



Regional Water Management Group

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

MINUTES

Monday, April 25, 2022 1:30 pm

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:33 pm, by Tom Wheeler, chairman.

Those present included:

Tom Wheeler – Madera County	Eddie Mendez – Madera County
Jeannie Habben – Madera County	Jacklynn Kouzougian – SEMCU
Kristi Robinson – Water Wise/Triangle T	Kim Witten – Madera County
Jacob Roberson – RWMG Coordinator	Al Solis – SEMCU
Keith Helmuth – City of Madera	Dina Nolan – MID
Brandon Tomlinson – Chowchilla WD	Nicole Wynd – SHE
Carl Janzen – Madera ID	Armando Ortiz – SHE
Gretchen Heisdorf – Root Creek WD	Ed Rose – Cascadel Mutual Water
Don Roberts – Gravelly Ford WD	Robert Macaulay – Madera County
Stephanie Anagnoson – Madera County	Wendy Rash – USDA NRCS
Sam Cunningham – Madera County	Joe Fiss – Greystone Equities/SEMCU
Melanie Aldridge – Madera WD	Amy Siliznoff – Madera/Chowchilla RCD
Clyde Wheeler – Indian Lakes	

2. Review & Approval - Agenda & Minutes

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

3. Approval – Resolution No. 2022-04

- A motion to approve meeting resolution no. 2022-04 was made by Gretchen H; Kristi R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comment

- Tom W commented that up in Ahwahnee they got 1.37” of rain which brings the total to 20.76” for the season, which is about 10” – 12” below normal but 5” more than last year.
- Tom also commented that this Friday and Saturday is the Coarsegold Rodeo. Friday is kids’ day where students from all the grammar schools in the area up to the 4th grade come to the rodeo. Tom usually goes to kids’ day to teach the students how to water-witch for wells, and the kids enjoy it when they start to hold the brass rods which move and they can’t stop them.
- Al S added that the funeral for Vernon (Vern) Moss will be at the end of this month. The visitation will be held on April 27th in Chowchilla and the funeral will be held on April 28th. Please [click here](#) to read the tribute for Vern which was published in the Madera Tribune.

- Tom W added that Vern was a supervisor for Madera County for 12-years and was also the Mayor of Chowchilla for some time.
- Items of interest were mentioned by Jacob R (for more information, reach out to Jacob):
 - The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is accepting concept proposals for their Strategic Land Conservation Direct Grant Program through May 6th. The program's goal aims conserve lands through the planning and implementation of fee title and conservation easement acquisitions. Acquisitions should aim to protect, restore, or create climate resiliency, connectivity across important natural lands, water resources, unique cultural or natural areas, working landscapes, or access to public lands and recreation opportunities.

They are also accepting concept proposals for their Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Grant Program. The program supports efforts to enhance and develop sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities, and to increase access to public lands in the Sierra Nevada Region.

Interested applicants should read the [2022 Guidelines](#) for the programs, and projects must be developed in collaboration with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

- The California Silver Jackets are hosting the 2022 Watershed University Summit on Tuesday, April 26th, and Wednesday, April 27th, from 9 am – 11:30 am on both days. More information about the event can be found on the [summit's event page](#), along with registration information. Experts will be discussing:
 - a. Floodplain management in the 21st century;
 - b. The Unified National Program for floodplain management;
 - c. Nature-based flood management solutions: engineering with nature;
 - d. The National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System; and
 - e. Nonstructural and resilience-based approaches to flood management
- [The California Financing Coordinating Committee \(CFCC\)](#) is hosting a free virtual funding fair on May 17th and 25th. The funding fair will provide the opportunity to learn more about available grant, loan, and bond financing options for infrastructure projects from federal, state, and local agencies.
- DWR has added 2 new drought-related features to the [Domestic Well](#) and [Irrigation Well](#) dashboards within [California's Groundwater Live website](#). The first new feature is a series of new interactive well density layers that summarize the number of domestic and irrigation well completion reports received by DWR. The other new feature has added monthly well statistics for both domestic and irrigation types.

- The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience drinking water program (SAFER) is rolling out a new Outreach and Engagement Strategy intended to increase community engagement; keep local drinking water projects on track; identify potential risks, issues, or delays; build local capacity; and create a path towards equitable and resilient water governance.

They are partnering with local experts to make this happen. The strategy involves 3 types of outreach and engagement partners:

Funding Partners: Enter into a funding agreement with the State Water Board and fund Community Partners for outreach and engagement activities.

Community Partners: Implement outreach and engagement, community education, and community capacity building activities.

Technical Assistance Providers: Provide administrative, technical, operational, legal, managerial, and/or community engagement support to failing water systems.

- DWR was recently provided \$202.5 million by the Legislature for SGMA Implementation activities, that includes planning and implementation projects (SGMA Implementation Round 2). This will provide funding to GSAs and other responsible entities to update/revise/modify their GSPs or their Alternatives to a GSP. The funding will also be used towards implementing the GSP or Alternative Plan. This funding is for eligible applicants with projects located in medium and high priority basins, including critically overdrafted basins.

The anticipated open date for this funding is in September 2022, with awards expected to be announced in July 2023. Once awarded, projects will have a period of performance of 3 years. Projects awarded are estimated to receive \$1 million - \$20 million.

- CAL FIRE has recently released the Forest Management Handbook for Small-Parcel Landowners in the Sierra Nevada and Southern Cascade Range.

Approximately 7 million acres (20%) in California's forests are owned and managed as small parcels by nonindustrial private landowners. The Forest Management Handbook for Small-Parcel Landowners provides clear, straightforward, and thorough information to help them develop a sound forest management strategy for their property.

A virtual workshop will be hosted tomorrow, Tuesday, April 26th, from 5 pm – 6 pm. This workshop will teach landowners how to use the publication, and where to find hardcopies. Please reach out to me if you would like the link for this workshop.

5. Discussion & Action - Financial Report/Warrant Approvals

- April 2022 Financial Report

- Carl J reported that we had more money come in than what went out which makes us \$500 more better off than we were at the beginning of the month. The only cash decrease we had for the month was the fee for our administrator/coordinator.
- A motion to approve the financial report was made by Carl J; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

6. Discussion – Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement Funding

- San Joaquin Valley
 - Self-Help Enterprises and Chowchilla Management Zone – Projects 12 and 13
 - Armando O reported that SHE continues to focus their efforts on the drought. SHE is currently not involved with any of the outreach or well testing for projects 12 and 13. Outreach and well testing will continue to be conducted by CMZ for these projects. This does not mean that in the future SHE will not be involved with these projects, but for the time being SHE is focused on the drought which leaves CMZ to do the outreach and well testing for projects 12 and 13.
- Chowchilla Nitrate Control Program
 - Kristi R reported that CMZ has had 40 inquiries for well testing. CMZ has had 14 applications submitted, and they have tested 9 wells. 4 of the wells tested have been above the threshold of 10 mg per liter for Nitrate. CMZ is also providing 8 homes with water replacement. For their outreach efforts, they have been connecting with groundwater users via social media. They have made 36,274 impressions through social media efforts. They have sent 8,582 mailers to homes via the postal service. They have also sent flyers and emails to residents within the Chowchilla Management Zone where they reached 3,815 residents. CMZ has also had 685 unique website views. Through food bank distributions, they have reached 620 people by putting flyers in food bank boxes. They also have reached out to 181 homes through door-to-door efforts, and they have presented information to 8 people through public meetings. CMZ has been doing a lot of outreach, and they have an event tomorrow, April 26th, at 11:30 am at the Dollar Tree in Chowchilla to talk to people about having their domestic well tested.
 - Tom W asked if people are receptive about having their wells tested, and Kristi answered that a lot of people are receptive once they reach out. CMZ is having a harder time with people completing the application, but once they fill out an application, CMZ has their wells tested and everyone that has had their wells tested have been very happy. Kristi also added that the testing is free, and they test for 13 constituents through the grant. They are only required to test for Nitrates through the regulation for CMZ, but the grant allows for them to test for 13 constituents which is good so they can tell residents that their water is safe. If the wells test high in Nitrates, CMZ provides them with bottled water in 5-gallon jugs every 2 weeks, along with a dispenser for the 5-gallon jugs. If the wells test high in other constituents, CMZ refers those residents to SHE so the residents

can apply for SAFER funding. CMZ refers residents to other programs if they are not able to fulfill their requests.

- Tom also asked if residents apply Chlorine, Clorox, or other stuff to their wells when they have Nitrates, and Kristi mentioned that she hopes not since it's probably not a good thing to do. Carl J added that people do that for E. coli, and they use Chlorate. Kristi said she would recommend that no one adds Chlorine or other products to their domestic wells for drinking water so they can test the wells to see what is in them and provide clean drinking water if needed.
- Jacob R also added that DWR approved of the extension request that was submitted at the end of last year. The new deadline for these projects is June 30, 2023. The past 2 invoices have also been approved by DWR, so MID should be receiving payment to disburse for those 2 invoices by the end of April. MID usually sends out checks for payment every 2 weeks, so SHE and CMZ should be expecting payment sometime in mid-May.

7. Discussion – Proposition 1 IRWM Implementation Funding

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
 - Indian Lakes and Parkwood
 - Eddie M reported that the vendor has received about half of the remaining radio units that they have been waiting on. Eddie had a meeting with the operations crew last week to give an update and to make sure everyone is on the same page. They are going to move forward with trying to get Indian Lakes completed first since they are not certain when the other half of the radio units will come in for Parkwood. Indian Lakes should be the relatively easy community to complete the installation for since it should be a more consistent experience in what the field crew should have to deal with for meter installation. A few other items will need to be ordered in the meantime, but they are expecting to receive the units at the vendor's warehouse next month which means they should be ready to go for installation as early as June but could be a little bit later (that is what Eddie is planning for now). Eddie is hoping to get all the components in the hands of the County in June so they can get started with installation by then.
 - Tom W asked if having received half the units is enough to get Indian Lakes done, and Eddie answered yes.
 - Clyde W added that last month it sounded like some funding is available for Indian Lakes to apply for to add an additional water storage tank for fire suppression and domestic water use in Indian Lakes. Clyde is not sure if anything further has happened with that possibility.
 - Clyde also added that they are anxiously awaiting the meter installation so they can get more accurate water usage readings for Indian Lakes. After the installation, they can begin to look for some of the leaks between the meters and points of use (POU) in the houses. Clyde is not sure what

can be done to check for leaks in other parts of the water system for Indian Lakes.

- Eddie M reported that for Parkwood, they are still in a holding pattern for the remaining radio units. The units received so far will be used for Indian Lakes. Eddie did submit an extension request to DWR that would extend the project by 1-year. DWR has not responded to the extension request and Eddie has followed up on the original extension request for an update from DWR to make sure everything has been submitted for the extension request. They currently have until the end of 2022 to get everything completed, but the request would extend the deadline to the end of 2023 to give them a buffer if anything else delays these projects further.
- City of Madera
 - Keith H reported that there is not an update from last month's report. They are still waiting on the report from their consultant regarding the meter installations.
- Parksdale
 - Eddie M reported that they are in the same spot as last month for this project. Eddie has not received an update stating that they are finished with the well rehabilitation for Parksdale. Madera Pumps has been working on a couple of other projects for the County, so Eddie has not been pressing them too hard to wrap up the project for Parksdale. The other two projects have sensitive timelines, and one of the projects is for Fairmead which is using a lot of attention from Madera Pumps right now.
- City of Chowchilla
 - No new update provided for this project.

8. Discussion – Domestic Wells – Prop 68 Funding

- Stephanie A reported that last month, Pete Leffler with Luhdorff and Scalmanini presented to provide an update on the domestic well inventory project and proposed monitoring well locations to the group. There have been discussions in the Madera and Chowchilla Subbasins on funding a domestic well mitigation program. Chowchilla Subbasin is hoping to have a MOU in place before the revisions to the GSP are completed.

9. Discussion – NRCS Cost-Share Pilot Program for Recharge Projects

- Wendy R reported that the application period closed on April 1st, and that they received quite a few applications during the application period. 20 applications came from Madera County, and there were a few others in Merced and Tulare Counties, and none in Kern County. They are currently working on putting together the plans for the applications received which consists of field visits and surveys. They are looking to have all the applications received ranked by the middle to the end of May and having their project selections by mid-June. Everything is on schedule, and they received a good response with applications to this pilot program. Implementation for the selected projects will begin in the Summer and Fall.
 - Tom W asked if any of the projects look good for recharge benefits, and Wendy answered that they are beginning field visits this week, but they

have a big enough pool of applicants and some of those applications should be very beneficial for groundwater recharge. Tom also asked if there was a good amount of money available to fund projects, and Wendy mentioned that there is \$2 million available overall. There won't be many projects that get funded, but that are hopeful that the projects selected will allow them to start evaluating the process for groundwater recharge.

- If anyone has questions about the NRCS pilot program for groundwater recharge, please email her at wendy.rash@usda.gov.

10. Discussion – Creek Fire / Forest Management / Watershed

- No new updates provided.

11. Discussion – Drought Working Group

- Jeannie H reported that Madera County had their last Drought meeting on April 15th, and SHE gave a report on water tank installations, bottled water, and other services that they provide relating to the drought in Madera County. They also showed the [California Drought White Board](#) which is on “Save Our Water”. It's about a 2-and-a-half-minute video on water conservation in homes. During the last meeting, they reviewed the new drought executive order (N-7-22) that they are all diligently working on at the County. They also reviewed maderacountywater.com where they have new articles available on the [drought page](#). Their next meeting is scheduled for May 20th at 10 am. If you would like to join or participate in the meeting, please reach out to Jeannie to get added to the emailing list.
 - Tom W asked if they get any good questions asked during the drought working group meetings for Madera County, and Jeannie mentioned that they do. They have pretty good discussions. They had a good discussion about the California Drought White Board this past meeting where they were talking about conservation and other ways to help conserve our water. For the Department of Water and Natural Resources, they are going to start doing the conservation class again. They'll be doing once a month “Lunch & Learn” sessions during the summertime where they'll cover home conservation, landscape conservation, and other conservation topics for residents. The Lunch & Learn sessions will be held in June, July, and August this year. The flyer for the Lunch & Learn sessions will be sent out soon.

12. Discussion – 2022 IRWM Implementation Grant Prop 1 Round 2 Funding

- Jacob R reported that there are no new updates for this since the comment period for the draft materials ended on February 18th. They are still looking to have 2 deadlines for this funding opportunity, with the 1st one in October 2022 and the 2nd one in February 2023. Jacob is keeping an eye and an ear out regarding the final materials for this funding opportunity and will update the group once he finds out more.
- Tom W mentioned to reach out to Jacob R if anyone has questions regarding submitting a project for this funding opportunity when the application period opens.

13. Review & Approval – 2022 IRWMP & SWRP Project List

- Jacob R mentioned that there were 2 new project proposals submitted which he sent out to the voting group members about 10-days ago. Both proposals are from Gravelly Ford WD. Gravelly Ford WD would like to add one of the proposals, the System Metering project proposal, to the Stormwater Resources Plan project list.
 - A motion to approve the IRWMP Project List was made by Carl J; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
- Jacob also mentioned that Madera WD has requested that 2 of their projects already on the IRWMP project list be added to the SWRP project list. The 1st project is the Madera Lakes project, which is on the IRWMP project list as project #127, and the 2nd project is the Surface Water Storage project, which is on the IRWMP project list as project #128.
 - A motion to approve the SWRP Project List was made by Don R; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

14. Review & Approval – Madera RWMG Coordinator Contract

- The Madera RWMG went into a closed session to discuss the contract for Jacob R and asked him to step out of the meeting for 5 minutes while they discussed the contract renewal.
- Tom W and the group had a discussion and decided to renew the contract for Jacob R for another year. The contract is good from May 4, 2022, to May 3, 2023. The group also decided to increase the monthly salary for Jacob by \$250.
- Jacob added that the contract remains the same. He will be doing the same roles for the group and looks forward to renewing the contract in April 2023 for another year before it expires May 3rd of next year.
- A motion to approve the contract was made by Gretchen H; Kristi R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

15. Report – Sustainable Groundwater Management – SGMA

- Stephanie A reported that the Chowchilla and Delta-Mendota Subbasins received a letter stating that the GSAs that wrote and submitted a GSP are considered incomplete, so those are all being revised. In the Chowchilla Subbasin, there have been a series of meetings with DWR where they tried to ask questions and get feedback on ways to get a sufficient plan. The plans will be completed and submitted sometime in July. The Madera Subbasin has not received a letter yet, but they did receive a State Water Resources Control Board letter which is the enforcement agency, and not the agency reviewing the plans.
 - Tom W asked Stephanie if there was only 1 GSP in San Luis Obispo that was accepted in the whole state, and Stephanie mentioned that there were a handful of GSPs that were deemed appropriate but none in the Central Valley.
- Melanie A reported that she was elected and appointed to help with the domestic well mitigation program. They are in the process of designing what that would look like. If anyone has copies of other domestic well mitigation programs from other agencies, please share those with Melanie. They are trying to get everything wrapped up and in place by the end of the year for implementation.

- Jacob R added that the 2nd round of SGMA Implementation funding will be coming out soon. Once the Request for Proposals or any draft materials are released, Jacob will send it out to the email list that he keeps for the Madera RWMG.

16. New/ Suggested Members for the Madera RWMG

- No new members suggested.

17. Future Agenda Items

- Tom W mentioned to reach out to himself, Jacob R, Jeannie H, Stephanie A, or Carl J if anyone would like an item to be added to the agenda for future meetings.
- Stephanie A mentioned removing the “New Business” and “Old Business” headers that are currently used on the agenda. Tom W agreed and Jacob R will remove them going forward. Jacob will also remove the NRCS Pilot Program from the agenda.

18. Next Meeting

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 23rd, 2022, at 1:30 pm on Zoom for now until COVID restrictions are lifted and allow us to meet in person.

19. The meeting was adjourned at 2:22 pm.