



Regional Water Management Group

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

MINUTES

Monday, July 26, 2021 1:30 pm

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm, by Carl Janzen, vice-chair.

Those present included:

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

Brandon Tomlinson – Chowchilla WD

Carl Janzen – Madera ID

Gretchen Heisdorf – Root Creek WD/P&P

Sam Cunningham – Madera County

Chris Montoya – DWR

Jenny Nunez-Rodriguez – Madera County

Laura Satterlee – SHE

Joe Fiss – Greystone Equities/SEMCU

Matt Maringer – Greystone Equities/SEMCU

Igal Treibatch – SEMCU

Kirsten Hefner – Madera County

Don Roberts – Gravelly Ford WD

Amy Siliznoff – Madera/Chowchilla RCD

Eddie Mendez – Madera County

Dina Nolan – Madera ID

Robert Macaulay – Madera County

Jason Rogers – City of Chowchilla

Heather Bashian – SEMCU/P&P

Noah Lopez – MAWA

Marliez Diaz – SHE

2. Review & Approval - Agenda & Minutes

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

3. Public Comment

- Items of interest were mentioned by Jacob R (for more information, reach out to Jacob):
 - The State Water Resources Control Board has begun accepting concept proposals for Round 3 of the [Prop 1 Groundwater Grant Program](#). The funding is for projects that cleanup or prevent aquifer contamination. Certain water projects serving disadvantaged communities will also be considered. Proposals will be accepted through Tuesday, September 7th.
 - The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation have partnered to provide approximately \$1.2 million in funding to assist with post-fire reforestation needs and recovery. This funding is not limited to any particular jurisdictional boundaries or specific wildfire events. Details of the [program](#), [application information](#), [submission deadlines](#), and other information is available through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's website. Proposal submissions are due on Wednesday, August 5, 2021.
 - The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Advisory Group is accepting applications for the 10 seats that are currently open. This group provides the State Water Board with advice on the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund Expenditure Plan and other SAFER-related policies. Applications will be accepted through August 31, 2021. The application form can be found online.

- The State Water Board will host a public workshop on Wednesday, August 4th, titled, “How to Apply for the SAFER Advisory Group”. Registration is required for this workshop.
 - The Madera County Department of Water and Natural Resources is holding a “Lunch & Learn” event on August 6th, 12 pm – 1 pm. This event will focus on water conservation topics for both indoor and outdoor uses.
 - The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research has released the [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) for their [California Resilience Challenge 2021 Grant Program](#). The grant application period closes on September 13th at 5 pm.
- Jeannie H commented that the final report went out for the MCFA DACI. They did the report where many people were interviewed in different areas throughout the mountain counties and finished the report in July of this year. Jacob R sent the report out to the group email list. If you did not receive the report, please reach out to Jacob (Jacob_roberson@outlook.com). That was done with our DACI funding for the mountain counties. There were some bumps along the way, but it includes the Tribal side and the DACI side.
- Igal T asked if anyone has heard about potential plans for limiting the amount of water that can be drawn out of streams or canals.
 - Carl J commented that he has not heard anything other than what’s being done up in the Delta by DWR or whoever oversees that area. On August 5th, they will be voting on restrictions on how much can be pulled on some riparian and pre 1914 rights. Igal asked if this is only for the San Francisco area, and Carl answered that it’s on water rights that they have control over, and Carl thinks it could be on any stream. Igal wanted to confirm that the discussion is not about any area outside of San Francisco and Carl could not, he has just read one or two articles about it.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Discussion & Action - Financial Report/Warrant Approvals

- Carl J reported that the group has only spent \$2,000 this month for Jacob R. We started out with \$35,191 and ended with \$33,191. All the group members are paid up-to-date for member dues.
- A motion to approve the financial report was made by Carl J; Kristi R second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion – Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement Funding

- San Joaquin Valley Counties
 - Self Help Enterprises – Projects 12 and 13
 - Angela I commented that as of today, they have only done three sampling sessions with three different private well owners. There is still not a lot going on regarding requests for water sampling which is mostly due to the emergency drought situation going on right now. SHE has been focusing all their attention in that area and has been receiving funds from the State to address emergency drought issues throughout their eight-county territory. It has come to the attention of SHE internally by speaking to each other that Emergency Services is on hold for water sampling right now. They will still take inquiries for people wanting their well sampled, but at this time they are slowing down due to supporting the SHE Water Sustainability Division for drought emergency responses.
 - Angela and Eddie O spoke with Jacob R a little bit further about the contract for these projects because the contract does end in July 2022. SHE does not really know how long this is going to take with emergency services having limited support for projects 12 and 13. They spoke with

the grant administrator, Maggie Dutton, for these projects in the San Joaquin River Funding Area and she mentioned an option for SHE to see if the Madera RWMG wants to discuss it further during August's meeting on what the group would like to do moving forward with the project 12 and 13 funding. The group could ask for a 6-month extension on the project deadline, or the group can consider the funds to be reallocated to another project on the Madera RWMG's project list. SHE wants to be transparent about this and wants to support the group with continuing the work for the water sampling program, but at this time SHE just wanted to bring this issue to the group's attention and have a further discussion next month.

- Carl J asked that for the drought emergency right now, has SHE had many Madera County residents reaching out for assistance with wells going dry. Angela mentioned that they have been receiving a high number of calls from Madera County, and the SHE Water Sustainability Division has been in communication with Stephanie A and Jeannie H a lot on the responses they have been getting and just trying to enroll a lot of the Madera County residents into their Water Tank Program. A lot of calls coming from Fresno County and other southern counties as well.
 - Igal T asked Angela if SHE knows the areas where the calls in Madera County have been coming from. Igal also asked if SHE has a map showing where the calls have been coming from to create an idea of where the problem is concentrated. Angela mentioned that she personally does not have that information, but Angela can have Jeannie connect Igal with the manager for the Water Sustainability Division. She'll have more of that information. If the Madera RWMG is interested, the manager can show where most of the calls are coming from in the county. Kristi R commented that they have received several calls in the Fairmead area and the Madera Ranchos area which is outside the community well system. Igal mentioned he would be interested to see where calls are coming from so they can see what can be done to potentially help.
- Carl agreed that this should be on the agenda for next month's meeting. Carl asked Angela to have her co-worker that is working on the drought responses to attend the meeting to give a report on the drought responses and answer some of the questions that group members have. Wells going dry and water quality should go together. Some of the project money can go towards that. Angela will speak with two of her co-workers to join the meeting next month if we can have a discussion on what we would like to do moving forward with projects 12 and 13. Requesting an extension or getting a new amendment in is something that Maggie Dutton mentioned she would like to get in as soon as possible to bring it to DWR's attention.

6. Discussion – Proposition 1 IRWM Implementation Funding

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
 - Eddie M commented that for Indian Lakes and Parkwood, they're in the negotiation phase with the vendor for installation. They have received some pricing information which is looking good. For these two projects, they are looking

into the budget. They are ironing out the details in terms of making sure which components will be receiving the responsibility of the installation crews that they are going to be hiring and what's going to be left for the county to do. They are going over those details right now to make sure the pricing is going to be accurate before bringing the contract to the Board. A few weeks will be needed to take care of ironing out the details, but it will be a 2-to-3-month project once it gets started. They are looking to start putting meters in beginning in the Fall sometime, but so far so good on the budget and the project timeline.

- Eddie also mentioned that for the Parksdale Well Rehab project, they are working on the Board documents to get them submitted and getting a contract drafted. They have confirmed the pricing with Madera Pumps who will be hired to perform the well investigation to confirm the repairs needing to be done. They are expecting to begin the work on the well in the next 2-months or so.
- Jason R commented that for the City of Chowchilla project, they have been working with the State on the particulars for the funding agreement regarding what the project is going to entail. They were getting close to finishing this out, but they found out at the end of last week that their 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) needs to be in place and adopted before moving forward with getting a funding agreement. The guidelines from the State for the 2020 plan requirements just came out in late-March of this year which hasn't given them a lot of time to work on the plan, and they just got money in their budget for this year to do the plan. They are working on finishing the plan which they just started so they can get the funding agreement in place in order to move forward with design and then construction.
 - Igal T asked if Chris M with DWR knows anyone within DWR that could help with this to help speed it up. Chris asked Jason if the DWR grant manager knew about this situation delaying the funding agreement, and Jason said he let her know and that she understood. The City of Chowchilla is using a group out of UC Davis as their technical advisors, and they mentioned they are running in to this issue with other groups which they are providing technical assistance to. The DWR grant manager mentioned that they are aware of the issue internally and are working to resolve it; however, they are working under the requirement that the 2020 UWMP needs to be submitted to DWR prior to execution of any funding agreement and what they're aiming for is October. Jason is hopeful that they can have their UWMP submitted and approved by the October date, but that is a lot to be done in a short amount of time by the State before the funding agreement comes in or passes by.
 - Chris mentioned the best thing to do is keep in contact with the grant manager. It sounds like they are aware of the problem internally and are working on a way to fix it. Just keep working with them directly.
 - Heather B commented that P&P is working on several UWMPs, and they have been told that if the UWMP is submitted, it shouldn't hold up grant eligibility (meaning it doesn't need to be reviewed and approved by the State first).
- Keith H commented that for the City of Madera project, they have sent out an RFP for consultants. Once the RFP closes, they will move forward with selecting a consultant. Keith is not aware of their UWMP being a problem for them, but he will go ahead and check in to it. They are working with the county on this project.

7. Discussion – Domestic Wells – Prop 68 Funding

- Stephanie A commented that they are scouting some potential locations for additional monitoring wells in the Madera and Chowchilla Subbasins. Pete L with Luhdorff and Scalmanini will provide a report on this when ready.

8. Discussion – Creek Fire / Forest Management / Watershed

- Carl J commented that another fire has started up in the mountains since we last met.
- Jacob R mentioned that he sent out an email a couple of weeks ago to the group's voting members to see if anyone would be interested in going on a tour of the Creek Fire damage. Jacob received some responses showing interest in attending the tour from about 15 people, and Doug Waltner with the Sierra Vista Scenic Byway Association mentioned a possible collaboration with the Madera RWMG on a tour of the Creek Fire damage. The Scenic Byway Association has been discussing doing a tour as well, and asked Jacob if the Madera RWMG would like to partner or collaborate and put our two separate tours in to one tour together. Jacob invited Doug to attend today's meeting to discuss it a little further, but Doug was unable to attend today.
 - Stephanie A asked who the audience is for the Scenic Byway Association's tour, and Jacob was not sure. He guessed it may just be stakeholders in the area or people that are just interested in seeing the damage that was done here locally. Jacob will reach out to Doug for more information on their possible tour and see how we could possibly partner or collaborate. Carl J asked Jacob to reach out to Doug W for more information and to also include Tom W in the communication since he is interested in this tour taking place. Jacob will also let Doug know the group is interested but would like more information.

9. Discussion – Drought Working Group

- Jeannie H commented that there are a couple of working groups going on related to the drought. [The Madera County Department of Water and Natural Resources](#) hosts one along with partner organizations for the county, and there is a [San Joaquin Valley partnership workgroup](#) that includes 8 counties in the valley. Both groups are basically doing the same thing, and that is utilizing the funds that SHE has received for their different programs. The Madera County workgroup had a workshop last week on Tuesday where they went over all the programs that are available at this time, such as the Water Tank Program through SHE. For the Water Tank Program, there is **not** an income eligibility requirement. It's for urgent access to water. Once a landowner fills out an application when a well is going dry, SHE assesses the situation, and the tenants could get a tank delivered and installed for free. They fill the tank every other week, and they allot for 50-gallons of water per person per day to figure out how much water to deliver each time. This will continue to be provided for free until the issue is resolved. Another program is the Water Well Program which is income based (within 80% of the Median Household Income, or MHI) and the landowner needs to fill out the application with his/her information. The application can be filled out or phoned in. It is currently taking 6 – 9 months to get a well drilled, so a water tank can be installed and refilled until the new well is drilled. SHE is still doing the water quality testing for domestic wells in Madera County. For the Chowchilla Subbasin within the Madera County boundaries, SHE and the Chowchilla Management Zone have partnered on a special project including domestic well water quality testing. There is also a Bottled Water Program which is also based on income. This is a program to get drinking water to people for the time being to get them through, whether it be poor water quality, or their well is starting to go dry.
- Jeannie also mentioned that as Angela I stated earlier, getting water is the most important thing right now. SHE is constantly getting calls about people's wells going dry or starting to dry up.. If anyone needs drought assistance, a lot of information is

available. Visit the Madera County drought website at www.maderacountywater.com/drought/ for more information including past/upcoming workshops, flyers, articles, and other important information related to the drought.

- Jeannie also commented that SHE reported out at the San Joaquin Valley workgroup last week that for the 8 counties, there were 57 wells that went dry that week. 27 of those wells were in Madera County alone, so we have an issue here in Madera County. SHE has maps available showing where the wells going dry are located, that they know of.
- If anyone is interested in joining either drought workgroup ([Madera County workgroup](#) and/or [San Joaquin Valley workgroup](#)), you can reach out to anyone within the Madera County Department of Water and Natural Resources. Both groups focus on getting the information out to those that need it, and having resources located in one spot and not putting out wrong/confusing information. This information is available for everyone.

OLD BUSINESS

10. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act – SGMA – Report

- Stephanie A reported that for the subbasins, they are at a certain stage with their data management system where people are receiving a bill. For those in the Madera or Chowchilla Subbasins, they should have a bill to date for services which can be paid directly to their engineering consultant. The data management system is moving forward. They also have inter-basin coordination going on between Madera, Chowchilla, Merced, and Delta-Mendota Subbasins. This coordination is mainly for subsidence. They looked at some hot spots of subsidence activity that Madera ID identified. They also had another map from the exchange contractor showing an area they prioritized for subsidence reasons related to the Sacramento Dam. There are ongoing discussions where they are either supposed to accept their map or suggest another map by the end of today by all four subbasins.
- Stephanie also mentioned that the County GSA has an allocation that it adopted in June. There are several details that they are still looking in to and they are responding to grower questions regarding what would happen if x, y, or z happened.
 - Igal T asked if a form is available for reporting on areas that are being irrigated, because within his ranches' subbasins, some areas are dedicated for homes and some areas are not irrigated anymore. Is there any way to communicate that? Stephanie answered that if it's just for the County GSA, they can see that information with satellite imagery since it measures the evapotranspiration (ET) from the land. Igal and Stephanie will talk more about this outside the meeting since this question is more specific with a certain area.
- Carl J commented that a lot of us with this drought are realizing that none of our plans are going according to plan. It's going to take a lot of wet years to help us catch back up.

11. Chowchilla Nitrate Control Program - Report

- Kristi R reported that the Chowchilla Management Zone (CMZ) is continuing to do outreach and solicit homeowners or residents that are interested in having their wells tested for water quality, specifically nitrates. They have tested one home to date, and they are supplying bottled water to that home due to high nitrates. They have a public meeting coming up on August 11th at 5:30 pm at the El Nido school which is in Merced County. They will continue to solicit free well testing and see if they continue their work. To date, they have been utilizing the grant that Angela spoke about earlier (the Prop 1 DACI grant), and the CMZ would like to be part of the conversation on extending the project period or reallocating the funds to another project to continue water testing in Madera County.
 - Carl J asked if there is any filtering program for nitrates that can filter nitrates out of well water. Kristi mentioned there are a couple different ways this can be done.

There is a Point of Use (POU) device (filtration system at the sink for example) and a Point of Entry (POE) device (filter system connected at the main for house for example). When you install those items, you do need to know all the contaminants in the water to be sure everything can be filtered out. They are also looking at ways to connect to or extending off a public water system or a small community system. They also spoke with another group called Sourcewater that collects water out of the atmosphere in devices and they have the patent on that. They currently have programs all over the world including the Navajo Nation which Kristi has spoken to about how it works for their program. It's a great way to get water to a remote home that can't connect to systems. They are looking at several long-term solutions. They want to gather feedback from residents that it is impacting and what works best for those in the community.

12. New/ Suggested Members for the Madera RWMG

- No new members suggested.

13. Future Agenda Items

- Carl J asked Jacob R to add the discussion for projects 12 and 13 under item agenda #5 for next month regarding extending the projects or reallocating the funds.

14. Next Meeting

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 23rd, 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 Madera location.

15. The meeting was adjourned at 2:21 pm.