



# **Regional Water Management Group**

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

## **MINUTES**

Monday, May 23, 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	Al Solis – SEMCU
Kristi Robinson – Water Wise/Triangle T	Dina Nolan – MID
Jacob Roberson – RWMG Coordinator	Armando Ortiz – SHE
Keith Helmuth – City of Madera	Amy Siliznoff – Madera/Chowchilla RCD
Brandon Tomlinson – Chowchilla WD	Jack Rice – MAWA
Carl Janzen – Madera ID	Erin Capuchino – Y/S RC & DC
Gretchen Heisdorf – Root Creek WD	Jason Rogers – City of Chowchilla
Don Roberts – Gravelly Ford WD	Phil Janzen – Madera WD/MAWA
Stephanie Anagnoson – Madera County	Mary Stalter – North Fork Rancheria
Sam Cunningham – Madera County	Jenny-Nunez-Rodriguez – Madera County
Clyde Wheeler – Indian Lakes	Angela Islas – Civic Well
Eddie Mendez – Madera County	Emily Garcia – Madera County
Jacklynn Kouzougian – SEMCU	

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

- A motion to approve the May agenda with the addition of the set aside Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief funding was made by Carl J; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
  - Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief set aside funding for Madera County MCFA was added to the agenda by Jacob R
- A motion to approve the April minutes was made by Kristi R; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Approval – Resolution No. 2022-05**

- A motion to approve meeting resolution no. 2022-05 was made by Carl J; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

### **4. Public Comment**

- Mary S commented that the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians is only considered a DAC where their Government Center and housing project are in North Fork, and the rest of North Fork is not considered a DAC. This is using the DWR mapping tool that is available online. Mary spoke with Jeannie H about this, and Jeannie could not figure out why all of North Fork is not considered a DAC.
  - Tom W commented that North Fork is considered a DAC and told Mary to dial 311. Matt Treber or Jamie Bax would be the ones to talk to about this. Madera County has documents which qualify North Fork as a DAC. Tom also mentioned that they had a battle with DWR to get North Fork listed as a DAC since the census tract that DWR used to determine which

communities qualify as a DAC also includes Bass Lake WD's areas (6 and 7) and North Fork is area 8 within Madera County. They took this to Sacramento to try to get it resolved. The County will need to investigate this more to see why North Fork has been disqualified as a DAC since this is an important piece of information when we look for grants for that community.

- Stephanie A added that Tristan Shamp with Madera County would be the most helpful for this since he looks for grants for the County. There are multiple guidelines for what constitutes a DAC, and the rules continue to change for this. Tristan can walk Mary through each of the guidelines for a DAC. Tristan would be the most knowledgeable about this. Stephanie will reach out to Mary to give her Tristan's contact information.
- Tom W introduced Erin C with Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council (Y/S RC&DC). Erin is the new Executive Director for Y/S RC&DC.
- Items of interest were mentioned by Jacob R (for more information, reach out to Jacob):
  - [The California Financing Coordinating Committee \(CFCC\)](#) is hosting a free virtual funding fair on May 25<sup>th</sup>. 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 and the State Water Resources Control Board will host a series of webinars on their development of a guidebook for preparing county drought plans. The plans will focus on helping small water systems and rural communities.

During the first of the three webinars, DWR and the State Water Board will review the SB 552 requirements for counties and the plan to develop a guidebook as technical assistance and solicit input on needed tools and considerations that could help counties meet the requirements. Registration is required in advance, and you can do so by [clicking here](#). The first webinar will be on June 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

- The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has two funding opportunities. The first opportunity is for their Watershed Enhancement Solicitation which closes on June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4 pm. The funding looks to implement watershed and community enhancements in areas impacted by cannabis cultivation.

Proposals for this opportunity should enhance watersheds and communities with funds for, but not limited to road decommissioning, road crossing upgrades, erosion and sediment delivery prevention actions, culvert upgrades, water conservation, cleanup and remediation of impacts of illicit cannabis operations on private lands, and/or enhancing biodiversity and wildlife habitat within watersheds, among other projects of similar nature. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, public agencies, and Tribal governments. [Please click here](#) for more information.

The second opportunity is CDFW's Public Land Cleanup and Remediation Solicitation which closes on June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4 pm. The funding looks to implement the cleanup and remediation of illicit cannabis cultivation impacts on qualified public lands. Qualified public land includes land owned in fee simple title and managed by a federal, state, local government, or institution, or California Native American tribal government. It also includes land held by the United States in trust for a California Native American tribe.

Projects should focus on the severe impacts of illicit cannabis operations and reduce delivery of contaminants and waste to the environment by removing refuse and infrastructure associated with illegal cannabis cultivation on qualified public land. Projects can include the removal of stream crossings or water diversion infrastructure associated with illegal cannabis cultivation. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, public agencies, and Tribal governments. [Please click here](#) for more information.

- The State Water Board is accepting proposals again for their 2022 Nonpoint Source (NPS) Grant Program – Clean Water Act section 319(h). This program seeks proposals for projects that reduce runoff of pollution to waters of the state, such as agricultural projects that reduce pesticide and nutrient runoff, improvement or decommission of dirt roads to reduce erosion and sediment runoff, streambank stabilization to reduce erosion, marina programs to reduce toxic discharges from anti-fouling paints on boats, and infrastructure improvements of ranching and livestock operations to reduce erosion and runoff to nutrients and pathogens. Proposals must be submitted using the [State Water Board's FFAST system](#) by 5 pm on June 24<sup>th</sup>.
- The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is making [\\$160 million in grants](#) available for water and energy efficiency grants. The funding is for projects that save water, implement renewable energy components, and support sustainability benefits, the grants are being supplied by the [WaterSMART](#) program. Applications are due by July 28<sup>th</sup>.

Eligible applicants include:

Category A

- States, Tribes, irrigation districts, and water districts
- State, regional, or local authorities, the members of which include one or more organizations with water or power delivery authority
- Other organizations with water or power delivery authority

Category B

- Nonprofit conservation organizations that are acting in partnership or agreement with entities listed in category A

Applicants are invited to submit proposals under the following funding groups:

- Funding Group I: up to \$500,000 in federal funds will be available for projects that generally should be completed in 2 years

- Funding Group II: Up to \$2,000,000 in federal funds will be available for larger projects that may take up to 3 years to complete
- Funding Group III: Up to \$5,000,000 in federal funds will be available for larger projects that may take up to 3 years to complete.
- The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) is currently accepting Agricultural Conservation Acquisition pre-proposals (due June 15<sup>th</sup>), Land Use Planning pre-proposals (due July 1<sup>st</sup>), and Capacity & Project Development applications (due August 8<sup>th</sup>). For the pre-proposals for acquisition and planning that are accepted, the full applications are due on September 9<sup>th</sup>. These dates are subject to change.

If you missed the acquisition pre-proposal workshop you can view the presentation slides by [clicking here](#).

There will be a SALC Land Use Planning Grants Pre-Proposal Workshop online on Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, from 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm. Registration is required to attend, and you can register for this workshop by [clicking here](#).

There will also be a SALC Capacity Program Development Grants Application Workshop online on Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, from 11 am – 12 pm. Registration is required to attend, and you can register for this workshop by [clicking here](#).

Prior to the 2 workshops, please familiarize yourself with the [guidelines and the pre-proposal and applications requirements](#).

Agricultural Conservation Acquisition Grants aim to permanently protect croplands, rangelands, and lands utilized for the cultivation of traditional resources from conservation to non-agricultural uses.

Land Use Planning Grants support the development of local and regional land use policies and economic development strategies to protect critical agricultural land.

Capacity and Project Development Grants aim to expand organizational capacity to develop agricultural conservation acquisition projects.

## 5. Discussion & Action - Financial Report/Warrant Approvals

- May 2022 Financial Report
  - Carl J reported that MAWA has paid their membership dues for the year, and we received \$5,515.89 for the Prop 1 DAC grant that we have. We had a total of \$8,015.89 for income for the month. We sent out \$2,500 for Jacob's position and \$5,051.93 to SHE for the Prop 1 DAC grant. We had a total of \$7,551.93 for cash decrease for the month, which leaves us with a total of \$37,834.01. This leaves us in good shape for the remainder of the year.

- Jacob added that \$2,000 was for his contracted position with the group, and \$500 was for grant administration work for the Prop 1 DAC grant. Tom W added that going forward for Jacob's contracted position, the monthly amount will be \$2,250.
- 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 – Projects 12 and 13
    - Armando O reported that SHE continues to focus their efforts on the statewide drought at this time. 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 / Chowchilla Management Zone – Projects 12 and 13
    - Kristi R reported that they just got done with the Chowchilla Fair. They had a booth at the fair where they talked to hundreds of people about getting their wells tested. They received 14 applications from that event which brings the total to 30 for applications received for well testing. Kristi will be processing the 14 applications from the Chowchilla Fair this week and will get those wells tested ASAP. They have tested 11 wells so far and they are providing water to 9 of those homes. 5 of the 11 wells tested are over the limit for Nitrates in drinking water. They are continuing to test wells and conduct outreach for well testing. If you live in the CMZ boundaries or in Madera County and would like your domestic well tested, please reach out to Kristi. If you know of anyone that lives in the CMZ boundaries or in Madera County, please mention this free service provided using Prop 1 DAC funds. They test for Nitrates and 12 other constituents.
      - Tom W commented that getting 14 applications from the Chowchilla Fair is a good number since a lot of people are reluctant to get their wells tested. The Madera RWMG had a grant to do well testing for the valley and the mountain communities back in 2006 and 2007, and it was hard to get people to sign up for well testing. What they ended up doing is hiring someone to make phone calls and go door-to-door to advertise the free testing. They ended up getting about 300 wells tested but it was difficult. Kristi added that they have been using a new canvassing group and they are real go-getters. The new group has been very helpful with engaging with people and are fluent in multiple languages.

They will continue to utilize the new group to assist with the outreach for this grant.

## **7. Discussion – Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief Set Aside Funding for Madera County MCFA DAC**

- Jacob R mentioned that the project proposal for the water mainline extension in Oakhurst was denied by DWR due to California American Water Company not having an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) for Oakhurst. Jacob has been working on 2 alternative projects for this set aside funding. DWR wants an alternative project proposal form turned in on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, which only gives us 1 week. Jacob was notified of the original project proposal being denied on Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. Jacob told DWR that 1 week is not enough time and asked for the deadline to be extended to Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, for the alternative project proposal form to be turned in.
  - There are 2 project ideas. One option is with Madera County. Jacob has been working with Eddie M, Tristan S, and Craig W on a project for the Sierra Highlands residential community which is a DAC and in the MCFA. They are currently experiencing water from their community well being out of compliance with the secondary drinking water standard for Iron and Manganese. This is due to the well being in a fractured hard rock groundwater area and water levels dropping. There is only 1 well providing water to the community where they have 26 connections supplying water to a population of roughly 75. The project would be for a water treatment system for the high Iron and Manganese levels that they have.
  - Another option that Jacob has been working on is with SHE. Jacob ran this option by Sierra Institute. SHE is currently doing ongoing immediate drought response in Madera County for bottled water, hauled water, and temporary water tanks for various communities. SHE does cover all 8 counties in the San Joaquin Valley, but SHE identified that they are having a hard time reaching the mountain communities about the services that they provide. A lot of the mountain communities are not aware of the support that SHE has or the other support that is available to them, nor are the communities always welcoming when they're approached by strangers advertising services that are at no-charge to them. The proposal with SHE would target the DACs within all the mountain communities in Madera County by advertising the existing services available. It would also advertise services available that are underutilized by the mountain communities. 1 project with SHE would be for drought outreach and engagement for the existing services provided by SHE which would also help identify areas that need additional drought funding whether it be permanent solutions or temporary solutions until a permanent solution can be obtained through funding. The outreach and engagement would also assist with fire prevention education. Sierra Institute mentioned that the project can't be just outreach, it also needs to include some form of hauled water, tank installation, or something relating to that.
- Jacob asked the group and meeting participants if they have any other ideas of projects that the group can turn in so we do not miss out on this set aside funding for Madera County's mountain communities (\$525,000). The funding needs to be used in the MCFA and for a DAC.

- Tom W asked if there are any projects on the IRWM project list that would qualify for this funding, and Jacob mentioned that only 2 projects are for the MCFA, and the dollar amount of \$525,000 limits which project could be completed without matching funds or costs. Jacob spoke with Tami McVay with SHE, and she mentioned that \$525,000 would only get us a month or two worth of bottled water for a DAC.
- Carl J asked if the California American Water Company needs to have an UWMP, and if they are out of compliance for not having one. Jacob answered that it being a planning project, the funding comes from the urban side of the program. There are two funding sources: the urban and the multibenefit. Planning grants are not eligible for the multibenefit funding source. With it being funded from the urban source, the urban water supplier needs to have an UWMP. Bobby reached out to the California American Water Company to see if they can put an UWMP together for this funding opportunity, but the water company never got back to us regarding that.
  - Stephanie A added that the UWMP is a very big plan, it's not a 10-page report and can take a year or 2 to put together.
  - Carl J also added that for that size of a system, an UWMP probably isn't feasible. Stephanie said that there is a requirement to have an UWMP based on the number of connections, and Oakhurst may be under that required number. Jacob mentioned that the requirement is 3,000 connections or an annual supply of 3,000 acre-feet per year to be required to have an UWMP, and Oakhurst is around 2,500 – 2,600 connections and acre-feet supplied annually. Jacob brought this up to DWR, and DWR said that due to the legislation in the funding for planning grants, there must be an UWMP. Stephanie said that is a little silly and Jacob mentioned that he was upset when DWR mentioned this to him, and only gave a week for an alternative project proposal form to be put together and turned in.
- Erin C asked if the funding can be used to drill deeper wells or drill new wells for people in DACs. Jacob answered yes if it is in the MCFA. New wells or rehabilitation of existing wells would be an eligible project type. Erin mentioned that she remembers hearing about a well issue recently in the MCFA, but she does not remember it exactly. She will look it up and see if it would be eligible.

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

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
  - Indian Lakes
    - Eddie M reported that they are waiting for confirmation from the vendor for arrival of the materials that were ordered. Eddie has ordered other materials for this project, including meter boxes. Eddie has received clearance from their maintenance department to house the meter boxes until they are installed and for the remainder of the items to arrive. They will be moving the materials into the community once the project is ready to begin. They are expecting to have all the materials in the next 6-weeks or so.
    - Clyde W requested that when the first meter begins to be installed, please let him know so they can go over and take some photos to include in their Fall newsletter for Indian Lakes. They also want to

take some photos to include in their newsletter for next year. Clyde is glad to hear that progress is being made for the project for the Indian Lakes community. Eddie will make a note for someone to reach out to Clyde before any work begins so they can take photos. Tom W will also let Clyde know if he hears anything since the Public Works Department keeps the Board of Supervisors informed about any projects beginning. Eddie also mentioned that Indian Lakes will receive mailers about the project begin date.

- Parkwood
  - Eddie M reported that depending on how much material they receive for Indian Lakes' project, that will give them an idea on how far out Parkwood's project will take. They are expecting about 4 and a half months before they begin the meter installations for Parkwood. They don't have a firm count on the inventory items needed for the Parkwood installations.
- City of Madera
  - Keith H reported that since the last meeting, they have received the report from their consultant. They are currently reviewing that report and they anticipate that the construction drawings for the meters will start next month.
- Parksdale
  - Eddie M reported that this project is pretty much completed. The well has been rehabbed successfully. They did the test on it, and it ran for around 400 – 450 GPM during the test. All the miscellaneous items have been dealt with, including leaking flanges and small electrical details. They just need to wait on the invoicing to get reimbursed. This project will be closed out in the next few months.
    - Keith H asked if the well was designed to pump the GPM requirements for the city of Madera. Keith is curious as to whether they are having trouble with that side of town in terms of volume for the GPM. Eddie answered that he hasn't been told anything when he was checking in with the operators. They said everything has been running smoothly. Eddie was out there when the pump was being tested before they knew what the GPM flow was, and the water level stayed stable during the test. It didn't seem like they were having any issues. Keith added that for a municipal well, they look for 1,300 GPM and their master plan states to stay away from the East side of town for wells if they can because of capacity and water quality.
      - Tom W asked if the well needs to produce 1,300 GPM, and Keith answered that it depends on what the goal is and what the design is for. They may have designed the pump to only achieve 400 GPM. Tom asked Eddie who should be asked to see what the pump was designed to achieve, and Eddie said to know what the specifics were used to determine the selection of the items, Trisha with Madera Pumps



would be the one to ask for that information. Keith mentioned he has been talking with Trisha about a farm well that he is working on with Madera Pumps on right now and will reach out to her about the Parksdale pump selection.

- City of Chowchilla

- Jason R reported that there is nothing new to report on. They are still waiting on the funding agreement from the State. It seems like the State has a new question or something new they need every time Jason asks about the status of the funding agreement. They are just waiting on the funding agreement before moving forward with this project.
  - Tom W asked if the Board of Supervisors can help in any way, maybe with writing a letter to the State. Jason mentioned that he sent a message out to them today about the funding agreement, so he will wait to see what they say back. Jason will follow-up with the Board of Supervisors once he hears back from the State. Tom mentioned if they need to put pressure on the State, they can help with that to get this project going. Jason mentioned that the State said it could take 12 – 18 months to develop an agreement, and they weren't kidding about that.

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

- Stephanie A mentioned that there are funds in the grants they received to put in new monitoring wells. They are currently scoping for locations for the monitoring wells. There will be 2 wells in the Madera Subbasin and 3 in the Chowchilla Subbasin.
- Jacob R mentioned that the Round 2 funding for Prop 68 is opening in September, and Al S reached out last week to see if we could discuss that more under this agenda item since there are a handful of GSAs that attend the Madera RWMG meetings each month. Tom W mentioned to have this as an agenda item for next month, and Al said that is OK. Jacob added that the funding opens in September, but he is not sure if the deadline to apply has been set yet.

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

- Tom W asked Erin C if they still have a project going on for reforestation. Erin said that the project started, then the Creek Fire came through and took out everything that was planted. They are starting the project over, and there will be some planting done soon once they get things settled in the office. It may need to wait until after this fire season since it is not an ideal time to plant those types of trees. They are working within their area to see what else they can do to be of assistance to the community for those affected by the Creek Fire. They have been doing a lot of watershed education for their outreach to the general population in hopes to bring understanding to why their rivers are important to be kept clean.

## **11. Discussion – Drought Working Group**

- Stephanie A reported that they have been meeting monthly. They had to cancel the meeting last Friday due to a lot of their staff having conflicts with the scheduled meeting time. They are looking to meet again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in June.

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

- Jacob R mentioned that DWR has released the final [Guidelines](#) and [Proposal Solicitation Package](#) for IRWM Round 2 Implementation funding. There will be 2 deadlines to apply (August 19, 2022, and February 1, 2023). Please keep in mind that the Madera RWMG only has funds to apply for in the Mountain County Funding Area (we have no funds to apply for in the San Joaquin River Funding Area). For the MCFA, we have \$594,782.67 to apply for which is just for the Madera region. A few different projects that we can apply for that would be eligible include water reuse and recycling, water-use efficiency and conservation, and regional surface and underground water storage. The main project type for the MCFA is watershed protection, restoration, and management projects, which include projects that reduce the risk of wildfire or improve water supply reliability. Stormwater resource management projects would also be eligible.
- Jacob also added that there are a few projects on the IRWM project list right now that would qualify for funding, but if there are any projects we are looking to fund in the MCFA with this funding source, we need the projects to be on the project list before we can turn in an application for those projects.

## **13. Report – Sustainable Groundwater Management – SGMA**

- Stephen A reported that the County GSA is in the process of noticing for Prop 218 in the Madera, Chowchilla, and Delta-Mendota Subbasins that will culminate at a public hearing on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

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

- No new members suggested.

## **15. Future Agenda Items**

- Jacob R mentioned that he will add Prop 68 Round 2 funding as an agenda item under the Domestic Well – Prop 68 Funding agenda item to discuss what projects the GSAs could apply for during the Round 2 solicitation. Tom W mentioned to the meeting participants to think about projects on our IRWM project list that would be eligible for this funding source.

## **16. Next Meeting**

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 1:30 pm on Zoom for now until COVID restrictions are lifted and allow us to meet in person.

## **17. The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 pm.**