

Upper Feather River IRWM Regional Water Management Group

FINAL SUMMARY MINUTES

January 22, 2016

Meeting materials and video recording link are available on the website at:

http://featherriver.org/rwmg_meetings/

Call to Order and Roll Call

Sherrie Thrall called the meeting to order on January 22, 2016 at 1 pm at the Plumas County Planning Conference Room, 555 Main Street, Quincy, California.

Members Present:

Sherrie Thrall, Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
Paul Roen, Sierra County
Jim Roberti, Sierra Groundwater Management District
Bill Nunes, Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District
Russell Reid, Feather River Resource Conservation District
Terry Swofford, Plumas County
Trina Cunningham, Maidu Summit Consortium
Jeffrey Greening, Public Member
Joe Hoffman, Plumas National Forest (Advisory)

Members Absent:

Roger Diefendorf, Plumas County Community Development Commission
Quentin Youngblood, Tahoe National Forest (Advisory)
Carol Thornton, Lassen National Forest (Advisory)

Staff Present:

Randy Wilson, Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
Uma Hinman, Uma Hinman Consulting
Zeke Lunder, Deer Creek Resources, Inc.
Leah Wills, Uplands and Forest Management Workgroup Coordinator
Terri Rust, Floodplains, Meadows, and Waterbodies Management Workgroup Coordinator

Additions or Deletions from the Agenda

None noted

Announcements / Reports

Randy Wilson noted that we are working to get better sound for the video recordings and reminded everyone to speak up for better recordings.

CONSENT AGENDA

(Video 1, 00:3:12)

a. RWMG Approval of Meeting Minutes for October 23, 2015

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Terry Swofford, the RWMG Meeting Minutes for October 23, 2015 were unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Project Status Updates

(Video 1, 00:3:35)

Uma Hinman presented an overview of task progress and an update on schedule and budget. We are in month 18 of the 2-year project, have completed approximately 60 percent of project tasks, and expended approximately 60 percent of the overall budget. The project remains on target to finish by June 2016. Uma noted that the budget summary spreadsheet didn't print properly in the agenda packet and offered to email it to the RWMG.

2. Stakeholder Outreach Updates

(Video 1, 00:6:10)

Trina Cunningham provided an update of Tribal outreach efforts and meeting attendance. Trina noted that they are continuing to outreach to as many tribal members in the region as they can. She noted that everyone has jobs and this process has been a lot of work above and beyond their normal workload. Trina noted that they continue to send emails and meeting notes to Tribal members in the Butte County portion of the region, but have yet to receive any responses. Trina and Sherri Norris will revisit the Butte County projects and see if there is interest in coordinating on those projects.

Uma Hinman provided an update on workgroup efforts, which include development of resource management strategy (RMS) recommendations and further development of project submittals. The final presentation will be during the meeting today. The Workgroup Coordinators continue to support project proponents to ensure the applications address the required review factors and include completed climate change assessments. Uma noted that we anticipate having a summary of the projects at the March RWMG meeting. She also reported that the first three chapters have been through an initial public review and will be brought to the RWMG next meeting.

Several special studies are included in the Plan Update, including the Forest-Water Balance Study and the Community Vulnerability Assessment, both of which are being prepared by Burkhard Bohm. The Forest-Water Balance Study is about 75 percent completed. The Community Vulnerability Assessment is getting underway and will be ongoing over the next few months. Additionally, a disadvantaged community (DAC) assessment is being prepared by Sierra Institute and we anticipate having a draft for the RWMG to review at the next RWMG meeting.

3. Disadvantaged Community Capacity Building Presentation and Discussion (Video 1, 00:9:50)

At the beginning of the item, Sherrie Thrall and Jeffrey Greening suggested that one of the things the RWMG members are hearing from project proponents is that they have good projects but no capacity to seek funding and do the grant writing. It was suggested that we should look into outreaching to CSU Chico to find some student interns to help with grant writing. Sherrie suggested to Trina Cunningham that she might have some contacts at CSU Chico. Trina agreed that she might know some students and professors she could approach with the idea.

Randy Wilson noted that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy recently brought in a grant writer to host a local training on grant writing. He also noted that the SNC is looking at the possibility of having an office in the County building.

Uma introduced Katie Burdick, Burdick and Associates, to present on the upcoming Proposition 1 DAC Involvement funding opportunity (Round 1). Her specialty is DAC involvement and project development in IRWM programs. She offered to help the UFR jumpstart their relationship with DWR for this Round 1 opportunity. Katie advised that her DWR contact indicated the draft DAC Involvement RFP would be out later this month. Katie noted that the average grant application costs can be \$35,000-\$55,000, which marginalizes DACs and largely excludes them from grant opportunities.

Katie's DWR contacts have indicated to her that this Round will not be a competitive process, however, the guidelines have not yet been released and may change. Rather, DWR will interview and assign funding within each IRWM region. Katie is meeting with IRWM regions up and down the Sierra, which are commonly rural regions with low population densities and significant infrastructure deficiencies. She offered pro-bono assistance to position the region to be competitive with DWR. She urged the RWMG to get ahead of the process and be ready with DAC needs.

Round 1 will be targeted to DAC Involvement and can be used to address 1) capacity needs and 2) project development. Capacity needs could include hiring a representative for several regions, per diem to attend meetings, etc. Katie noted that she had lots of experience with water and wastewater infrastructure projects. She envisions a three step process for DACs: 1) needs assessment, 2) prioritize needs, and 3) design support for highest priority projects. The goal would be to develop competitive projects to a level they are ready to submit for grants.

Katie discussed identifying and profiling the DACs within the region. She advocates jumpstarting the preparation for the upcoming Round 1, think through who the DACs in the regions are, and be prepared for DWR's interview and process. Katie offered to come and help DACs through this process. She is continuing to talk with various other IRWMs (Upper Pit, Yuba County, etc.) about similar processes.

Leah asked whether DWR will be changing the processing of invoices to be more timely because DACs can't float the upfront money for the projects while they wait 90+ days for reimbursement from the state. With Proposition 1, DACs can get an advance of up to 50 percent to help with that problem. Katie noted that DWR is looking for multiple benefit projects.

Randy encouraged Katie to review the project list that we are working on for the UFR region. Katie would suggested she would be willing to meet with a group of UFR folks to review the projects together so as to help build capacity in the region. Katie also suggested coordinating with the other Mountain Counties IRWM regions to discuss the possibility of establishing a "DAC Swat Team" to help with the three tasks noted above.

Katie Burdick's contact information is katie@burdico.net or (530) 906-1335.

4. Resource Management Strategies – Agricultural Land Stewardship Workgroup (Video 1, 00:39:00)

Willo Vieira presented the Agricultural Land Stewardship Workgroup resource management strategy recommendations for each assigned RMS:

- RMS-1: Agricultural Water Use Efficiency
- RMS-5: Conveyance – Local/Regional
- RMS-8: Conjunctive Management
- RMS-17: Pollution Prevention
- RMS-20: Agricultural Land Stewardship

- RMS-23: Land Use Planning and Management
- RMS-25: Sediment Management
- RMS-28: Outreach and Education
- RMS-31: Other Strategies

Willo, Chair of the workgroup, explained the process the workgroup went through in developing the recommendations. The workgroup connected their workgroup's projects with the RMS recommendations. Additionally, they pulled in other workgroups' recommendations that were relevant to their assigned RMS.

Sherrie Thrall commended the workgroup on tying their projects to the RMS recommendations.

5. Resource Management Strategies – Uplands and Forest Workgroup and Tribal Advisory Committee (Video 1, 00:42:15)

John Sheehan, Alternate Chair for the Uplands and Forest Workgroup, presented the RMS recommendations for the following RMS:

- RMS-21: Ecosystem Restoration
- RMS-22: Forest Management
- RMS-23: Land Use Planning and Management
- RMS-25: Sediment Management
- RMS-26: Watershed Management
- RMS-27: Economic Incentives
- RMS-28: Outreach and Engagement
- RMS-31: Other Strategies

John focused his presentation on the more unusual recommendations.

RMS 21: recommendations addressing the interaction between the water system and road system – recommends reducing culvert barriers and improve culverts under all ownerships (federal and private).

RMS-22: pointed out recommendations regarding burn frequencies and severity. Encouraged reviewing continuum of fire effects, both the good and bad, to come up with an overall approach. Recommended pressing the issue of carbon and carbon sequestration and various types of fire.

RMS-22: recommends directing development away from undeveloped meadows. Recognize importance of these open areas.

RMS-25: recommends post burn assessments to look at immediate, mid-range, and long-term effects.

Randy asked about coordinating with the National Forests in their land management planning. John noted that working within the framework of the IRWM will be really important to address region-wide needs.

RMS-26: advance the use of fire. John noted that liabilities pose an issue with this recommendation.

RMS-27: Biomass for local, regional, Tribal projects.

RMS-28: recognizes the excellent local watershed education program and recommends promoting it outside the region in the areas receiving water from the Upper Feather River watershed.

RMS-31: recommends proven techniques for fire mitigation, snow enhancement, and wildland urban interface (WUI) management.

Trina Cunningham reported that the TAC integrated with the Uplands and Forest workgroup, working together on the RMS recommendations.

Trina discussed the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and noted the inclusion of TEK into RMS 27 and 31, as well as utilizing TEK as a monitoring tool for water quantity and quality. She noted that we are integrating Tribal engagement into the process more so than anywhere in the state; it is unique to the UFR IRWM Plan. Trina also highlighted the additional recommendations regarding reintroducing low and moderate intensity fire management into the system and daylighting meadow systems. Also unique to our IRWM Plan, the TAC has included two goals: Beneficial Use and TEK.

Sherrie expressed her appreciation for the recommendations on fire management, beneficial use and TEK. Trina discussed how to start introducing fire management such as using small scale burns, etc. Zeke Lunder shared Deer Creek Resources' collaboration with The Nature Conservancy and various other groups up in the Trinity and Siskiyou areas training and managing burns in the WUI areas. They are working with CSU and The Nature Conservancy to bring some of that training to the northern Sierra. Sherrie noted the complaints the county supervisors receive regarding air quality concerns during control burn operations. Terri Rust noted that there is a current collaboration between private land owners, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Greenville Rancheria, and Forest Service in the Genesee Valley area.

6. Resource Management Strategies – Tribal Advisory Committee (Video 1, 00:01:13)

This presentation and discussion was covered under the previous item.

7. Plan Performance, Implementation and Monitoring (Video 2, 0:00:15)

Uma presented an overview of the requirements of the Proposition 84 Guidelines for addressing Plan performance, implementation and project monitoring within the IRWM Plan.

The discussion started with how often the RWMG plans to meet post-Plan adoption. Uma clarified that the Plan is scheduled for completion in May 2016. Russell asked when the money would become available. Sherrie suggested that the RWMG should meet every other month for the first year post-Plan adoption, and quarterly thereafter so as to keep people engaged. Jeffrey asked when grant solicitations might be coming, IRWM and other funding opportunities. Uma noted that all funding opportunities and project implementations should be tracked by the RWMG, regardless of funding source.

Sherrie noted that now we have staff support under contract. After the contract is up, how will that support continue? Randy noted that the standard needs to be realistic. The Plan should include the

Leah noted that we are building from existing organizations, and integrate with those organizations and planning efforts.

Randy noted that the Governor's Office of Planning and Research encourages land use and water planning, and encourages coordination and integration with IRWMs. The IRWM should include the

minimum intent and more meetings could occur as needed. Sherrie clarified the RWMG would commit to quarterly meetings, post-Plan.

John Sheehan suggested a two-page spreadsheet of projects that is kept up to date and provided at each meeting. Sherrie noted that those projects will likely obtain other funding and may drop off the IRWM implementation list.

The RWMG intends to appoint representatives to evaluate and report to the RWMG on Plan performance. Sherrie asked who will be the representatives and who will pay for them. Randy relayed the process for developing the regional acceptance process (RAP) and that it was funded through the Plumas County general fund. Sherrie noted that the RWMG is setting goals that they ultimately don't have funding to carry out. The public needs to understand that there is limited resources to pay for this ongoing process.

Leah asked what DWR's strategy is for supporting DACs. Katie encouraged involvement in the Roundtable of Regions. They are developing strategies for policy changes to support DACs, such as the \$250,000 per IRWM region for administration strategy within the Water Plan Strategy.

Sherrie noted her concern that the county supervisors would need to be on board and work it into annual county budgets, which would be precarious.

Katie noted that a strategy used by other IRWM regions is a set agenda that incorporates the reporting requirements. That way the meeting minutes meet the requirements of an implementation report.

Katie suggested pursuing funding in Round 1 to extend RWMG administration and encourage wider participation in the IRWM Program. Meanwhile, the Roundtable of Regions will be continuing to work to change policy that will result in more stable and long-term funding for the Program.

Sherrie discussed identification of DACs and asked how we are going to be sure we meet the criteria for DWR. Katie suggested the DWR DAC mapping tool and noted that Melissa Sparks at DWR will consider other methodologies for identifying DACs. Katie offered to assist with that process. Sherrie discussed the discrepancies in the Almanor Basin and expressed her concern that the region as a whole would meet the DAC definition because of the pockets of wealth in the region.

Randy noted that Jonathan Kusel is on the consulting team and is looking into the identification of DACs in the region. Debbie Spangler (DWR) is aware of the concerns in the region.

The current website could hold the project monitoring reports, Plan implementation and performance reports, etc. Sherrie again expressed concern about capacity but suggested that Plumas County is the likely host for continuing the website. We are currently paying Deer Creek Resources \$75/month to maintain the website. Sherrie asked who would keep the website updated in the future. Russell Reid suggested there might be a way to incorporate those costs into individual grants. Katie noted that may be possible but it all depended on how it was stated/presented in the grant application.

Uma presented the Guideline requirements for project-specific monitoring plans. Third party monitoring was discussed and Sherrie suggested that "subject to approval of the RWMG" be added to the third bullet. Leah asked for clarification of where the third party monitor would come in. Sherrie clarified that the third party would be doing the actual monitoring. Trina asked how some of the projects would be monitored (i.e., TEK or the region-wide thinning projects). Sherrie responded that those unique

circumstances should be built into the monitoring plan itself. Sherrie stressed that there needs to be separation between those doing the work and those reviewing the work. Measurements and monitoring targets will be developed by the project proponents for individual projects.

Sherrie clarified that it should read “Statement in the PSMP that monitoring will be conducted by a third party, subject to approval of the RWMG.”

The RWMG had no changes to the minimum content of the PSMPs.

Next steps will be for staff to draft up the chapter on Plan performance and monitoring with today’s discussion incorporated.

8. Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program

(Video 2, 0:51:52)

Uma presented the item, noting it was the consideration of endorsing the WIP as requested by the RWMG at the last meeting. Sherrie expressed her support of the program, saying that a number of the RWMG members had been involved in the SNC and pushed for support in the program.

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Jeffrey Greening, the RWMG unanimously approved endorsement of the WIP.

Leah expressed gratitude for all the outreach and collaboration that Lynn Campbell is putting into region. Sherrie commended the Workgroup Coordinators for all their work in the Plan Update process.

9. Next Meeting

(Video 2, 0:55:30)

Uma suggested monthly meetings until the end of the Plan in order to get through all the chapter presentations. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 26th at 1pm. The following meeting will be Friday, March 18th at 1pm.

Adjournment

(Video 2, 1:08:00)

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm.