



MARIPOSA COUNTY

Administration • 966-3222



RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2019-688

MEETING: December 10, 2019
TO: The Board of Supervisors
FROM: Dallin Kimble, County Administrative Officer
RE: NRCS Agreement

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Approve a Memorandum of Collaboration with the National Resource Conservation Service to Sublet Office Space at the Mariposa County Fairgrounds; and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Memorandum.

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 the coming months. Staff is simultaneously working with NRCS to identify and evaluate alternatives.

The County is supportive of NRCS 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, the Board approved a lease agreement with 35-A District Agricultural Association to allow NRCS to continue operations in their current office.

With gratitude to NRCS for the work they have and continue to do in our community, staff recommends approval of the attached Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC), which formalizes the County's relationship with NRCS and their ability to continue leading the state from their office in Mariposa.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

On November 5, 2019, the Board approved Resolution 2019-633, a lease agreement with 35A District Agricultural Association for office space at the Mariposa County Fairgrounds for NRCS.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Do not approve this agreement. Staff will notify NRCS and begin the process to terminate the lease with 35-A District Agricultural Association. NRCS will continue working to find solutions, but may or may not ultimately have to close their local partnership office in Mariposa County.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no direct financial impact for this agreement. The Board previously approved a one-year lease (\$15,000) to accommodate this request.

ATTACHMENTS:

NRCS MOC (DOCX)

RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Merlin Jones, District II Supervisor

SECONDER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor

AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Menetrey