



# **Regional Water Management Group**

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

## **MINUTES**

Monday, November 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  
Jeannie Habben – Madera County  
Kristi Robinson – Water Wise/Triangle T  
Jacob Roberson – RWMG Coordinator  
Keith Helmuth – City of Madera  
Angela Islas – SHE  
Brandon Tomlinson – Chowchilla WD  
Carl Janzen – Madera ID  
Gretchen Heisdorf – Root Creek  
WD/P&P  
Sam Cunningham – Madera County  
Chris Montoya – DWR  
Amy Siliznoff – Madera/Chowchilla RCD  
Matt Maringer – SEMCU

Roberto Macaulay – Madera County  
Melanie Aldridge – Madera WD  
Kim Witten – Madera County  
Brad Samuelson – Triangle T WD  
Jennifer Morales – DWR  
Al Solis – SEMCU  
Jack Rice – MAWA  
Noah Lopez – MAWA  
Eddie Ocampo – SHE  
Tommy Greci – MID  
Julie Konno – Coarsegold RCD  
Jean Okuye – East Merced RCD  
Marliez Diaz - SHE

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

- A motion to approve the October minutes was made by Kristi R; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
- A motion to approve the November agenda was made by Kristi R; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Approval – Resolution No. 2021-02**

- A motion to approve meeting resolution no. 2021-02 was made by Kristi R; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

### **4. Public Comment**

- Items of interest were mentioned by Jacob R (for more information, reach out to Jacob):
  - The NRCS has announced FY 2022 assistance opportunities for agricultural producers and private landowners for key programs, such as the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#), and [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#). Please [click here](#) for more information on this announcement. Here are the California cutoff dates for these three programs:
    - Sign-up Period 1 for EQIP: December 10, 2021
    - Sign-up Period 2 for EQIP: April 1, 2022
    - EQIP – Sage Grouse Initiative: May 6, 2022
    - CSP: April 1, 2022
    - ACEP: December 1, 2021

NRCS offers assistance at no cost to give their customers personalized advice and information.

- The State Water Board (SWB) will be holding two public workshops on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. During the workshops, the SWB will receive early input for the development of urban water use efficiency standards. The workshops will also provide a detailed overview of the methods being used to evaluate potential impacts of water use efficiency standards on local wastewater management, developed and natural parklands, and urban tree health, and will give the public, urban retail water suppliers, and other interested parties the opportunity to ask questions about the Board's analysis.

December 2<sup>nd</sup>'s workshop will be from 1 pm – 3 pm and will focus on wastewater management. No registration is required to attend. Please [click here](#) to attend the workshop.

December 3<sup>rd</sup>'s workshop will be from 2 pm – 4 pm and will focus on urban trees and parklands. No registration is required to attend. Please [click here](#) to attend the workshop.

- The CA Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) has announced the 2021 funding opportunity for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). This program provides funding for communities to implement mitigation activities to reduce risk of life and property from natural hazards, which include wildfire, earthquake, drought, extreme weather, flooding, and other impacts of climate change. Funding can also support the development of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMP) and project scoping activities.  
Deadline to apply is March 31, 2022, and there is an estimated \$7.8 million available in funding.
- The Department of Conservation is holding two workshops to hear what stakeholders would like to see in the upcoming Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program. The workshops will give stakeholders the opportunity to provide input into the Department of Conservation's proposed Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program before program guidelines are developed. A brief overview of proposed program components will be provided at the top of each hour during each workshop, with the remainder of the time available for discussion and questions. Registration is required to attend.

**Workshop #1:**

November 30<sup>th</sup>, 10 am – 1 pm ([click here to register](#))

**Workshop #2:**

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5 pm – 7 pm ([click here to register](#))

- For domestic well users, there is a [free private well class program](#) which uses a combination of methods (both online and in-person) to boost knowledge and competency of well owners and professionals that serve well owners day to day.

- The final [guidelines and proposal solicitation package](#) for the [Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief Grant Program](#) have been released by DWR. Approximately \$190 million in grant funding will be available for relief in response to California drought conditions. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase deadline has already passed, but the deadline for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase is Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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

- October Financial Report
  - Carl J reported that the group began the month with \$34,026.03 and spent \$8,255.98, leaving us with a balance of \$25,770.05.
  - A motion to approve the financial report was made by Carl J; Kristi R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
- 2022 Budget – Approval
  - Tom W mentioned that the 2022 budget proposal was presented to the group during October’s meeting. Carl J commented that the budget proposal has not changed since October’s meeting.
  - A motion to approve the 2022 Budget 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
    - Angela I commented that there are no new updates for these projects to report on for SHE.
    - Kristi R reported that CMZ is continuing community outreach for these projects, trying to get well testing done, and continuing to provide safe drinking water to residents.
    - Jacob R reached out to Contra Costa Water District, the grant administrator, about the deadline for these two projects. The current deadline is July 31, 2022, which the Madera RWMG can request an extension on. We can either ask for a 6-month extension or a 12-month extension.
    - Kristi suggested that the group ask for a 12-month extension. Angela agrees with Kristi since a lot of situations that were out of our control have delayed a lot of progress with deliverables for these two projects. Angela also mentioned the database deliverable which is part of these two projects. More discussion about the database to follow outside of this meeting.
    - Eddie O added that there is some coordination between the Water Board and the Regional Water Quality Board about database sharing. They have been in discussion for a few years now and SHE is hopeful that they will end up with a coordination agreement that will hopefully allow for some flexibility there and allow more effectiveness in marketing domestic well sampling throughout the state. Hopefully this will make residents more open to having someone come on to their property to test their domestic wells for contaminants. The drought became a priority this past year which

caused people to be more worried about water availability than water quality. Eddie agrees with asking for a 12-month extension on projects 12 and 13.

- A motion to approve the 12-month grant extension request was made by Kristi R; Eddie O second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
  - Jacob R will reach out to Contra Costa Water District and begin working on the 12-month extension for projects 12 and 13 with DWR. We may need to get an agreement amendment signed, but Jacob will keep the group informed about this.
  - Jeannie H mentioned that contract amendments with SHE and Contra Costa WD may need to be done. There may need to be one done with DWR too.
- Jeannie H added that Contra Costa had additional funding in the SJRFA, and they submitted some applications to use those additional funds for other projects. There are an additional 2 projects with a total of \$4M which the applications were submitted for. One project is for Merced ID and the other is for the East Merced RCD. The City of Modesto is looking to apply as well for \$1M. This is an additional \$5M in funding for projects in the SJRFA and the projects address critical drought issues.
  - Jacob R commented that the \$5M was already accounted for when the notice of additional funding being available was sent out by Contra Costa WD.

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

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
  - Jacob R commented that Eddie M is out of the office today and Eddie usually provides the monthly update on the water meter projects. Last month, Eddie reported that the vendor is working with Public Works and allowing for the meter order to be partially delivered. We will not be billed for the meters until the full order is received by the vendor. Raw material shortage is slowing down the fulfillment of the meter order. This is for the Indian Lakes and Parkwood meters.
  - Jacob R commented that there is no update for the Parksdale well rehabilitation project.
  - For the City of Chowchilla's project, Jason R is on vacation so there is no update this month.
  - Keith H reported that for the City of Madera's water meter project, they are still in the data collection and meter engineering phase.

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

- Jeannie H mentioned that the Madera County GSA will be having a Zoom meeting, which will include this domestic well inventory project, on the rate study which they are doing for their GSA. It will be at 3 pm on Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, and will include information about the land repurposing, groundwater recharge, water supplies, and other projects that will be included in the rate study.
  - Melanie A asked if there are any materials available yet about the domestic well inventory. Jeannie mentioned that there is nothing available yet, but she will look into it for Melanie.

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

- Jacob R mentioned the Madera RWMG's tour coming up which is scheduled for December 4<sup>th</sup> (weather permitting). There is still space available for those who would like to join the tour but have not RSVP'd yet. Please reach out to Jacob if you or anyone you know may be interested in attending the tour. Jacob wants to fill as many seats on the bus as possible. There are currently 18 seats on the bus that need to be filled. Tour will begin at 9 am and end at 1 pm. We will be meeting at the old mill site in North Fork (34000 Koso Nobe Rd).

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

- Jeannie H commented that the Madera County Department of Water and Natural Resources has hosted a few meetings now focusing on the current drought situation in Madera County. During the last meeting, they had a speaker from The Private Well Class ([www.privatewellclass.org](http://www.privatewellclass.org)) talk about what they offer. The next Drought Working Group meeting is scheduled for 10 am on Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The San Joaquin Valley Partnership will be speaking during this meeting (Laura Ramos). She will be speaking about their outreach that they are doing from Fresno State and throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Jeannie can send the Zoom link to anyone who is interested in attending the meeting.

## **11. Review & Approval – 2022 Meeting Calendar**

- Tom W commented that the Madera RWMG's meetings for 2022 will continue to be on Zoom per the current COVID-19 situation. The January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting will be both in-person and on Zoom for the Election of Officers for 2022. If anyone has any conflicts with the current dates scheduled for Madera RWMG's monthly meetings, please bring those conflicts up now so we can get the 2022 meeting schedule finalized.
- Jacob R mentioned that no major holidays fall on the Mondays currently listed on the 2022 Meeting Calendar draft. Stephanie A did make a comment on the layout of the 2022 Meeting Calendar draft being confusing to some for the February – November 2022 meetings. It looks like the meetings will be both in-person and on Zoom for the entire year. Stephanie recommended only listing Zoom as the meeting location for February – November.
- A motion to approve the 2022 Meeting Calendar after listing Zoom as the meeting location for February – November was made by Kristi R; Eddie O second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

## **12. January 24, 2022, Meeting Location – Discussion**

- Jacob R was able to confirm the meeting location for the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting with the help of Bobby M. The meeting will be both in-person and on Zoom. The in-person option will be held at the Madera County Government Center's Board Chambers (200 W Fourth St, Madera, CA, 93637).

## **OLD BUSINESS**

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

- Madera County GSA
  - Jeannie H gave an update on Madera County GSA's GSP. Madera County serves as the GSP manager for the joint GSP for the Madera Subbasin, and they are also the technical provider and contract manager for multiple GSAs/GSPs. Madera County GSA also serves as the Madera Subbasin's point of contract. They are also the contract managers for the data management system, Prop 1 funds in the Madera and Chowchilla Subbasins which is almost caught up and

done, and Prop 68 planning funds with the domestic well inventory and monitoring wells installation. There will be a total of 7 monitoring wells installed in the Madera and Chowchilla Subbasins. They are also the contract manager for Prop 68 implementation funds for groundwater recharge. Madera County has 3 critically overdrafted (COD) subbasins (Madera, Chowchilla, and Delta-Mendota). They are the GSA responsible for the “white area” which is 250,000 acres. Roughly half of that is irrigated acreage. Madera County is also completing the rate study which will include the groundwater recharge, water supplies, and resting and repurposing land. They currently have a SALC (Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation) grant that is helping with the study for resting and repurposing land. Domestic well mitigation and a water market simulation will also be a part of the rate study. The water market simulation is being done right now with the Water Smart grant from the Bureau of Reclamation.

- Madera ID GSA
  - Carl J gave an update on Madera ID GSA's GSP. They have 6 basins that they have updated and installed meters on so they can recharge groundwater during wet years when they have water available to do so. They also put out a RMD for recharge land. They bought 2 parcels of land – 40 acres in the south part of the County off Ave. 7 and 30 acres near Fairmead which they are currently in the process of getting it ready for recharge. 2 – 3 years ago they did some on-farm recharge, and they are using that to educate their growers so they will be prepared for on-farm recharge when water is available. They have also done work on upgrading their system (improving leaking pipelines) so they can handle their water better. They City of Madera and Madera ID connected a basin at the golf course so they can put water in there and share the benefits. They're also keeping the 12,000 acres in the district that is fallow now at the Madera Ranch and Madera Lakes so they do not come into production and they're not using water for irrigation. This is currently what they're working on to meet the requirements of their GSA GSP. The biggest unknown for them is the amount of water they will be receiving.
- City of Madera GSA
  - Keith H gave an update on the City of Madera GSA's GSP. The city currently has 2 projects. Most of the land within City of Madera solely relies on groundwater. They do have a small amount of agriculture users, but most of those are also on groundwater. One project includes a basin that was designed to increase recharge and it also utilizes one of the city's current stormwater basins which Madera ID puts water into during wet years. This basin is jointly operated by the city and Madera ID, and they both benefit from it as well. The basin at the golf course is outside of the GSP for the City of Madera GSA, but it was a joint project with Madera ID that was completed months ago. Madera ID will put water into the golf course basin during wet years that will fill up one of the larger water hazards at the golf course. The 2<sup>nd</sup> project is meters and volumetric pricing. It is called this in the GSP to reduce evaporation and groundwater pumping. They need to complete their re-metering by 2025 which is a state mandate. They're currently 98% done with re-metering. The average annual benefit to date is 3,358 acre-feet/year. The last phase is the most difficult which includes cross-lot connections between two residential district areas where they do not know where the pipe locations are between the street and the parcel. This last phase is being partially funded by an IRWM grant for this group.
- Root Creek WD GSA
  - Gretchen H provided an update on Root Creek WD GSA's GSP. The Root Creek Water District GSA (RCWDGSA) has recently concluded their second year of SGMA implementation. The RCWD GSA encompasses roughly 10,000 acres in

the southeast corner of the Madera Groundwater Subbasin. The following will provide an update as to the RCWDGSA's progress in implementing their GSP:

- Static groundwater level data is collected annually and recorded in the GSA's Data Management System (DMS). In addition, two transducer wells are continuously monitored providing enhanced data that is graphed and provided in the GSA's Annual Report.
  - Water quality data is collected on an annual basis and is reported in the GSA's Annual Report.
  - The GSA continues to update and prepare an Annual Report due April 1st of each year in accordance with SGMA regulation. This report will be provided to the Board of Directors in December of this year, for review and possible adoption. Once approved the report will be submitted to DWR by April 1st and will be provided to the public.
  - Alterations are underway on the Stormwater Modification Project to increase recharge capability and efficiency.
  - The GSA continues to enhance outreach and correspondence with Riverstone development, also in accordance with ongoing MS4 projects. This outreach includes but is not limited to:
    - Correspondence with the HOA's
    - Promotion of water conservation and smart use techniques
    - Address water quality concerns commonly seen by residential consumers
    - Promotion of drought tolerant plant use and zero scaping whenever possible to prevent excess water use on landscaping
    - The In Lieu Recharge Expansion Project, funded through the USBR Drought Resiliency Program in underway and aims to increase the GSA's ability to bring more surface water supplies into its service area. This will potentially decrease the need for additional groundwater pumping.
    - Water quality improvement seems to be quite apparent throughout the GSA, particularly within the Rolling Hills community.
- Gravelly Ford WD GSA
    - Don R with Gravelly Ford WD GSA was unable to attend, but he did provide Jacob with an update on their GSP to read to the group. Subsidence measurements on the 24 ag wells completed. Subsidence varied from 3/4" to 3 3/4" since 2019. Water levels completed on all but 4 of the ag wells, access or pumps running on remainder.
  - Madera WD GSA
    - Melanie A provided an update on Madera WD GSA's GSP. One of their main projects is the Madera leak project. When wet winters occur, they will be able to purchase excess water off the Friant unit or elsewhere and store it in Madera Lake. They're also investigating land retirement and using one of those parcels as a storage basin. They continue to purchase water which has gotten very expensive. Last year they purchased water at \$1,200/acre-foot and paid as high as \$1,550/acre-foot to avoid pumping from the basin.
  - New Stone WD GSA
    - No representative was able to attend to report out on New Stone WD GSA's GSP.
  - Chowchilla WD GSA
    - Brandon T provided an update on Chowchilla WD GSA's GSP. In 2018, they put in their own recharge basin on a 40-acre piece of property that they have owned since 2010. In 2019, they bought another 56-acres and developed that into recharge basins as well. In 2020, they purchased 80-acres and the basins have

been built (two 40-acre basins) but the infrastructure to get water to them has not been completed yet. The most recent project included 75-acres on the corner of Robertson Blvd. and Highway 152. This one will be completed by the end of this year (2021).

- Triangle T WD GSA
  - Brad S provided an update on Triangle T WD GSA's GSP. Triangle T is in the Chowchilla Subbasin in the NW corner of the county. Before SGMA, groundwater was a major issue in the Triangle T area. The Exchange Contractors help build conveyance underneath the San Joaquin River from their canal over to the Madera County's side of the river and those pipelines became operable in 2017. The farmers on Madera County's side of the river in the Triangle T area had to agree to lower aquifer pumping restrictions and those increased over time. The common crop demand for water is about 3 – 4 acre-feet. Landowners made a commitment to build infrastructure and bring surface water to reduce groundwater pumping. They had another infrastructure project for a 350-acre recharge pond before SGMA. This is taking floodwater off the eastside bypass. This basin is only 6 – 7 inches deep flat across the field. This year they were unable to purchase surface water from the Exchange Contractors, but previous years they were able to. The average price was about \$300/acre-foot. The land in the Triangle T area is subsiding this year from 0 to 0.15 feet per year and it was up to a foot per year in 2011 and 2012. They believe recharge and purchasing surface water has really helped the region. This last year with the help of Madera County GSA, they applied together for Prop 68 Implementation funds which they were awarded. In Triangle T's area using these funds, there are two 30-acre recharge ponds along with points of diversion in the eastside bypass (20 CFS electric pumps with fish screens). They also have a permanent water right over \$500,000 in applications to the State Water Board to be able to divert these flood flows. There are over 20 diversions on this water right helping multiple GSAs along the bypass. Project lead time is estimated at 9 – 12 months. Next steps include annexing 3,000 more acre-feet to the Kern WD. When they annex water, the recipients need to agree to the mitigation agreement with the Exchange Contractors. They are also going to continue to expand the infrastructure for surface water and continue to purchase water, continuously push water rights, and build up to 1,000-acres of recharge ponds (currently at 400-acres).
- Merced County GSA
  - No representative was able to attend to report out on Merced County GSA's GSP.
- Aliso WD GSA
  - No representative was able to attend to report out on Aliso WD GSA's GSP.
- San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors GSA
  - Jacob R read an update provide by the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (SJREC) GSA. The SJREC GSP is managing groundwater on behalf of the Exchange Contractors member entities including Central California Irrigation District (CCID), San Luis Canal Company, Firebaugh Canal Water District and Columbia Canal Company. They have also partnered with 6 DACs and some county white areas in Merced, Fresno, and Madera Counties. CCID has decades of partnering with our local DACs on groundwater investigation studies. Back in the 1980's, they were jointly studying the groundwater reliability, now called sustainability, in and around our communities as the cities were growing. This established a trusting relationship and is the nexus for the success they had developing their GSP. They have been actively monitoring and managing groundwater for over 40 years and had triggers and management actions in



place prior to the adoption of SGMA. This has set them up with a sustainable groundwater management strategy.

The Delta-Mendota Subbasin covers about 750,000 acres, 23 GSAs, and 6 GSPs. One success in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin was clearly defining the coordination efforts across the 6 GSPs through their Coordination Agreement. They recognized the need to have clear guidance on how to coordinate groundwater management across their subbasin and used their coordination agreement to dictate the process to make decisions. They feel that inelastic land subsidence will be a main point of concern with both DWR and the SWRCB. As such, the Delta-Mendota Subbasin is using their grant funds through the Facilitation Support Services to engage with people in the Merced, Chowchilla and Madera Subbasins to stop subsidence through development of a regional comprehensive groundwater management strategy.

#### **14. Chowchilla Nitrate Control Program – Report**

- Kristi R reported that they are continuing to test for nitrates and 11 other contaminants in domestic wells in the southern part of the Chowchilla Management Zone which is in the northern part of Madera County.

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

- No new members suggested.

#### **16. Future Agenda Items**

- Election of Officers

#### **17. Next Meeting**

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 1:30 pm. This meeting will be both in-person and on Zoom for the Madera RWMG's Election of Officers for the upcoming year. The in-person option may be canceled depending on COVID cases after the holidays.

#### **18. The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 pm.**