

# Upper Feather River IRWM Regional Water Management Group

## FINAL SUMMARY MINUTES

September 23, 2015

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

[http://featherriver.org/rwmg\\_meetings/](http://featherriver.org/rwmg_meetings/)

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

Sherrie Thrall, called the meeting to order on September 23, 2015 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  
Russell Reid, Feather River Resource Conservation District  
Bill Nunes, Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District  
Jim Roberti, Sierra Groundwater Management District  
Roger Diefendorf, Plumas County Community Development Commission  
Trina Cunningham, Maidu Summit Consortium  
Joe Hoffman, Plumas National Forest (Advisory)

### Members Absent:

Paul Roen, Sierra County  
Terry Swofford, Plumas County  
Jeffrey Greening, Public Member  
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  
Paul Lackovic, Deer Creek Resources, Inc.  
Leah Wills, Uplands and Forest Management Workgroup Coordinator  
Terri Rust, Floodplains, Meadows, Waterbodies Management Workgroup Coordinator  
Kristi Jamason, Agricultural Land Stewardship Workgroup Coordinator

### **Additions or Deletions from the Agenda**

None noted

### **Announcements / Reports**

None noted

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

**(00:1:07)**

#### **a. RWMG Approval of Meeting Minutes for June 15, 2015**

Upon motion by Jim Roberti and second by Russell Reid, the RWMG Meeting Minutes for June 15, 2015 were unanimously approved.

## REGULAR AGENDA

### 1. Project Status Updates

(00:1:19)

Uma Hinman presented an overview of task progress and an update on schedule and budget.

To date, 34 signed Memorandums of Understanding have been received, primarily through the project development process. Interested parties may sign the MOU at any time during the Plan update process.

Randy Wilson, Trina Cunningham and Uma Hinman met with Vicki Newlin of Butte County Water Agency to discuss an MOU for coordination of planning and management activities in the Butte County overlap area. Discussion items included how to coordinate on projects, outreach efforts, and work on the draft of the MOU. Trina Cunningham will look into coordinating with Oroville area Tribes for participation in the UFR IRWM process. Trina noted that the UFR IRWM should look at the significant traditional properties in the overlap area in Butte County. Sherrie noted that she was glad that contact has been made saying that the RWMG has been concerned about the overlap area being missed in the coordination efforts.

Uma Hinman presented an updated schedule with the current status and efforts needed to complete the Plan update before the June 4, 2016 grant deadline. Uma also noted that the Proposition 1 IRWM planning funding is scheduled to be released in May/June of 2016; implementation funding will follow later in the year.

Uma provided a status of the various studies for the Plan update including the Forest-Water Balance Study, Climate Change Technical Study, DAC Assessment and Community Vulnerability Assessment. Sherrie recognized that identification of Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) is defined differently by agency and poses a difficulty in assessment. Uma noted that there are some proposed additional definitions for the Proposition 1 including economically disadvantaged communities (EDA) and severely disadvantaged communities. Randy noted that the Forest Plan Update must also look at disadvantaged communities, although in different terms. (00:05:27)

### 2. Stakeholder Outreach Updates

(00:7:20)

The UFR IRWM Region was invited to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Board meeting in Paradise on September 2, 2015. Uma Hinman attended and shared a map of projects submitted for the Plan update. A benefit was discussing projects and the process with members of the Butte County Fire Safe Council.

Other updates were the interregional outreach with Butte County/Northern Sacramento Valley IRWM, a Municipal Services Workgroup meeting in which the RMS recommendations were finalized, and the completion of the Workgroup Integration and Climate Change Workshop on August 21, 2015.

Trina Cunningham provided an update on Tribal Outreach efforts, which has been focused on forming what Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is and how it can integrate into the projects and process.

### 3. Traditional Ecological Knowledge

(00:09:39)

Trina shared about Tribal Ecological Knowledge (TEK) at the *Workgroup Integration Workshop* on August 21. Trina noted that TEK is defined differently by region. Some of the concepts of TEK is that land has always been manipulated. TEK asks: What is the desired land use? What are the baselines of TEK? Trina

expressed interest in reaching out to other communities and sharing TEK about the region through storytelling, perhaps over the winter.

Trina and Leah Wills also met with Julie Griffith-Flatter, Sierra Valley Conservancy, to discuss a larger template for Tribal engagement and TEK, which will benefit the UFR IRWM Plan update process through added support by the SNC. Tribes see things spatially on a larger level rather than individual project development.

Russell Reid asked how many tribes are in the area. Trina responded that there are four federally recognized tribes; Rancherias; and allotments in the UFR that are held in trust for families through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

TEK is about going back to the baseline of pre-European contact. The objective of integrating TEK is to foster the optimal health of water and land and having a continuing relationship with Place. Part of the TEK process is about recognizing the leadership of families within the region, identifying those families and how and if they want to be engaged. TEK would be integrated into projects through the TAC, who would access TEK for the region through individuals and families.

Russell Reid asked if TEK evolved/changed through subsequent generations in a tribe. Trina said there was a natural evolution of TEK in part based on the shifting of the Earth, which happens every 11,000 years.

Next steps: 1) Finding leadership in local families and in those who have relocated; 2) reaching out to the other UFR IRWM Workgroups for knowledge about their history here in Plumas County; and 3) plans for a storytelling function during the winter.

#### **4. Chapter Review Process and Schedule**

**(00:22:28)**

Uma Hinman introduced an updated process for Chapter reviews. She suggested a streamlined process to meet the overall project timeline.

1. Develop chapters
2. Internal staff (Uma and Randy) review
3. Chapters would be released as they are developed, approximately every 2 weeks
4. Released for a 30-day comment period
5. Comments addressed and revisions made as appropriate
6. Complex questions brought to RWVG during chapter presentation

Sherrie agreed that skipping an initial review by the RWVG makes sense. She would prefer looking at comments from the five Workgroups before the RWVG undertakes their reviews.

Uma presented updated Plan targets; noting that it would be prudent to aim for finishing ahead of time.

March/April - Admin Draft Plan completed

April/May - Public Draft Plan completed

Workgroup Coordinators are developing a strategy to encourage workgroup members to review and comment on the chapters.

**5. Municipal Services RMS Recommendations****(02:13:00)**

Frank Motzkus presented the Municipal Services Workgroup resource management strategies (RMS) recommendations for the assigned RMS.

- RMS-2: Urban Water Use Efficiency
- RMS-6: System Reoperation
- RMS-7: Water Transfers
- RMS-11: Municipal Recycled Water
- RMS-14: Drinking Water Treatment and Distribution
- RMS-15: Groundwater Remediation/Aquifer Remediation
- RMS-18: Salt and Salinity Management
- RMS-19: Urban Stormwater Runoff Management
- RMS-23: Land Use Planning and Management
- RMS-27: Economic Incentives
- RMS-31: Other Strategies
- RMS-32: Wastewater/NPDES

Frank noted that in Plumas County alone there are 36 water treatment operators, 51 distribution operators, and 23 waste water treatment operators (6 levels of certification). Higher grade operators are retiring and a fresh labor pool is needed. Frank suggested contacting high schools to inform them of this career path since certifications require a high school diploma. Sherrie recognized the need in the county for training.

Sherrie commended the Municipal Services Workgroup's efforts.

Uma noted the schedule for the next workgroup presentations:

- Floodplain/Meadows/Waterbodies – October
- Uplands/Forest & Tribal Advisory Committee – November
- Agricultural Lands Stewardship - November

**6. Workgroup Integration and Climate Change Workshop****(00:27:25)**

Uma presented an overview of the workshop held on August 21, 2015. The Workgroup Integration portion of workshop was held the morning and was the first opportunity for all the workgroups to meet each other and hear what others have been working on. The session served several purposes:

- Encourage collaboration and cooperation among workgroups
- Hear an overview of each workgroup's efforts
- Hear summary of all projects submitted
- Consider strategic integration of projects for greater impact
- Identification of regional and multi-benefit projects

Sherrie reported that the morning session was valuable and that she noticed a lot of sharing between workgroup members. Frank Motzkus offered that Workgroup members began realizing what other WGs were doing, how the information might/would affect each other's group. Terri Rust agreed with Frank, that there was "lots of energy around how groups tied into each other;" commonality is clearer.

Sherrie expressed appreciation for the map of projects and suggested it be shared through the newspapers.

The Workgroup Coordinators met to discuss next steps on September 9. They will continue to develop project integration and regional project lists based on workshop feedback and their joint discussions. They will incorporate feedback from the workgroups and will present their recommendations to the RWVG.

The Climate Change Workshop was held during the afternoon of August 21, 2015. Uma reported that 30 people attended and participation was good. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss possible climate change scenarios, vulnerability rankings, and regional adaptation strategies. The interactive working session solicited vulnerabilities, regional significance, and regional priorities.

The next steps for development of the climate change efforts consist of the following:

- Finalize climate change vulnerability study
- Finalize climate change technical study
- Draft Climate Change Chapter
- Presentation to RWVG (October meeting)

## **7. Summary of Project Submittals**

**(00:33:12)**

Uma reported that there were 81 project submittals for Step 2 that are included in these five categories:

- Agricultural Land Stewardship 13
- Floodplains/ Meadows/Waterbodies 15
- Municipal Services 39
- Tribal Advisory Committee 5
- Uplands/Forest 9

Uma noted that capacity building is still a huge concern across the workgroups. The conceptual project regarding capacity was not submitted for the Step 2, in part because the RWVG encouraged project proponents to build it into their individual applications, which didn't occur.

Capacity Building as it relates specifically to grants includes the technical, managerial, and financial ability to pursue, implement and manage grants and projects. It is also about increasing knowledge, abilities, contacts, referral resources and funding opportunities.

The bigger picture of building capacity includes human resource development, organizational development, and institutional and legal framework development. Uma also noted that Holly George had sent an email expanding the definition of capacity building and encouraging a more expansive and in-depth look at the issue. The email was provided as a handout at the meeting.

## **8. IRWM Program Implementation**

**(00:37:12)**

Elizabeth Betancourt, Watershed Science and Policy Analyst with Forsgren Associates, Inc., presented information about the future the IRWM Program at the State level. She noted that DWR is currently working on strategic planning for IRWMs and has identified draft objectives and strategies.

Strategy 1. Embracing IRWM and sharing successes - publicize the fact that you have successes (i.e., project maps, etc.)

Strategy 2. Aligning government programs to support IRWM.

Strategy 3. Strengthening regional capacity – proposed baseline funding of \$250,000/yr per region for IRWM Program administration

Elizabeth confirmed that the proposed baseline funding could be used to put grants together. She noted that legislation would be necessary and may be brought forth in early winter of 2016. She urged the RWMG to participate in the process and in writing guidelines for Prop 1 grants.

Elizabeth encouraged the RWMG participate in advocacy efforts. She suggested a number of opportunities for involvement:

- Roundtable of Regions
- Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA)
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- Sierra Water Workgroup

Elizabeth noted that any region in California has the capacity to do these things and that the Finance chapter of the IRWM Plan is very important in moving forward.

## **9. Project Selection Process**

**(01:13:20)**

Uma presented the item, reminding the RWMG that no decisions were being requested at this time. The approach presented was collaborative rather than competitive. It was noted that project selection will vary by grant solicitation and “ranking/selection” and to do so for the Plan could be duplicative. This approach has precedence in the Upper Pit Watershed IRWM and the Yuba County IRWM Plans. Rather than putting projects through the selection process at this time, Workgroup Coordinators would like to further develop projects. Additionally, we are required to prepare a climate change analysis and a greenhouse gas emissions worksheet that Coordinators will work with project proponents to complete. Randy noted that the climate change consultants are working on preparing the worksheets to aid in this effort.

Sherrie expressed approval for the approach of grouping projects rather than ranking; this approach will give the RWMG flexibility. She noted that projects can be identified and combined depending on various grant opportunities.

Russell Reid agreed with Sherrie and noted that it is important to have a means for adding projects into the Plan in the future. Sherrie agreed and suggested the RWMG should review the projects annually. Leah Wills suggested the regional projects are an umbrella that might provide opportunity for adding projects to achieve those regional goals.

Sherrie noted that after we wrap up this Plan in June 2016 and another (non-IRWM) grant comes along, we can promote any of the current projects. It will be important to regularly update the list of projects; to remove those that receiving funding and add new projects.

Terri Rust noted that at the Coordinators meeting upcoming chapter review was discussed and it was suggested that people who haven't been coming to the table, who haven't submitted a project, can be included somehow. There should be a means by which to reach out to these folks can add verbiage to the Plan.

Kristi Jamason asked how far to push for development of refined cost estimates. Sherrie replied that rough estimates are as far as we should go, recognizing that by the time that project submits an

application for actual grant funds, those estimates may have changed. Those proponents that anticipate submitting Proposition 1 applications may require more time.

Sherrie stressed that project proponents should not be going to the level of issuing RFPs and asking consultants to prepare detailed information for the applications for project inclusion in the IRWM Plan. That level of detail isn't appropriate at this time unless they are submitting for actual grant funding in response to a current or anticipated solicitation.

Randy brought up the Brownfields Grant opportunities (e.g., Indian Jim School, local Armory, etc.). How do we bring something in we didn't know about but want to include in the project lists? Bring similar projects in under projects on the list?

Sherrie stated that the Coordinators are the people who know the players and project and will see opportunities for project integration.

Joe Hoffman asked whether there will be any initial ranking for the Plan, noting that it looked like Yuba County IRWM had included some evaluation of projects. Uma responded that the Coordinators would be working with the applications to make sure they met the minimum requirements per the DWR Prop 84 Guidelines for project selection. It is required that the Plan describe how we went about the process for inclusion of projects in the Plan.

Uma added that the Coordinators will also identify those projects that benefit DACs, are regional and/or integrated projects, and those that are multi-beneficial; the intent being to front load the process for the RWMG so as to more easily select projects for grant solicitations.

Jim Roberti asked how the RWMG will disperse available grant money. Uma explained that the Mountain Counties Overlay was allocated \$13 million in IRWM funding through Proposition 1. It may be that the RWMGs of the six IRWM regions within the Mountain Counties Overlay area could meet and agree to equally distribute the funding between the regions (i.e., approximately \$2 million each). Another approach would be each IRWM region for themselves and competitively apply for the \$13 million.

Uma discussed the PowerPoint presentation (meeting handout) from the public scoping meeting hosted by DWR for the Proposition 1 funding. Sherrie noted that we won't know the specific requirements and details for project selection for grants (Proposition 1 IRWM funding) until the draft guidelines come out, which won't be until next year. Leah noted that we are working (updating the Plan) between Proposition 84 and Proposition 1, making it difficult to anticipate what exactly DWR will be requiring.

**Motion:** Upon motion by Bill Nunes and second Roger Diefendorf, staff is directed to proceed with categorization of projects and further developing projects, putting them in categories, and waiting for DWR solicitations before selecting projects. (1:51:30)

Uma requested some discussion of developing the process by which the project list will be updated in the future (post-Plan approval). Bill Nunes expressed a need to have that process in place and asked staff to develop a draft process for discussion.

Sherrie noted that it has always been the intent of the UFR RWMG that a management or steering group would remain in place and implement the Plan, including the projects and grant opportunities Russell expressed his agreement. Sherrie noted that unless some funding is in place to continue the efforts of IRWMs, most regional IRWM Programs will discontinue.

**10. Project Monitoring**

**(02:00:07)**

Uma presented the item and requested discussion of an approach for plan implementation, performance measures and establishing monitoring protocols.

Russell suggested this was Best Management Practices and requested staff to research that other groups have used so as not to reinvent the wheel. Sherrie agreed and asked staff to identify these aspects (e.g., Who is doing the monitoring?).

Terri Rust asked about what level of ‘monitoring the Plan’ are we talking about? On the administrative level or scientific level? Uma replied that each type has its own monitoring requirements (i.e., engineering, restoration, etc.). Randy noted that school monitoring, as for the Indian Jim School, might include all sorts of remediation.

Sherrie requested staff develop a proposed approach/method for 1) monitoring specific implementation projects, and 2) monitoring the performance of the IRWM Plan.

**11. Next Meeting**

**(2:34:30)**

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 23, 2015 at 1:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

**(2:47:00)**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55pm.