



**Madera/Chowchilla
Resource Conservation District
Post Office Box 531
Chowchilla, CA 93610**



**Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 15, 2023 – 5:00PM to 7:00PM**

- I. Call to Order: 5:04PM by Norman Kuhr**
 - A. Director Roll Call
Attendance was in person at 425 N Gateway Dr, Suite K, Madera, CA. Directors: Norman Kuhr, Erik Herman, Mike DeLaGuerra, Tim Coehlo, Matt Angell Staff: Amy Siliznoff, Kevin Reyes, Associate Director: Mark Hutson, Partners: Mira Dick (NRCS),

- II. Additions/Changes to the Agenda**

No changes or additions to the agenda.

- III. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. **Approval of April Meeting Minutes** – Motion was made by Mike DeLaGuerra to approve the Meeting Minutes, there was a second by Erik Herman. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.

- IV. Correspondence & Mail** – \$1,000 check from IFF, \$3,150 check from CARCD, CMZ management zone flyer

- V. Public Comments** – No public comments

- VI. Reports**
 - A. Madera County SGMA Update/GSAs – Amy Siliznoff
 - Madera Subbasin – MID refused to adopt the GSP, but DWR has posted GSPs for public review
 - Chowchilla Subbasin – GSP was declared “inadequate” and we have revised it to re-submit to the board
 - Delta-Mendota Subbasin – GSPs were declared “inadequate” and we appear to be ready to write one GSP (there were six originally)

 - B. NRCS Report – Mira Dick
 - IRA money arrived, small amount of money this year available. Money is exclusive and dedicated to air quality (tractor replacement), forestry, tribal applications and CSP. Extended application to apply for CSP conservation stewardship program (April 28th). CSP is a 5-year contract that can be extended to a 10-year contract. Region 9 meeting will be in late May or Early June.

C. Madera Region IRWM/RWVG – Amy Siliznoff

- The Madera RWVG is currently working on updating their bylaws. Each member agency's board will need to approve and resign the MOU once the bylaws are finalized.
- The 2023 Call for Projects to be added to the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) Project List resulted in three projects being added – 1) Gravelly Ford WD: Canal-midline pipeline inter-tie project, 2) Indian Lakes: Studies necessary for a new water tank, and a new water tank and construction of water tank, & 3) Indian Lakes: Studies necessary for a new well, and a new well and installation.
- They currently have funding through June 30, 2023, for domestic well testing in Madera County for nitrates and other constituents. If nitrates are found to be above the safe threshold (10 mg/L) established by the State, those homes will be provided free replacement water through the Chowchilla Management Zone (CMZ) if within CMZ boundaries, or the homes will be provided resources and information on how to get replacement water free of charge if outside CMZ boundaries. Replacement water extends through the June 30th deadline. That deadline is for the testing only.

If you or anyone you know would like to have their domestic well(s) tested, please reach out to Kristi Robinson by emailing chowchilladrinkingwater@gmail.com, by calling (559) 373-7399, or by going to www.chowchillamanagementzone.com.

- Indian Lakes and Parkwood meter projects are coming along. Just waiting on the final miscellaneous components to be received. Hoping for an installation begin date sometime in June or July.
- [Madera County's Draft Drought Plan](#) was released on May 1st for public comment, commencing the 30-day comment period. Comments can be submitted by emailing them to wnr@maderacounty.com
- An application for the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Round 2 funding was submitted by Public Works on behalf of the Sierra Highlands Community in the Mountain County Funding Area (MCFA). The project is for water treatment for the community.

D. Farm Bureau – Amy Siliznoff

- No update

E. News/Other Meeting Reports – Amy Siliznoff

- CDFA, NRCS, CARCD, and Sustainable Conservation are hosting a soil-water interface expert convening: cover crops' impact on water budgets on May 18, 2023. This meeting will focus on different approaches to water allocations as they relate to cover crops.
- Madera County Board of Supervisors extended an invitation to the RCD to attend the Madera County Water Roundtable featuring Congressman John Duarte. This roundtable aims to bring together key stakeholders in the water sector in Madera County, enabling productive discussions and collaborative efforts to address water-related challenges within our community. The roundtable will take place on June 28th from 9AM-11AM. Amy will RSVP for Tim Coehlo and herself to attend. The

following are items of concern that the RCD would like to bring up at the roundtable discussion:

- Help growers take trees out (funding to take trees out a land out of production for few years) \$1,000-\$1,200/per acre to rip out trees and there's no funding for this, and get funding for whole orchard recycling
- Clean out natural waterways (dredged out and make deeper than what they are)
- Repurposing, by replanting to native grasses or minimum furrowing the lands (reduce wind erosion)
- We're not seeing credit for some of the conservation practices that growers are implementing (whole orchard recycling and orchard removal)
- What can the feds fix with the state

VII. RCD Report: Board Action Items and Discussion Topics

A. RCPP with American Farmland Trust (I) – Amy Siliznoff

- Of the 23 applications Chris got ranked for round 1, 3 were pre-approved. Of the applications funded, only 2 were Cover Crop and Compost. The majority of applications funded were irrigation practice-based. Pipeline, pump, structure for water control, etc.
- Funding decisions for Round 2 should be coming out shortly. Chris is hoping to maybe get one more application funded here.
- Paperwork is going well. Chris is hoping to have his portion of the paperwork done by the middle of May. From there, the planners will take over to get the applicants to contracting.

B. Biochar Trial Project with American Farmland Trust (I) – Amy Siliznoff

- Amy is waiting to hear from AFT on the next steps moving forward in planning the outreach events.

C. CDFA Mobile Irrigation Lab (I) (A) – Kevin Reyes

- The RCD is completing irrigation evaluations from April through November. We currently have 7 irrigation evaluations in progress, we have 3 scheduled for the next two weeks. Our schedule is open and please reach out to Amy or myself if interested in having an evaluation completed.
- Amy requested approval to hire an irrigation intern for the 2023 summer season. Motion was made by Tim Coehlo to hire Gavin Stoddard as the Irrigation Intern, there was a second by Mike DeLaGuerra. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.
- Amy will reach out to Tom Devol to confirm if the Almond Board invoice will be processed before the summer season.

D. CDFA Conservation Agriculture Planning Grant (I)

- ESRCD received the SOW, it's dated for start as of June 15th, which means we can have contracts approved at the June board meeting. The scope of work includes completing up to 12 pollinator plans (\$6,700 per plan). This funding is for planning only, we would be working with ag producers to create a plan for fall 2024 implementation, but it doesn't include implementation funds. It's a two year grant starting June 2023 through June 2025. Amy will be expecting to

- bring a final contract to the Board meeting next month.
- E. NRCS Groundwater Project (I) – Kevin Reyes
 - Kevin is currently templating 31 groundwater plans. He's been focused on drafting the producers site visit questionnaire for the groundwater plan. Our groundwater plans will include map groundwater basin location, determining GSA & GSP for mapped location and referencing management plan actions. We have 6 sections in the plan: 1. Groundwater Conservation Plan, 2. Site Description & Resource Concerns, 3. Irrigation Water Use & Distribution Uniformity, 4. Practice for Reduction & Repurposing, 5. Water Retention Through Soil Health, 6. Groundwater Management Resources. This plan will be drafted for every grower who participates in our irrigation evaluation. Our goal is to have 35 plans completed by September of this year. We need 4 more to complete this goal.
 - F. NRCS Equity Project (I) (A) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Amy will be planning a workshop with Punjabi American Growers Group. A draft agenda has been completed and she is coordinating with Jasbir, president of PAGG on a date to set for the Cover Crop/Healthy Soils Workshop.
 - G. DOC MLRP (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - At the Supervisor's Board meeting on 4/18, the last partner contracts were approved. We will now be able to move forward with the MLRP project.
 - Within the next few weeks, we will have a kickoff meeting for all partners to plan how to move forward. In the meantime – the State meeting for the project will be held on June 22nd, from 10:00 to 11:30.
 - H. WCB Pollinator Block Grant (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - \$166,983 is the total award amount, however CARCD issued a contract for Tasks 1, 4 and 6 only. Tasks 2 and 3 will come after the filing of NOE or CEQA documents for each habitat project. We have the option to share a biologist as needed with ESRC. They will be hosting the biologist position. This project will not require easements, but it will require monitoring and maintenance so we will need to have landowner agreements in place. 2/28/27 is the end date for this grant.
 - Amy discussed her plans to move forward with an outreach event under this project. She recommended a demonstration site where growers can view a hedgerow and ask the grower questions and any benefits they've seen.
 - I. Board Compliance (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Amy to contact Matt for Form 700 and send email to Matt for Ethics and Sexual Harassment. Amy to send Norm links for Ethics and Sexual Harassment Training, follow up with Tim for Ethics, Amy to complete training for Sexual Harassment & Ethics.
 - Amy to get 2 new board members on RCD Board and work on Board term renewal.
 - J. Upcoming Workshops (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - The RCD will be hosting a recharge workshop event in June. We had to move forward from hosting with Punjabi American Growers Group due to unresponsiveness. We will be targeting outreach towards all growers and will plan to reach out to groups that have relationships with DAC's.

K. Upcoming Contracts/Agreements (I) (A)– Amy Siliznoff

- Amy reviewed the subcontract with East Stanislaus RCD for management and accounting support and project coordination for \$5,775.10. This will be for the Executive Director and Office Manager to step in while Amy is on leave from July 10th through September 15th. Motion was made by Matt Angell to approve the subcontract with East Stanislaus RCD, there was a second by Tim Coehlo. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.

L. Upcoming Grant Applications (I) – Amy Siliznoff

- Amy is exploring the CDFA SWEEP Block Grant to see if the RCD would be a good fit for the funding opportunity.
- Amy reviewed a grant opportunity with UC Davis and 3 other RCDs in the San Joaquin Valley, funding is for 50K. The unique focus of the grant is developing climate-smart market infrastructure, training, etc. and connecting growers who are implementing climate-smart management to climate-smart markets and the monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) necessary to participate in those markets.

VIII. Financial Report

- Matt Angell made a motion to approve the financial report, there was a second by Tim Coehlo. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.
- Mike DeLaGuerra made a motion to approve the expenses, there was a second by Matt Angell. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.

IX. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:02PM.

Next Meeting: June 21, 2023, 5:00PM