



Regional Water Management Group

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

MINUTES

Monday, March 20, 2023, 1:30 pm

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:33 pm, by Bobby Macaulay, chairperson.

Those present included:

Al Solis – SEMCU

Bobby Macaulay – Madera County

Brandon Tomlinson – Chowchilla WD

Dina Nolan – Madera ID

Emily Garcia – Madera County

Gretchen Heisdorf – Root Creek WD

Jacob Roberson – RWMG Coordinator

Jasmine Rivera – SHE

Jason Rogers – City of Chowchilla

Jenny Nunez-Rodriguez – Madera County

Jim Brohm – Indian Lakes

Keith Helmuth – City of Madera

Kristi Robinson – CMZ/Triangle T WD

Mary Stalter – North Fork Rancheria

Phil Janzen – Madera WD & MAWA

Sam Cunningham – Madera County

2. Review & Approval - Agenda & Minutes

- A motion to approve the March agenda was made by Kristi R; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.
- A motion to approve the February 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):
 - Cal OES Hazard Mitigation Assistance has released a mitigation funding opportunity for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for major disasters resulting from severe winter storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides. Notices of Interest are set to open on March 31st and close on May 10th.
 - DWR's Small Community Drought Relief Program is currently accepting applications through December 29th.
 - The CAL Fire California Forest Improvement Program is currently accepting applications through May 1st.
 - DWR has amended the 2021 SGMA Implementation Guidelines to address authorities and reservation of funding as outlined in the Budget Act of 2022. Comments on the edits are being accepted through 5 pm on March 23rd.
 - A Climate-Smart Agriculture for Nut Production workshop event will be held on Wednesday, March 22nd at the UC Cooperative Extension office in Merced from 8 am – 12:30 pm. Lunch is included.

- A Madera County Almond Day workshop event will be held on Thursday, March 23rd, at the Madera County Farm Bureau office from 8 am - 12:15 pm. Light refreshments will be provided.

4. Discussion & Action - Financial Report/Warrant Approvals

- March 2023 Financial Report
 - Jacob R reported that two more members paid their yearly dues this month which makes the income for the month \$5,700. \$2,250 was spent on the coordinator position, \$198 for CalTech Web which is for two months of website maintenance, making \$2,248 the total expenses for the month. The balance at the end of the month is \$40,337.50
 - A motion to approve the March financial report was made by Jason R; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion – Madera RWMG Future Meetings

- Jacob R reported that he is still getting mixed reviews from organizations that he has reached out to about IRWM groups being subjected to the Brown Act. The IRWM group in Ventura County mentioned they have never heard of an IRWM group having to follow the Brown Act requirements. This is due to most groups not holding or making any authority decisions. Most of the groups have boards that are made up of multiple agencies. The Madera County legal counsel mentioned that in our bylaws, it does mention that we will follow the Brown Act when it comes to our meetings. They also mentioned that there is an exemption when it comes to having to follow the Brown Act, but that exemption does not appear to apply to our group. Other IRWM groups added that they do not follow the Brown Act. We are currently following the Brown Act because of the way it is stated in our bylaws.
 - Bobby M added that he thinks the legal counsel's opinion of our group having to follow the Brown Act comes from their interpretation of our bylaws and their misunderstanding of how our group operates and how it was formed. If the group does want to be cautious and continue to follow the Brown Act for our meetings, we could make it work. The groups thought process seems to be to continue to meet online. If we want to continue to meet online, we can change the bylaws to reflect this and establish a new meeting schedule. Bobby proposes to meet once a year at each location (Madera, Chowchilla, and Oakhurst) and then the rest of our meetings would be held online via Zoom. This would be a great opportunity to network occasionally.
 - Kristi R added that our attendance is great when we meet on Zoom versus when we meet in person. Kristi thinks we should have the flexibility within our bylaws to do whatever works best for our membership. Kristi also thinks we should try to follow the Brown Act as best as we can when it comes to getting our agendas and minutes out within the same time frame and that we try to engage with the public in a transparent form of governance.
 - Keith H added that the Brown Act is about transparency. One thing we can do for transparency is record the meetings and keep the recordings on file for a year or whatever it may be. The recordings can be made available

via an online link, or we can send them a CD to listen to and review the meetings. This way there are no allocations of “closed door meetings” or that people do not have access to attend our meetings. Bobby thinks this is a great idea.

- Jacob added that last month, Jeannie H brought up the idea that instead of meeting every month, we could meet every other month if group members agree to it. We can even change the time of our meetings as well if 1:30 pm on the fourth Monday of the month does not work for everyone as our calendars get filled up quickly with other meetings. Jacob also added that Kristi’s point of following the Brown Act as closely as possible is a good idea.

6. Review & Approval – Bylaw Updates

- Bobby M commented that before any other changes get approved, the bylaws should be amended and approved by the group along with the other changes made by Jacob R earlier this year. Jacob can make the changes to the bylaws where it mentions following the Brown Act, and those changes along with the ones made earlier in the year can be approved together during April’s meeting.
 - Dina N added that when the bylaws are changed, they would need to go back to each member’s boards for approval. Jacob stated that this is correct, and the MOU would need to be resigned by each member’s organization.
 - Jason R added that the bylaw changes can come to the Madera RWMG group as a draft for next month’s meeting and then the members would present the draft to their boards for approval, then come back to the Madera RWMG for an official approval of the changes in the bylaws. Jacob added that this is correct, and then the MOUs would need to be signed again by each member.
 - Keith H added that the counsels for each member’s organizations may have different opinions causing a back and forth when it comes to the group needing to follow the Brown Act or not. Once a draft of the bylaws is sent, Keith would send them along to the attorney for the City of Madera to get her opinion about the Brown Act and see if her opinion aligns or disagrees with what we are proposing. Keith mentioned putting a draft of the updated bylaws together, approving them as a group, then sending the draft to the group members various counsels to get their opinions on it.
- Jacob will make changes to the bylaws and have the draft ready for approval by the group members next month. Changes will include meetings not following the Brown Act by meeting in person every month for a quorum. Bobby added to make it as broad as we can, so we do not hold ourselves accountable to anything when it comes to our meetings. Gretchen H commented about changing the meeting in November since it normally falls around the Thanksgiving holiday. Bobby commented to move the November meeting to the beginning of December. Gretchen agreed to this so the last meeting of the year falls between both the Thanksgiving holiday and the Christmas holiday.

7. Discussion – Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement Funding

- San Joaquin Valley

- Self-Help Enterprises – Projects 12 and 13
 - Nothing new to report.
- Chowchilla Nitrate Control Program / Chowchilla Management Zone – Projects 12 and 13
 - Kristi R reported that the Chowchilla Management Zone is working on developing the Management Zone Implementation Plan. The plan is like the GSP of groundwater and nitrates. In the plan, they are working on developing long-term drinking water solutions for wells that are over 10mg/L in nitrates. They are continuing to test domestic wells. The response in wanting to have domestic wells tested continues to be slow but they are continuing to do outreach to get as many wells tested within the time frame of the grant. The grant ends on June 20, 2023.
 - If you know of anyone that would like to have their domestic well tested for free, please reach out to Kristi by emailing chowchilladrinkingwater@gmail.com, by calling (559) 373-7399, or by going to www.chowchillamanagementzone.com

8. Discussion – Proposition 1 IRWM Implementation Funding

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
 - Indian Lakes and Parkwood
 - Jacob R mentioned that there is no new update. Last month, Eddie M reported that they are still waiting on miscellaneous supplies to be received to begin with installs. They are hoping to be able to start with installs in Indian Lakes sometime in June or July.
 - City of Madera
 - Keith H reported that there are no new updates since last month.
 - Parksdale
 - This project is essentially done.
 - City of Chowchilla
 - Jason R reported that they are still in design for their project.

9. Discussion – SGMA Implementation Grant

- Gretchen H reported that round 2 is still ongoing. Projects 2 and 5 with Madera County have to do with the GSP update and the pipeline installation. These projects are being ran by the County and are still in a draft status. They are trying to figure out what's going on with the GSP. The Root Creek project has been delayed by about a month or so due to all the water we are receiving. Too much water in the fields to allow them to get out there and start reconstruction work. The Madera WD project is still in the environmental review stage with various agencies. Gretchen is hoping that they will be receiving a check from DWR within the next month or two if they process it quick enough.

10. Discussion – Drought Working Group

- Jenny N reported that during their meeting on Friday last week, they had staff from SHE provide an update on their emergency water services which include bottled water, water quality, and well drilling programs. SHE also provides water testing for residents which is separate from their drought services.

11. Discussion – IRWM Round 2 Application Status

- Jacob R commented that an application was turned in by Madera County's Public Works Department. The application turned in was for the Sierra Highlands Water Systems Improvement project.

12. Discussion – IRWMP Project List – Call for Projects

- Jacob R reported that he sent out an email to the email list that he keeps for the group back on March 3rd. The call for projects will close on Wednesday, April 12th, at 5 pm. Any project proposals received will be sent to the group members prior to April's meeting for review before being voted on to be added to the IRWMP Project List.
- Kristi R mentioned that we previously discussed streamlining the projects and reducing the project lists, and just wanted to confirm that this was done. Jacob mentioned that it was done, and the number of projects on both lists were cut down by about half.

13. Report – Sustainable Groundwater Management – SGMA

- Jacob R commented that the revised GSP for the Chowchilla Subbasin was deemed incomplete by DWR, and the GSP for the Madera Subbasin is still waiting for comments from DWR about the revisions made. Bobby M added that they are working on revising the plans based on other GSPs in the state that have been approved. They are working on getting revisions back to DWR before any involvement from the state happens. GSP revisions are a lengthy project, but they are working on it.

14. New/Suggested Members for the Madera RWMG

- No new members suggested.

15. Future Agenda Items

- No new future agenda items suggested.

16. Next Meeting

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 24, 2023, at 1:30 pm on Zoom.

17. The meeting was adjourned at 2:07 pm.