve and refine that work with these grant funds. Essentially, what we have is various sources of information. The DWR has a Well Completion Report Database, so if you have a well drilled then the well drilling company needs to send required information to DWR to complete the well completion report. There is also a County Well Permit Database that has all of the permits issued for wells in the county. The last 10-years for the databases have really good data, and we also have the Assessor's parcel data sets, so we know where people live. Theoretically, if you have a home then you should have a water source, either from a public water system or from your own well. We also have census information where we can check against the Assessor data so we

can make sure we know where everybody lives. The idea is to count the wells and have a list complete.

- Pete L commented that with these four databases, it's important to look at the different characteristics that we have. Starting with the DWR Well Completion Reports, this tells us about historical presence and some of these reports go back to the early 1900s. Unfortunately, they do not provide us with the information on well status, meaning whether it's an active well or not. Location accuracy is generally pretty good but can be variable. Sometimes we have precise locations and other times we only have the Township, Range and Section, and sometimes they have construction data. The County Well Permit Database lets us know when a well is going to be drilled since it is a permit. For Madera County, we were able to get permits as far back as 1990. For Merced County, we were able to get permits as far back as 1998 (there's a small piece of Merced County in the Chowchilla Subbasin). The information on the permit data does not tell us whether a well is active or not. Location is given by APN, and generally don't have construction data except for well seal depth. For the parcel data, we can defer from that. There is a dwelling code so we know where the homes are and location is by APN. Census information also gives us information on homes by census block.
- Pete L used some maps and graphics during his presentation which can be found on the link above, or by [clicking here](#). This presentation is a draft and is subject to change. The maps and graphics will be changing as information and data are inputted, and issues are fixed.
- Pete L mentioned that they are going to be looking at these data sets and the conjugation with each other. Other aspects of this study are still in progress. In terms of outreach, there is a limited component. The exact type and form of outreach is something we are still evaluating in terms of making best use of those funds, but it may include distribution of preliminary inventory findings to get some additional feedback, possibly from additional targeted outreach, and discussions with local stakeholders regarding potential barriers to the registration of domestic wells for the mitigation program. We'll be looking for possible coordination with other projects that are going on in these two subbasins. Once we get through these preliminary findings, we will determine the scope of the outreach. The two technical experts in the subbasins have met to discuss domestic well mitigation and a potential process for registering wells.
- Pete L also mentioned that another thing they will be doing once they have all of this data together with the different databases is looking at potential impact. There was a preliminary analysis that was done and included in the GSP which we received comments on regarding the analysis used to estimate the number of domestic wells to go dry in the future. We are going to pull together these additional data sets and information from this study, and we will revisit that analysis and update it with a focus on what may happen in the next 5 to 20-years as far as for the potential for domestic wells to go dry. That will also provide input to funding procurement for a domestic well mitigation program.
- Pete L closed by mentioning the overall primary goals are to refine the total number of domestic wells using the additional information and data collected for this study, refine the impacts, refine the costs for a domestic well mitigation program, provide a basis for domestic well monitoring sites, and provide a baseline inventory that can be updated and refined in the future. The second part of this study is to put in some additional nested well monitoring sites focused on domestic well areas or areas of dense concentrations. We will consider sites of other monitoring wells to determine where to install the additional sites. Test holes will be drilled to about 800 feet, with 3 locations in the Chowchilla Subbasin

and 2 locations in the Madera Subbasin. We'll be doing lithologic and geophysical logging of each of those test holes. We'll be constructing up to 3 wells at each location at different depth zones which will be used for measuring groundwater levels and collecting groundwater quality samples, as well as instrumenting for long-term monitoring. The schedule to do all this is now through July of this year for the domestic well inventory which will overlap with the planning for well installation. We are hoping to start the drilling sometime in August of this year followed by the well sampling, instrumentation, and surveying at the end of the year. Doing the reporting in the first quarter of next year, 2022.

- Madeline H asked the question of why County Permits for wells do not include well depth and all the other needed information, and from here on out how all of this information can be included with the County Permit process. Tom W commented that it is because a lot of these wells are old, which he has dealt with many times. Pete L also commented that the main issue is when you apply for a well permit you don't necessarily know how deep you are going to drill because a lot of times when you are drilling, you are kind of seeing what you're encountering and that kind of goes into the determination of how deep you end up drilling. Even if there were predictions on how deep you are going to be drilling it doesn't necessarily mean that is how deep you actually drilled. The County Well Permit Database is information about the well before it is drilled whereas the DWR Well Completion Report Database is from after the well is drilled. Tom W added that in the past, not all well drillers turned in a completion report. Some of the records were lost too.
- Madeline H also asked if there is a plan to find out well status of the wells where the status is unknown or uncertain. Also, for the wells that are found to be active, is there a plan to assess the groundwater conditions and well depths or is this something that will be done comprehensively. If not comprehensively, will it be done through the test wells that you are going to be installing. Pete L answered that determining the status of wells is one of the big challenges here, and that's why the well registration process is going to be very important for the domestic well mitigation program. We really need to make an effort to get people to register their wells and provide basic information about their wells, particularly the status. We may be able to gather more information through the outreach as part of this scope but that's a pretty limited budget we have for that. Stephanie A added that this is a state-wide issue and not a county issue when it comes to addressing domestic well challenges. Madeline H mentioned to reach out if they can help with the outreach for this.

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

- San Joaquin Valley Counties
  - Self Help Enterprises – Projects 12 and 13
    - Kristi R is asking the group for the flexibility to utilize the grant for as many domestic wells as they can find to do testing within the Chowchilla Subbasin.
      - Tom W asked if this is something that can be done with the grant and Jacob R answered that in the agreement there is no issue with it as long as the testing is done within the Madera Region outlined in IRWM. Tom W said that it is fine to go ahead and do what Kristi is asking. Jeannie H confirmed that as long as it is within the boundaries of Madera Region then it's OK. What they

are looking to do is utilizing our funds to do some of the testing for CV-SALTS just to make sure that part of the testing is done and that's well within the boundaries of the grant directives.

- All agreed with Tom to let this happen.
- Christina B asked if the grant is based on the county boundary or the Bulletin-118 SGMA boundary. Jeannie H answered that it is the county, or the Madera Region for IRWM.
- Jacob R shared a flyer that they put together for outreach and to advertise for the testing.
- Christina B added that they are steering away from the term CV-SALTS for this since this is for the Nitrate Control Program. CV-SALTS is an entity that has helped put this together.

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

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
  - Clyde W with Indian Lakes commented about the DAC application that Indian Lakes is getting ready to turn in to the group to officially join the program. They had a meeting this past Saturday and they all agreed to sign the MOU and other paperwork. The Indian Lakes Estates Property Owners Association will be signing the MOU and board resolution letter. Clyde also asked if the projects for Indian Lakes submitted last year are still included on the project list for potential funding in the future. Tom W answered that the projects are still on the list. If any project were to be removed, a public hearing would be done prior to removing the project.
  - Eddie M commented that the Public Works Department had a brief meeting with DWR to go over details on the invoicing and reporting which went smoothly. For the water meter installs at Indian Lakes, we are in the process of updating our bid documents which would be inclusion of subdrawings that we are going to have updated since they haven't been updated in a few years. We are looking to go out and do the bid in the next 4 weeks, so sometime in April. It shouldn't take too long to get the drawings updated. One thing that could possible delay that slightly is that during our discussion with DWR, they mentioned that for this first quarter, they recommend that we submit our reporting in April though we typically have until the end of May. We will be working conjunctionally to get this first reporting and invoicing period done about a month early, which can possibly delay the bid documents a little bit since we'll be working on those things simultaneously rather than doing the bid first and then doing the reporting and invoicing later.
  - Eddie M commented on the projects for Parkwood and Parksdale. Parkwood is essentially in the same status as Indian Lakes. About a month out from starting the bid. For Parksdale, we are currently in discussion with Madera Pumps to get the well investigation complete. Eddie has been going back and forth with them to get the needed information for a bid to be put together to have the well investigated. We need this done in order to complete the bid document so we'll have a confirmed list of items of what will be needed to rehab the Parksdale well, whether it's the well casing, well pump, etc.
  - Keith H. commented on the project for the City of Madera. They are looking to do an RFP with consultants to figure out their more difficult meters. We have gone through the easy list of meters over the last 8 or 10 years. Now we are on to the really hard ones. This is where we have cross-block connection between houses, and in some cases, we had it going through basement to basement. The consultant selected will look through these and put together a list of locations to have the meters installed.

- Jason R. commented on the project for the City of Chowchilla. Back in June 2020, the City of Chowchilla submitted a Prop 1 Implementation funding application, and we were recently informed by the state that we did receive funding for that in the amount of \$3.4 million for an urban runoff management project. This project will go from Sonoma St (West side) along 3<sup>rd</sup> St all the way to 15<sup>th</sup> St and Edward Ray Park. It's a multi benefit project that includes subsurface infiltration galleries, low impact development, rain gardens, along with conventional stormwater infrastructure to try to alleviate some of the flooding issues over on that side of town while creating a new runoff recreation area in our park that will be used for collection of stormwaters, and when not in use for that purpose it will be used as a soccer field. We are currently working on the funding agreement with them right now. Once council approves acceptance of that then we can finish the funding agreement with the state and start moving forward with completing the rest of the design (at 30% complete right now), then bidding for construction. Jason thanked everyone who submitted Letters of Support for this project.

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

- Jacob R mentioned that he attended the Southern Sierra RWMG meeting a couple of weeks ago and they are continuously working on different issues relating to the fire. Sierra Institute has different projects as well relating to the fire that they are looking for funding to implement.
- Tom W mentioned that on March 10<sup>th</sup>, the County OES (environmental health) received an email from Cal OES in response to the County letter to include debris removal at Jackass Organization Camp (which the County owns) and Wagner's commercial property. Just waiting on phase 2 for the ash and debris removal that will begin in Madera County.
- Tom W also commented that PBS had a special on the Creek Fire this past Wednesday night. Reach out to Tom if you would like a copy or information on where to find it. We are also looking for grants to do as many fire breaks in Madera County as we can.

#### **9. Roundtable of Regions – IRWM Advocacy Template**

- Jacob R presented the template to the group. Jacob, Jeannie H and Stephanie A worked on putting it together. Tom W commented that the template looks good, it's very informative, simple, and puts out what we're doing.
- A motion to approve the IRWM Advocacy Template was made by Kristi R; Jason R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

#### **10. Call for Projects**

- Jacob R has not received any project proposals since sending out the call for projects. The deadline to submit a project proposal for this round is April 12<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. The group members will vote on projects submitted during the April meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Igal T mentioned that there may be a few projects that they are looking in to as far as a recharge basin on their farming land. They are going to have a discussion with Stephanie A and see if it's appropriate. If it is, they'll add it on.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

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

- Stephanie A reported that last week, the Chowchilla Subbasin Advisory Committee met and reviewed the elements of the annual report that's due April 1<sup>st</sup> and voted on a scope for the annual report to be done. The Madera Subbasin met the month before for similar work to review everything that happened last year and report out on projects and management actions. There is a County GSA meeting tomorrow at 2 pm for our strategic

agriculture lands conservation program and recharge. We are going to give status updates on where both of those are.

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

- Kristi R commented that the Chowchilla Management Zone has submitted the preliminary management zone proposal and the early action plan to the Regional Water Board, and they are now accepting public comment on it. We are continuing to be looking for domestic wells within our management zone (parts of Madera County and Merced County) that would like to be tested for nitrates.

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

- Round 1 – Arundo/Sediment Removal Project
  - Jeannie H reported that everything for this project was sent in to DWR last week. Gretchen H added that the final progress report and final pay request went in. The final progress reports submitted are drafts, and we have to wait for DWR to review and comment. After Gretchen receives the comments on those and the draft grant completion report, those will be reviewed and incorporated into the final reports and then submitted. Once those are submitted, we can submit for the final retention request so the final disbursement paychecks will go out. At that point, this project will be finished completely, and we can start looking to start the next one.

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

- Jacob R commented that Indian Lakes will be submitting the DAC application soon to officially join the group, and nothing heard back from Aliso WD. Tom W asked Jacob to send the invite email to Aliso one more time.

#### **15. Future Agenda Items**

- Nothing mentioned

#### **16. Next Meeting**

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 26<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 2:47 pm.**