



County of Placer  
**Agricultural Commission**

11477 E Avenue ▪ Auburn, CA 95603 ▪ (530) 889-7372

Denise Moore – Nursery  
Earl Stephens – Ag Processing  
Elisa Noble – Small Farms

Jim Brenner – Fruit & Nut Farm  
Larry Jordan – Timber  
Patricia Beard - Livestock

Patrick Bollinger – Foothill Farms  
Rich Ferreira – Citrus  
Wayne Vineyard – Rice

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, February 6, 2023, 7:00 PM**

Placer County Planning Commission Hearing Room  
3091 County Center Drive, Auburn, CA  
County Contact: Joshua Huntsinger

**I. CALL TO ORDER and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair, Wayne Vineyard.

**Roll Call**

Present: Beard, Bollinger, Brenner, Ferreira, Jordan, Noble, Stephens, Vineyard.

Absent: Moore

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA for February 6, 2023 AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES from December 12, 2022:** Motion by Ferreira, second by Stephens, MPUV.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**IV. INFORMATION ITEMS:**

**A. Form 700 Filing:** Deadline is March 30, 2023  
Reminder to submit Form 700 by the deadline.

**B. Water Supply Updates:** Greg Jones

1. Nevada Irrigation District – Greg Jones

a. Water Update, as of 2/1/23

- Total NID Reservoir Storage
  - 230,447 Acre Feet
  - 120% of 9-year average
  - 85% of capacity
- Bowman Lake
  - 151% of average
- 57.32” precipitation

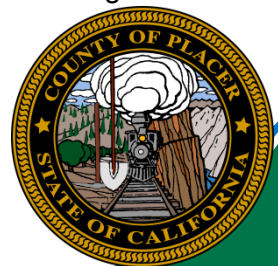
b. Welcome to Trevor Caulder, Director, District 4

2. Placer County Water Agency – Darin Reintjes

a. Water Update, as of 2/6/23

- Lake Spaulding: 52.9” precipitation, 135% of average
- American River Snowpack: 33.9” precipitation, 173% of average
- Middle Fork Project & Snowpack Storage
  - Reservoir: 253,300 AF, 146% of average
  - Snowpack: 220,000 AF, 173% of average
- Middle Fork Project Combined Storage: 99% of average

The Agricultural Commission is composed of appointed community members whose purpose is to advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters pertaining to agriculture including recommendations regarding California Land Conservation Act/Williamson Act applications. Residents are encouraged to attend and provide input. Placer County is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided the resources to participate fully in public meetings. If you require disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, to attend or participate in this meeting, please contact the Placer County Agriculture Department at (530) 889-7372.



### **C. Country Acres Solar and Batter Project Introduction**

Josh Huntsinger, Agricultural Commissioner, introduced Kathleen Ave, Senior Climate Program Manager with Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), to report on the SMUD Country Acres Project in Western Placer County. The first item will be presented by Professor Majdi Abou Naim with UC Davis, and the second item will be presented by Amanda Beck, Project Development Manager. Kathleen reported this is a follow-up from a meeting in October 2022.

Kathleen Ave reported that SMUD's big solar projects are evolving. The first phase of a different way for using ag land was a solar project at Rancho Seco, grazing was added with little ground disturbance. The second phase was pollinator habitat. The Country Acres project now has agrivoltaics. The companion benefits to solar are ag production, creating solar food farms, ecosystem services, soil carbon and health, water conservation, and economic development. The created shade and moisture are an additional benefit to the agricultural land. Definitions of agrivoltaics are evolving. The U.S. Department of Energy defines agrivoltaics as agricultural production, such as crop production, livestock grazing, and pollinator habitat that exist underneath solar panels and/or in between rows of solar panels. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines agrivoltaics as the use of land for both agriculture and solar photovoltaic energy generation. Solar grazing is a variation where livestock graze in and around solar panels.

Potential benefits to farmers are diversified revenue streams shading to mitigate heat stress for animals and crops, potential water savings, pollination services for ag near the site, and on-farm energy production for resilience.

### **D. Country Acres Project – Agrivoltaics, Professor Majdi Abou Najm, UC Davis**

Professor Majdi Abou Najm with UC Davis provided an overview of agrivoltaics as a practice and the research planned to construct and operate an Agrivoltaics demonstration project at Country Acres in Placer County. The project aims to test modifications to conventional solar project design for full-scale agricultural production. This will be accomplished by constructing a portion of the solar panels at varying heights to allow access for farm equipment and plant growth along with varying row spacing to test the impacts of shading on crop yields, water and energy efficiencies, and soil health. One of the first steps is harvesting light to grow food and clean energy together. Optimizing sunlight to maximize the productivity of our land per crop, climate, and time. Green energy can offset growers' energy bills, bring more revenue opportunities, energize a new generation of electric tractors, and produce fertilizers. The shade provided by solar panels can increase moisture retention in soils. Prolonged drought, extended warm season, and more extreme weather all pose a threat to Placer County's farm economy. This project will give regional farmers practical information that can be applied to make their production more resilient and support expanded food security.

**E. Country Acres Solar and Batter Project Overview: Amanda Beck, Project Development Manager, Power Generation and Project Development, SMUD**

Amanda Beck provided more information on the Country Acres Project. The project is a portion of a larger project with a 344MW solar facility and up to 344 MW battery project located on approximately 1,170 acres of land in Western Placer County north of Baseline Rd. Existing land uses include almond orchards, agricultural rice fields, and grasslands. The project is being designed and planned with pollinator plantings at the site to support the surrounding farming operations as well as sheep grazing for vegetation management. In addition, the project will include an 11-acre agrivoltaics demonstration site that includes crop plantings. The project interconnects to SMUD's existing transmission grid. The duration of the project is planned for a 30-year operational term, with most of the property being leased and a portion being purchased. The facility will support more than 360 jobs on average. The project is planned to support pollinator habitat, use sheep grazing for vegetation management, and include crop production research. The facility should produce enough renewable energy to power more than 80,000 homes per year. Most of the property is used to harvest rice, with an orchard on the south side, and the western portion is grazing property. To address the impact on the agricultural property, the project is required to mitigate the loss of Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland at a 1:1 ratio. The project is planned to begin construction in mid-2023 and complete construction, testing, and commissioning in 2025.

**V. ACTION ITEMS:** None

**VI. REPORTS**

**A. UCCE Farm Advisor Update:** Cindy Fake, Horticulture and Small Farms Advisor

Cindy Fake reported that Dan Macon will not be as accessible over the next 3-4 weeks and to contact the UCCE Office for assistance. Cindy shared that she and Dan Macon will be speaking to UCANR regarding the need to replace Cindy's position when she retires in June 2023.

Cindy reported significant damage to mandarin and other citrus crops due to the impact of the atmospheric rivers along with devastating damage because large trees fell on orchard trees. There are still several orchards and vineyards saturated and impacts will continue through the growing season. Most tree and vine roots start dying between 7 and 14 days; therefore, if the soil continues to be saturated, there may be loss of vines and trees affecting ag production this year. The good news is the wet soil is mitigating the impact of frost in the winter.

Workshops are scheduled in the spring and early summer. Sessions are scheduled for wine and grape growers, citrus growers, beginning farmers, mulching, irrigation management, citrus pest management, and grape pest management. Hoping Bob Bonk will stay to build the network of weather stations, agrivoltaics projects on farms, research in Roseville, and drone technology to look at crops, stress, and water use.

**B. Agriculture Department Updates:** Josh Huntsinger, Agricultural Commissioner  
Josh Huntsinger reported that Supervisor Landon restarted the Wine Industry Task Force to meet with County Staff, which began in the 2008-2012 time period. The purpose of the task force was to have a regular dialog with the implementation of the county's wine ordinance. In 2020, the wine ordinance was updated, and two meetings have been held thus far, to discuss challenges and have discussions with the wine industry.

Regional Forest Health (RFH) will be presenting to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, to provide an update on the Land Tender, a GIS-based tool (Geographical Information System). The GIS tool will allow RFH to help prioritize and map forest health projects to assist in planning treatments over the next 10+ years. The U.S. Forestry Service is also using the GIS tool, and it is expected that Placer County will be the first county in the state with the entire county mapped out and prioritized to the level of building specific projects, identifying onsite conditions and accessibility, cost-per-acre, and honing in on high-priority items, such as protecting the community and wildlife habitat.

Josh reported he would be traveling to Washington DC for the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association (CACASA) Conference in early March to speak to our congressional representatives and senators. Senator Padilla reached out to the Agricultural Commissioners to notify them they will be working on the Farm Bill soon, so we will also be meeting with USDA, EPA, Customs and Border Protection, and policy. The biggest item that agricultural commissioners manage related to USDA funding through the Farm Bill is the pest prevention program, to deal with invasive pests in California such as the Medfly, Glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS), and Asian citrus psyllid (ACP). The newest pest to focus on is the Spotted lanternfly, seen in the Philadelphia, Delaware, and New Jersey area. To date, no live insects have been found in California. Dead insects have been found in cargo areas. The Spotted lanternfly is attracted to rusty steel, and one location to monitor is the Roseville Railyard to identify specific plants where the pest may be found. Other items funded by the Farm Bill throughout the State of California are the 12-14+ dog teams operated on a regional basis by agricultural commissioner offices to inspect the U.S. Post Office, FedEx, and UPS looking for unmarked shipments of plant material coming from out of state.

As Interim Parks Director, Hidden Falls Regional Park is of interest to the ag community. A town hall is being scheduled soon update the community, and Parks is closing to having a grazing contractor.

Regarding sustainable groundwater management in the valley, we are in the phase of identifying recharge sites and finding best geological locations to implement groundwater recharge, seek funding, and build-out sites.

Ag Tour planning is underway thanks to Andrew with the Placer Resource Conservation District.

**C. Agricultural Commissioner's Reports:** No reports

**VII. ADJOURNMENT – 9:09pm**