



# SLOUGHOUSE

Resource Conservation District

HERALD | SLOUGHOUSE | WILTON

Groundwater Sustainability Fee

## Methodology for Verification of Irrigated Acres

Irrigated acres subject to the user fee was determined using a data product developed by the Dept. of Water Resources using aerial imagery collected in 2018. Currently, this is the best data available to identify irrigated acres/groundwater usage. However, this imagery may not accurately reflect current conditions. To address any errors in this data, a process has been established by SRCD to allow landowners to correct the record. Forms were sent to all landowners affected by the fee to provide them with an opportunity to make such corrections. However, requests for corrections must be supported by verifiable information, including, if necessary, a sworn statement by the landowner that the information supporting the requested correction is accurate. The following protocol will be used for such verification.

### **1. If the correction is related to an incorrect number of irrigated acres:**

- a. SRCD will use aerial imagery collected during the summer months to verify that land identified by DWR as irrigated is not green, suggesting that no irrigation is occurring. The most recent publicly available aerial imagery can be obtained through Google Earth and the National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP). Both sources provide imagery collected during the summer of 2020.
- b. If aerial imagery is inconclusive for any reason, a sworn affidavit from the property owners will be requested. This affidavit should state the parcel number and contain a statement declaring that groundwater is not used for irrigation, outside of incidental irrigation of plants, trees, and/or a lawn of less than 1 acre. The affidavit must be properly signed and notarized.
- c. In addition to the above information, SRCD may investigate, obtain, and rely on other relevant information and at its discretion request a site visit.

### **2. If the correction is related to land that is irrigated with surface water, not groundwater:**

- a. SRCD must verify that the landowner has water rights to surface water. Accordingly, the landowner must provide SRCD with documentation of reports submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board associated with riparian rights; pre-1914 water rights; permits or licenses if the landowner has appropriative rights; or a copy of the contract if the landowner obtains surface water from an irrigation district. In a drought/curtailment year, the landowner may need to certify that under drought conditions they can still utilize their surface water permit.
- b. If none of the above can be provided, then the landowner must provide a properly signed and notarized affidavit stating that they use surface water for irrigation and do not pump groundwater outside of that used for domestic purposes.
- c. In addition to the above information, SRCD may investigate, obtain, and rely on other relevant information and at its discretion request a site visit.