



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



**Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 14, 2024 – 5:00-6:00PM**

I. Call to Order: 5:14PM by Norman Kuhr

A. Director Roll Call

Attendance was in person at the FSA office located at 425 N Gateway Dr, Ste K, Madera, CA. Directors: Norman Kuhr, Andrew Carrol, Shannon Iest, Mike DeLaGuerra, Matt Angell, Tim Coehlo; Staff: Amy Siliznoff, Kevin Reyes

II. Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Amy requested to add the following line items under the RCD Report Section:

- CARCD Conference – Registration for Amy and Kevin

Motion was made by Matt Angell to approve the change, there was a second by Mike DeLaGuerra. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. **Approval of June Meeting Minutes** – Motion was made by Shannon Iest to approve the Meeting Minutes, there was a second by Matt Angell. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.

IV. Correspondence & Mail – Quickbooks advertisement, CARCD General Membership Special Meeting, Community West Bank Notice about personal and business online banking information, CMZ well testing flyer, PNP magazines, CSDA magazines, Measure T Special Meetings flyer, Caltrust flyers, AFP Pic Rights notice

V. Public Comments – No public comment

VI. Reports

A. Madera County SGMA Update/GSAs – Amy Siliznoff

- No current updates

B. NRCS Report – Mira Dick

- NRCS is obligating contracts. They're sending more to obligate and they're putting applications into contracts
- The planning staff continues to obligate new contracts and work on newly selected applications. It is too early to report on numbers currently as the situation remains quite fluid.
- With sadness for their field office, their engineer Prospero Gonzalez has accepted a promotion to the state office. This promotion is extremely well-deserved and effective immediately.
- A position has been posted on USAJobs for an engineer in the Madera field office, among others. If you know of anybody who is qualified and interested in applying,

please refer them to USAJobs. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact Mira.

- She is looking forward to introducing to everyone their new conservation planner May Yang at the September board meeting. She is now fully onboarded in Madera and is proving to be a wonderful asset.
- They have another new conservation planner starting with our office in the next few months. She's looking forward to introducing to you, Sean Neil Perez. More information on his placement will be coming soon.

C. News/Other Meeting Reports – Amy Siliznoff

- The RCD will plan a strategic plan meeting, will schedule the meeting sometime in November when its less busy.
- There's an Organic Transition workshop UC Organic Agricultural Institute (UCOAI) will be co-planning with CAFF to be held in early November at the Kearny REC in Parlier. The workshop will focus on the why, how, what of organic transition and have a "resource fair" where TA providers local to the San Joaquin Valley can chat with growers about the resources that they provide.
- CARCD is hosting their 79th Annual Conference: *Transforming Challenges into Opportunities*. This year's conference will be held December 10-12, 2024, at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Sacramento. Early bird pricing ends September 15th. Pricing is \$495 and will go up to \$545
- Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will invest \$400 million with at least 18 irrigation districts to help farmers continue commodity production while also conserving water across the West. This funding – which will support irrigation districts and producers in using innovative water savings technologies and farming practices while producing water-saving commodities in the face of continued drought – is expected to conserve up to 50,000 acre-feet in water use across 250,000 acres of irrigated land in production, while expanding and creating new, sustainable market opportunities.
- California's Climate Resilience Bond ([SB 867](#), Allen), if approved by voters in November, will catalyze a wide range of powerful climate solutions, including nature-based farming practices, and investments to improve historically underserved communities' access to healthy food and safe drinking water. The [Food and Farm Resilience Coalition](#) applauds the legislature for the inclusion of \$1 billion of our Coalition's priority investments in climate-resilient sustainable agriculture, local food system infrastructure, and farmworker well-being.
- The proposed investments related to the Coalition's agriculture chapter priorities are five times greater than those in Proposition 68, the last successful climate bond to include food and farming investments.
- This boost in food system priorities is the direct outcome of a multi-year campaign by the Food and Farm Resilience Coalition and the tireless advocacy of legislative leaders Assemblymember Lori Wilson and Speaker Robert Rivas.
- Given California's budget deficit and the lack of resources in the [Governor's 24-25 budget](#), this bond may be the only source of funding for several of these popular programs and much-needed investments.

VII. RCD Report: Board Action Items and Discussion Topics

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

- The RCD is currently running its irrigation program April through November. 2 evaluations are scheduled for the next 2 weeks, and Kevin is finishing up the final reports. The RCD is scheduling evaluations for late August/early September.
- The RCD has completed 23 evaluations total in Madera County this season.
- B. CDFA Agricultural Planning Grant (I) – Kevin Reyes
 - Kevin has been working with another biologist, Point Blue, on setting up site visits with growers. He’s been training on how to complete site visits independently. He will contact Rex Dufour for additional assistance. We currently we have 3 evaluations in progress, 1 is complete, 6 signups.
- C. NRCS Equity Project (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Amy met with Sara Tiffany, CAFFs Director of Ecological Farming and her colleague Hanna on May 22nd. We’re planning on a collaborative cover crop/water and irrigation field day event. Amy requested an additional 6-month extension to this grant, for an end date of March 2025.
- D. DOC MLRP (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - RCD team has been attending the statewide DOC MLRP meetings, monthly partner DOC meetings, and bi-monthly partner meetings for project planning. The team is working on reviewing Deborah’s contract as well as the draft MALRP for structuring the incentive payment for growers through this program. The La Vina incentive payment has been proposed to Deborah and she’s signed the Landowner Access Agreement to move forward with the project. The next step will be for her to sign the MLRP contract. The RCD will be assisting with the implementation of the project.
- E. WCB Pollinator Block Grant (I) – Kevin Reyes
 - We’ve been moving forward on the Hillside Elementary School pollinator project. This project will include pollinator curriculum for the students at the elementary school. Planting will take place during the fall.
 - We will be moving forward to submit for plants for Deborah’s project in La Vina. Deborah has signed the WCB landowner agreement, and we are waiting for the County to submit for CEQA for her project, but before that the Board of Supervisors will need to approve the draft contract and CEQA submittal.
- F. SBIR II – Amy Siliznoff
 - Kevin has completed 6 irrigation evaluations under this project. He’ll go through training on how to set up a neutron probe. Collin is also training Kevin how to check pressures. Colling will be working on the final report then will show Kevin how it’s formatted.
- G. LWG Meeting (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - The Local Workgroup meeting was held on July 17th from 12PM-2PM. The virtual workgroup meeting was a success, we had 17 participants and the meeting lasted 1.5 hours. Priorities were discussed and agreed upon amongst the participants. Amy finalized the LWG letter and five agencies were represented in the letter.
- H. MCRCO Audit (I) (A) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Amy requested to move forward with the biennial audit estimate received from Bryant L. Jolley, CPA office for \$7,500.
 - A motion was made by Shannon lest to approve moving forward with the biennial audit, there was a second by Tim Coehlo. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.

- I. Board Compliance (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Reminder that Form 700 and Ethics/Harassment Training is due
 - Norm needs to complete Ethics and Harassment Training
 - Amy needs to complete Harassment & Ethics
 - Matt Angell needs to completed Harassment & Ethics
 - Amy to resend the link to everyone and work with finding an in-person training for Matt to attend.
- J. Upcoming Workshops (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - The RCD will be hosting a biochar workshop in the spring with AFT, along with a healthy soils/water conservation workshop in the spring with CAFF.
 - The RCD will be presenting on the RCDs pollinator program at the Organic Transition workshop that UC Organic Agricultural Institute (UCOAI) will be co-planning with CAFF to be held in early November at the Kearny REC in Parlier. The workshop will focus on the why, how, what of organic transition and have a "resource fair" where TA providers local to the San Joaquin Valley can chat with growers about the resources that they provide.
- K. Contracts/Agreements (I) (A)– Amy Siliznoff
 - No current contracts/agreements
- L. Upcoming Grant Applications (I) – Amy Siliznoff
 - Amy will look into Water Foundation and Central Valley Community Foundation funding for the RCD.

VIII. Financial Report

- Shannon Iest made a motion to approve the July and August Financial Reports and Expense Report. There was a second by Tim Coehlo. Motion passed unanimously by all present directors.

IX. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 6:27PM.

Next Meeting: September 11, 2024, 5:00PM