

Upper Feather River IRWM Regional Water Management Group

FINAL SUMMARY MINUTES

June 23, 2017

Approved October 13, 2017

Recordings of the meeting are available here:

Video #1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJEVktbjr2Q>

Video #2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAUotKavlXM>

Video #3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpZ7FQ-0up4>

Video #4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9dfWTy9oIY>

Video #5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMiB-uHrjmc>

Call to Order and Roll Call

(Video#1 0:05)

Sherrie Thrall called the meeting to order on June 23, 2017 at 1:07 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

Jeff Engle, Plumas County Board of Supervisors

Doug Teeter, Butte County Board of Supervisors

Russell Reid, Feather River Resource Conservation District

Roger Diefendorf, Plumas County Community Development Commission

Trina Cunningham, Maidu Summit Consortium

Nancy Francine, Plumas National Forest (Advisory)

Members Absent:

Paul Roen, Sierra County Board of Supervisors

Rick Roberti, Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District

Jim Roberti, Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District

Jeffrey Greening, Public Member

Carol Thornton, Lassen National Forest (Advisory)

Quentin Youngblood, Tahoe National Forest (Advisory)

Staff Present:

Randy Wilson, Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

Uma Hinman, Hinman and Associates, Inc

Additions or Deletions from the Agenda

(Video#1 0:35)

None noted

Public Comment Opportunity

(Video#1-0:42)

Nancy Francine announced the presence of the USFS Plumas County Forest Supervisor, Daniel Lovato. Daniel Lovato introduced himself and noted he is making himself and the Plumas County Forest District more available for support.

Announcements / Reports

(Video#1-2:00)

Trina Cunningham announced she has been developing a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Symposium, which is scheduled for August 2, 2017. She is working with the Government Office of Planning and Research to put on this two-day event. Trina extended an invitation to all of the RWMG. The agenda for the Symposium will focus on goals, planned discussions, and attendees. Uma Hinman asked if there was any information on the TEK Symposium to post on the website. Trina said yes and also added she would like to have ongoing weekly planning meeting update until the event.

Uma Hinman announced the flyer presented at the meeting for the Sierra Water Workgroup Summit, which will be held July 24th & 25th in Kings Beach. The focus of the summit this year will be on "Legal and Legislative Strategies to Protection our Headwaters." A number of sessions planned will focus on disadvantaged communities.

CONSENT AGENDA

a. RWMG Approval of Meeting Minutes for August 19, 2016

(Video#1-5:30)

Upon motion by Trina Cunningham and seconded by Roger Diefendorf, the RWMG Meeting Minutes for April 21, 2017 were unanimously approved as presented.

ACTION AGENDA

1. Butte County RWMG Representation

(Video#1-5:57)

Sherrie welcomed Butte County representative Doug Teeter, and asked if there had been any further discussion of Butte County joining the UFR RWMG. Randy Wilson asked if the Butte County Board of Supervisors approved the MOU, which Doug confirmed they did, indicating their eagerness to join.

Upon motion by Russell Reid and seconded by Jeff Engle, the RWGM unanimously approved adding Butte County representation to the RWMG and formally seating Doug Teeter as Butte County's representative.

2. Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement Coordination

(Video#1-7:26)

Uma Hinman introduced Sierra Institute guest speaker, Lauren Miller, as well as Hinman and Associates new Assistant Planner, Melissa Burger.

As a continuation from the last meeting, Uma Hinman briefly reviewed DWR's Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) grant application of the Mountain Counties Funding Area (MCFA), which is a funding area wide application. The DAC Coordinating Committee (CC) representatives, which consists of representatives of nine IRWM regions included in the MCFA, met June 7, 2017, providing feedback on an administrative draft application to the Sierra Institute Team, the applicant for the grant. The Sierra Institute is working on the final draft, which is included in the agenda packet in its current form.

Lauren Miller explained that this final draft is the first of two rounds of revisions with the CC and is currently accepting comments. The Sierra Institute is planning on doing one more round and with the CC, and upon approval the final draft will be submitted to the DWR as soon as possible.

Lauren explained to the RWMG, within the proposal there are six components required by DWR. They are

- 1) Applicant – Describes how and why the Sierra Institute was selected as the applicant.
- 2) MCFA Disadvantaged Communities Background – Examines how DAC identification and needs assessments have been handled within all participating IRWMs. This section also discusses shortfalls of the current definition of DACs and indicates gaps where the Sierra Institute will work to fill by providing a more inclusive methodology and refining the definition.

- 3) DAC Involvement Activity Description – Discusses all planned activities proposed for the three years covered by the grant. Within the proposal, there is a section included regarding annual reviews for all activities, budget, and schedules for modification if necessary.
- 4) Statement of Qualification – Elaborates on the qualifications of the Sierra Institute.
- 5) Schedule – will be reviewed with the CC and DWR after the first year.
- 6) Budget - \$1.3 million, will be reviewed with the CC and DWR after the first year.

Lauren also pointed out some recent changes that were applied to the draft application in the schedule and budget sections. In the Schedule, one modification is that 3.3 is included in the most recent version of the schedule. In the Budget, there is also a 3.3 included. There were also a few changes in the Schedule to create more flexibility. The Budget now includes an invoice from the Sierra Water Work Group (SWWG) for their assistance with the Request for Qualification (RFQ) and coordination of group meetings.

Randy Wilson pointed out that this is a tangible step towards building capacity, moving forward with water issues for all nine IRWMs and focusing heavily on identifying each of their needs. The DWR currently uses a standard basis of 80 percent of median state household income, which doesn't necessarily capture the true disadvantaged nature of these communities. Refining the definition of a disadvantaged community will require applying social science, capacity analysis and tools for building capacity in the future. The hope is being able to fund needed project to reduce water issues.

Russell Reid asked why the DWR is concerned about disadvantaged areas. Uma Hinman explained that this proposal focuses on water and wastewater needs for disadvantaged communities within the Sierra. Uma further emphasized that water bonds and solicitations for grants in the past would be sent out, in which metropolitan areas and/or the larger water districts would be better equipped to obtain the grant funding. Historically, the smaller, disadvantaged communities who have more need were unable to participate because they lack the capacity to pursue and obtain grants. This is an effort on DWRs part to bring those DACs up to a level in which they are able to compete for funding. Lauren Miller added that this is the first step, the involvement step, in the process and will be followed by more funding for implementation. Uma clarified that \$1.3 million is awarded out of \$13 million for DACI within the MCFA and there is an additional \$1.3 million set aside for DAC Implementation projects. Those are minimum figures but whatever additional DAC funding that is needed will be taken from the total allocation of \$13 million for the MCFA.

Randy Wilson further added that redefining the definition of DAC more accurately will aid efforts for other funding sources besides DWR. Leah Wills provided more insight on the Water Board Legislature decision to get involved with DACs. Driven by the nitrate problems in the San Joaquin Valley and the fact that some of these locations still did not have drinking water, the Legislature directed agencies to get seriously involved in servicing these struggling communities. The Water Board has a \$500 million budget that is available for drinking water and wastewater projects for poorer communities. A major push for all the IRWMs in the region to work together is to solidify competitiveness while simultaneously generating a proposal emphasizing the needs to the rest of the larger IRWMs within the state. The group effort allows smaller communities to compete with the larger districts for more funding opportunities.

Sherrie Thrall expressed one of her major concerns is now that the Proposition 84 funding has ended, funding that provided for IRWM Program support staff and consultants is no longer available. Support services are invaluable to the Program and one of the main issues that has been noted is that the very people that need the money do not have the capacity to pursue grants (i.e., writing grant proposals, implementation, and grant management). Although the RWMG has discussed and agreed to move forward with the UFR IRWM Program, there has been no discussion about who is going to pay for it. There are three counties benefiting from the time and effort from support staff and consultants, which creates

the need to propose who and how much each county will pay for these services. **(Video#2-0:13)** Sherrie explained the difference in the counties by geographical size, population density, and portions of the county involved. The question of what would be a fair division followed. Sherrie argued if the plan is to progress with this, we need to ensure that money is set aside for staff and ideally, an additional pool of funds set aside to assist other organizations with building their capacity.

Russell Reid validated the concern and also added his concern is the potential of overlapping times of planning for grants while also applying for grants. Uma Hinman shared that this same topic has been brought up at CC meetings and there is an attempt from DWR to adjust the grant solicitation schedule. Leah Wills added that one of the changes Lauren spoke about earlier was the CC pushed the capacity and technical assistance forward in an effort to continue planning for areas that are in more need. Some areas have a good start which require less assistance and allows them to move forward quicker. Sherrie Thrall brought the conversation back to the questions of how do we finance the people doing the ground work to accomplish all of this. There needs to be an assessment of costs for staff and consulting fees as well as a proposal of how to fairly divide that cost between the three counties. Doug Teeter stated that he believed initially separating the charges by population was fair and in the future, as projects become funded, it should shift to those counties paying a larger share. Randy reported that a budget for Hinman & Associates Consulting to continue providing support services for the coming year is \$25,000 and up to this point, Plumas County has been the only contributor. Further discussion on this will be discussed at the next meeting.

Doug Teeter asked for a time frame of when the Final Draft Application would be submitted to the DWR. Lauren Miller and Uma Hinman stated the second round begins June 30, 2017 and the following week it will be submitted. There is only one week left for comments. Sherrie Thrall suggested that if any member of the RWMG wants something added to the Final Draft to review the draft they currently have and submit comments within the next week.

3. Regional Coordination Updates

(Video#3 - 3:54)

Uma Hinman participated in the May 30, 2017 Roundtable of Regions meeting and notes from the meeting along with a PowerPoint are included in the agenda packet. One point that has not been discussed by the RWMG is that DWR is looking to slightly change their grant process to enhance coordination between the applicant and DWR. The main focus is to possibly include feedback and better communication.

There was a discussion about the appropriateness of bringing SIGMA in to work together with the IRWM's instead of being two separate entities. Response varied. They also put together a letter to the state titled *Response to Department of Water Resources Report – Stakeholder Perspectives: Recommendations for Sustaining and Strengthening Integrated Regional Water Management* stating support and offering assistance to move forward. The last item is the DWR updates that are provided in the agenda packet.

4. Draft Support Letter to the State for the IRWM Program Funding

(Video#3 – 7:40)

During the last meeting held April 21, 2017, staff was directed to draft a Letter of Support to the state to encourage baseline funding for IRWM regions. Uma Hinman presented a draft Letter of Support and asked for feedback and consideration for approval. She also asked if there was anyone else that should be cc'd as a recipient. Sherrie Thrall agreed the list of recipients was sufficient.

Doug Teeter suggested that since Plumas County is paying for Hinman & Associates Consulting services, that perhaps they should state it on the letter that the UFR Program is being paid from a County general fund which potentially will not be available in the coming years. Doug suggested it would be beneficial to ask DWR what efforts they are considering to fund administrative services IRWMs. Uma agreed to add it in the Letter of Support.

Nancy Francine described grant processes of the US Forest Service and shared some of the struggles and challenges they are subjected too as Federal entities. Doug Teeter added to the conversation that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is allowed money for administration but the IRWMs do not. Doug suggested that perhaps the RWMG should invite the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to see how we could partner in their lobbying efforts. Randy Wilson added that it all comes back to capacity for partnering up. Nancy brought up the point that having partners with the correct skill sets and interests would be helpful. Sherrie mentioned that the problem is that these types of groups and/or organization struggle with having the capacity.

Roger Diefendorf stated that Plumas County Community Development Commission has the capacity to administer grant money but money for administration would still be needed. Sherrie Thrall mentioned the majority of these smaller areas have organizations that are all volunteer and longevity can be a struggle. Without providing these organizations with financial assistance, building their capacity for grant opportunities will continue to be a struggle. An organization such as the Plumas County Community Development Commission could provide support for organizations that have grant opportunities available to them but do not have the capacity to apply for them.

Trina Cunningham mentioned to the RWMG that this is one of the major topics that will be discussed at the TEK Symposium. An entire day will be dedicated to coordination, cooperation and leveraging resources to better achieve a necessary and obvious need for the region.

Russell Reid suggested an issue that also needs to be addressed is how our demographics in the rural northern areas are changing. Leadership is no longer there. Farmers are aging, cattlemen are aging and the younger populations are either not there or at least not involved. Sherrie noted that she has been watching the demographics over the years and Plumas County is losing 1.5- 2 percent of the population yearly, primarily made up of younger families. Both Russell and Sherrie believe we have to change tactics to incorporate this factor.

Sherrie Thrall brought the conservation back to the Letter of Support to the state, asking staff to include the suggestions made by Doug Teeter and to also reformat the front page.

5. Grant Opportunities and Implementation Projects (Video#4 – 12:35)

Uma Hinman discussed the Implementation Projects and noted the recent correspondence with project sponsors to update project status and contacts. Five of the projects have received at least partial funding, some being Forest Service projects. Also, specific outreach was targeted to municipal projects sponsors to encourage sponsors to look into the State Water Resource Control Board Technical Assistance (TA) Grant. Five project sponsors responded stating they would like assistance applying for the TA Grant and that might be something to consider in next year's budget. The focus of this was to simply gauge who and how many would be interested in receiving help.

Uma mentioned that in the back of the agenda packet is a list of funding opportunities from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

6. Next Steps (Video#4 – 16:16)

Next meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2017 at 1pm at the Plumas County Planning Conference Room, 555 Main Street, Quincy, California.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:43 pm.