



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



**Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 8, 2021 – 5:00PM to 7:00PM**

- I. Call to Order: 5:06PM by Norman Kuhr**
 - A. Director Roll Call
Attendance was in person and virtual on Zoom. Directors: Norman Kuhr, Jay Bellach, Tom Petrucci, Tim Coehlo; Associate Director: Mark Hutson; Staff: Amy Siliznoff; Partners: Priscilla Baker (NRCS), Chris Yohannan (East Stanislaus RCD), Christina Beckstead (Madera County Farm Bureau); Zoom attendance: Erik Herman, Paul Lum (AFT), Stacy Shutts (AFT), Cristina Murillo-Barrick (UCCE), Joy Hollingsworth (UCCE), and Patricia Stever Blattler (Tulare County Farm Bureau)
 - B. Introduction of Guests – Guests in attendance were Chris Yohannan (East Stanislaus RCD), Paul Lum (AFT), Stacy Shutts (AFT), Cristina Murillo-Barrick (UCCE), Joy Hollingsworth (UCCE), and Patricia Stever Blattler (Tulare County Farm Bureau)

- II. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. **Approval of August Meeting Minutes** – Motion was made by Tom Petrucci to approve August 2021 Meeting Minutes, there was a second from Jay Bellach. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.

- III. Correspondence & Mail** – Central Valley Community Bank statement, CSDA Mailers, Notice of Modifications to Text of Risk Adjustment for Health Premiums, Golden State RMA Invoice for Liability Insurance

- IV. Public Comments** – No public comments were made

- V. Reports**
 - A. Madera County SGMA Update/GSAs – Stephanie Anagnoson
 - o No updates at this time

 - B. NRCS Report – Priscilla Baker
 - o End of fiscal year is September 30th, trying to obligate contracts
 - o Drought CIG funding was announced for conservation/efficiency
 - o DannaMarie Acevedo Velasquez is back from leave
 - o Sharon Nance has retired, and Tony Rolfes is the acting Assistant District Conservationist for 120 days

- C. Madera Region IRWM/RWVG – Amy Siliznoff
 - Self-Help Enterprises: High frequency calls to enroll Madera County into Water Tank Program
 - They are working on Indian Lakes project to install meters
 - Creek Fire Tour along scenic route
 - San Joaquin Valley Workshop on Drought (Fresno State is also included on this)
 - Utilizing Self-Help Funding
 - Going over water tank program (no income verification)
 - Water well program (income based – 80% median income)
 - Bottled water program (income based – they will get drinking water to you if your well is contaminated)

- D. Farm Bureau – Christina Beckstead
 - SHARE grant headed into 3rd and 4th Demo
 - Farm Bureau is working on fact checking local articles
 - Ag United Harvest Celebration is October 24th

- E. News/Other Meeting Reports – None

VI. RCD Report: Board Action Items and Discussion Topics

- A. RCD Regional Carbon Farming Hub with Carbon Cycle Institute (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - This work includes outreach and educational events to promote carbon farm planning (Field days, farmer-to-farmer demonstration events, and creation of outreach materials)
 - The outcome will be creating 7 regional hubs to provide carbon farm planning and implementation assistance across CA
 - Matt Angell and Amy met with Patricia Hickey and CCI will be approaching a Foundation for funding for this project

- B. Annual and Long-Range Plan – Establish Sub-Committee (I) (A) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Amy will be working to update the Annual and Long-Range Plan for the RCD. There is a request to establish a three-person Sub-Committee to work on updating the plan.
 - Tim Coehlo, Jay Bellach, and Matt Angell expressed interest in becoming a part of the Sub-Committee.

Tim made a motion to approve the Sub-Committee. Jay seconded the motion. All present Board members approved.

- C. By-Laws and Policies (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Amy will be working to update the RCDs By-Laws and Policies.

- D. Stanislaus Grower Magazine (I) (A) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Buy-in for set number of pages (8 of the total 32 for 25%), RCD share is 25% of cost to produce (currently quoted at \$8,300 for 10,000 copies). Our RCD would set the

prices and create content for our 8 pages. The designer will make the magazine flow.

- Buy in per page versus a % - One page is \$415 – Our RCD would sell what we want and use what we want for content articles (4 quarter page ads at the price we set).
- Sell ads using ESRCD rate sheets and ESRCD will pay 30% back in commission and we can submit articles that ESRCD will try to include as they have space but no guarantees for placement depending on paid submissions. This one does not require any commitment.

Tim made a motion to approve the ad option for the Stanislaus Grower Magazine. Jay seconded the motion. All present Board members approved, Tom Petrucci declined.

- E. CARCD – Heller Foundation funding for SGMA work (admin for Amy – ends in December) (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - THEME: Making the work to support transition to conservation practices to better help farmers address SGMA
 - Set up a presentation to GSA's about Soil Health/Water Nexus (Healthy Soils, Cover Crops)
 - Central Valley Foundation – Meet with them with Karen Buhr about how to get more young leadership awareness to the local conservation and water boards.
 - Local Workgroup with NRCS
 - \$17,500 to cover Amy's work until December 1st
- F. Local Workgroup Meeting with NRCS (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Amy is working with Coarsegold and Columbia RCD, as well as Priscilla with NRCS to plan the Local Workgroup. The workgroup will take place on October 7th from 9-11AM. Amy has found all presenters to present at the workgroup, she is working to finalize the agenda and continue outreach.
- G. Presentation to GSA's about Soil Health/Water Nexus (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Jeff Mitchell with UC ANR, Joy Hollingsworth with UCCE, and Rob Roy with NRCS. Another potential speaker for this is Richard Krepps (Grower)
 - Currently the State CDFA and the NRCS are including soil health as part of their grant structure. There is a concern that the way GSP's treat cover crops as a net USER of water will discourage farmers from implementing soil health practices of which cover crops are a central pillar. Our RCD is interested in assisting the local GSA's to include cover crops as a positive management practice when it comes to water use.
 - A planned discussion on this would include the following topics:
 1. How cover crops increase rainfall retention in the soil by reducing runoff - therefore reducing the water requirement to "build up the soil profile". Including use in "on farm recharge" and designated recharge areas.

2. How cover crops increase Organic Matter in the soil thereby:
 - a. increasing water retention.
 - b. decreasing commercial nitrogen application need.
 - c. reducing nitrogen volatilization.
 - d. reducing leaching to the groundwater. This will be a big help with improving groundwater quality (CV Salts)
3. How cover crops reduce the need for pesticide applications thereby:
 - a. Reducing pesticide runoff issues
 - b. Reducing labor safety issues
 - c. Reducing groundwater contamination issues
 - d. Earlier access to fields by equipment
4. Bee and monarch butterfly health.

H. Update: RCPP with American Farmland Trust – Amy Siliznoff

- Irrigation and Nutrient Management Workshop with ESRC
 - The workshop is set for October 28th from 8:30AM-1PM.
 - Amy is completing outreach for the event.

I. Update: Orchard recycling workshop in the fall with MCFB (I) – Amy Siliznoff

- Two-Segment Workshop for Orchard Recycling in the Fall (End of October/early November)
- One entire segment will be dedicated to Madera County
- Madera/Chowchilla to discuss opportunity to team up with Farm Bureau on these Workshops and provide videographer for Madera County footage.
- Amy stated cash-flow is low and current grant funding would need to be re-verified to see if videography would be covered

J. Cover Crop workshop in the fall with MCFB (I) (A) – Amy Siliznoff

- Healthy Soils Workshop in December/January
- Current grants need to be verified if videography is covered

Tim made a motion to approve NTE \$5,000 to provide videographer for the SHARE Cover Crop Demo pending verification of grant language. Jay seconded the motion. All present Board members approved.

K. Upcoming Grant applications

- CDFA – Healthy Soils Program

Announcement of funding availability October 2021 – February 2022

On farm management practices that include but are not limited to: cover cropping, no-till, reduced-till, mulching, compost application, and conservation plantings.

- HSP Demonstration Projects Funding

CDFA – State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Program

Announcement of funding availability is October 2021 – December 2021

The State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) provides financial assistance in the form of grants to implement irrigation systems that reduce greenhouse gases and save water on California agricultural operations. Eligible system components include (among others) soil moisture monitoring, drip systems, switching to low pressure irrigation systems, pump retrofits, variable frequency drives and installation of renewable energy to reduce on-farm water use and energy. Eligible system components include (among others) soil moisture monitoring, drip systems, switching to low pressure irrigation systems, pump retrofits, variable frequency drives and installation of renewable energy to reduce on-farm water use and energy.

- California Resilience Challenge – ESRCD, Tranquillity RCD, East Merced RCD, West Stanislaus RCD (Application deadline is September 13th, 2021) Amy has a meeting September 10th with ESRCD to discuss the collaboration.
 - Specifically, state agencies are directed to pursue innovative actions, strategies, and partnerships to maximize the full climate benefits of our natural and working land through healthy soils management, including planting cover crops, hedgerows and compost applications.
 - Description of Resilience Challenges Project Addresses
Demonstrate that the planning efforts for which funding is sought are targeted at improving local or regional resilience to one or more of the following four climate challenges, and water and air quality impacts of the foregoing:
 - Drought
 - Flooding, including from sea level rise
 - Extreme heat
 - Wildfire

VII. Financial Report

- A. Monthly Treasurer's Report (I)
 - i. County Account: \$2,539.36
 - ii. Central Valley Community Bank Account: \$7,340.16
 - iii. Incoming: from NRCS: \$12,772.76 (pending)
 - iv. Incoming: from CARCD for July: \$3,500.00 (pending)
 - v. Incoming from CARCD for August: \$3,500.00 (pending)
 - vi. **Total in all accounts: \$9,879.52**
 - 1. **Total after incoming: \$29,652.28**
- B. Review and Approval of Expenses (I) (A)
 - i. Expenses: Monthly fee for CalTech Web - \$99
 - ii. Invoice for Amy Siliznoff August - \$3,500
 - iii. CARCD Membership Dues - \$150
 - iv. Golden State RMA Insurance - \$945
 - v. **Total Expenses: \$4,694.00**

C. Previous Approved Expenses Still Pending

i. Laurel Angell - \$4,121

ii. Amy Siliznoff - \$3,500

iii. Quickbooks Pro - \$399.99

iv. **Total Previous Approved Expenses: \$8,020.99**

1. Total Expenses and Previous Expenses: \$12,714.99

2. Total in all accounts after incoming is deposited and expenses are paid: \$16,937.29

- Tim made a motion to approve payment of expenses for invoices, Motion was seconded by Jay. All present Board members approved.

VIII. Madera/Chowchilla RCD Old Business

A. All Board Members - Harassment and Ethics Training

Tim requested assistance setting up a login. Amy will reach out to him to set this up so he can complete the training.

B. Legal description (on hold)

IX. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:08PM.

Next Meeting: October 13th, 2021, 5:00PM at Madera Library; 121 N G Street, Madera, CA with Zoom accessibility.