



# MARIPOSA COUNTY

Administration • 966-3222



## **RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2019-633**

MEETING: November 5, 2019  
TO: The Board of Supervisors  
FROM: Dallin Kimble, County Administrative Officer  
RE: Fairgrounds Lease for NRCS

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### **RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:**

Approve a Lease Agreement with 35A District Agricultural Association for Office Space at the Mariposa County Fairgrounds for NRCS; and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Agreement.

In the mid-1990s, the U.S. Department of Agriculture decided to consolidate local offices of the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Mariposa County's office was identified for closure.

The office was eventually allowed to remain open as a "local partnership office", not an official NRCS office, with the condition that the local NRCS would not be permitted to pay for rent or other expenses associated with operating a local office. Mariposa County Resource Conservation District (RCD) was able to provide space at their location on the fairgrounds and NRCS has continued serving the county under that arrangement ever since.

Although RCD remains supportive of NRCS, operating a nonprofit conservation district is a difficult proposition and the RCD Board of Directors has recently determined it would be in their own best interest to relocate to a smaller office. The smaller space will allow RCD to continue serving the community with the excellent tools they provide; but it places the NRCS office in some jeopardy.

The Mariposa NRCS office is the most productive in the state with more than 350 active contracts valued at over \$19 million. They have been a crucial partner in battling drought and tree mortality on private land throughout our community and are awarded grants on a regular basis that improve our fire safety and resource management.

Regulations have also changed since the mid-1990s. The local office is in the process of requesting authorization from their superiors in the federal government to pay for rent and other expenses. Officials at NRCS are cautiously optimistic their request will

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be granted. A response indicating whether authorization will or will not be provided is expected in about three months. In the meantime, the lease for their current space expires at the end of October.

The County is supportive of NRCS, RCD and the Mariposa County Fairgrounds. In view of the value each of these organizations brings to our community, and in order to maintain an NRCS office in Mariposa County, staff recommends entering a lease for office space at the fairgrounds where NRCS can continue operations.

The proposed lease includes all costs associated with establishing an office in this location (rent, utilities, trash collection, etc.) for a monthly fee of \$1,375. It does not include general maintenance or janitorial services.

The proposed lease is for a full year. The agreement can be canceled within thirty (30) days if, at any time, NRCS receives authorization to pay for rent or finds another solution to maintain an office in Mariposa County. Staff will continue working with NRCS to identify alternatives if their authorization request is denied. No ongoing contribution to NRCS is anticipated at this time.

With gratitude to NRCS for the work they have and continue to do in our community, staff recommends approval of the attached agreement. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formalizing the relationship with NRCS is forthcoming.

### **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:**

The Board regularly provides funding for nonprofits delivering services in our community.

### **ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:**

Do not approve this agreement. NRCS will continue working to find solutions allowing them to stay in Mariposa County, but may or may not ultimately have to close their Mariposa office.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

**\$15,000 will be included in balancing adjustments to accommodate this lease.**

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

**Fairgrounds Lease Agreement for NRCS (PDF)**

**RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER:** Kevin Cann, District IV Supervisor

**SECONDER:** Marshall Long, District III Supervisor

**AYES:** Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Menetrey