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## CHAPTER 2.0 GOVERNANCE, STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT, COORDINATION

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the governance and stakeholder outreach process and procedures that will be followed during the update and implementation of the Upper Feather River (UFR) Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan. Ensuring effective governance of the IRWM Plan process facilitates access by all stakeholders as well as the public to the planning process. The goal of governance, stakeholder involvement, and coordination is to provide multiple and continued opportunities for participation and comment throughout the planning process, and to continue to encourage public engagement in regional water management after the Plan is adopted.

### 2.2 Governance

#### 2.2.1 Memoranda of Understanding and Entities Adopting the UFR IRWM Plan

In June 2005, the County of Plumas, the Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District (SVGMD), and the United States Forest Service Plumas National Forest entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to adopt an initial IRWM Plan for the UFR Watershed. These entities, collectively known as the Feather River Regional Watershed Initiative, collaborated in the development of a UFR IRWM Plan under California Department of Water Resources Proposition 50 Guidelines and Standards. The primary goals were to increase coordination and collaboration among stakeholders in the UFR Watershed and to ensure that an appropriate share of IRWM funding available to the Sacramento River funding area would be allocated to the UFR Watershed<sup>1</sup>. The parties also were seeking to ensure that objectives, data and project outcomes for the UFR Watershed were incorporated into state and regional plans:

- ◆ State Water Plan, as revised every five years by the Department of Water Resources (DWR);
- ◆ Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins;
- ◆ Hydroelectric licenses and adaptive management processes of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC); and
- ◆ California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan (AB 32).

In order to remain eligible for DWR's IRWM Grant Funding opportunities it is necessary to update the existing UFR IRWM Plan to Proposition 84 standards. Consequently, to encourage increased collaboration throughout the region and to further define the intent of the UFR IRWM Program, a subsequent MOU was signed in November 2014 (Appendix 2-1), which established the Upper Feather River Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) as the successor to the 2005 Feather River Regional Watershed Initiative. As required by the IRWM Act (California Water Code Sections 10530 to 10547), the formation of the RWMG is necessary to carry out the UFR IRWM Program and further develop, implement, and periodically update the UFR IRWM Plan. In addition to carrying out the Program, the RWMG is required to:

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<sup>1</sup> The region was successful in obtaining subsequent Proposition 50 grant funds amounting to approximately \$7 million.

- ◆ Support the objectives of the California Department of Water Resources IRWM Program that seeks to ensure sustainable water uses, reliable water supplies, better water quality, environmental stewardship, efficient development, protection of agriculture, and strong economies.
- ◆ Promote communication and collaboration in the Upper Feather River Region to identify and implement resource management strategies and projects with broad-based stakeholder support.
- ◆ Facilitate investment partnerships in projects that can maximize regional benefits through economies of scale and through projects with multiple resource benefits and beneficiaries.
- ◆ Refine values for ecosystem services that are provided through water and watershed management actions.
- ◆ Develop investment opportunities for increasing financial support from extra-regional beneficiaries of improvements in water supply, water quality, flood control, hydroelectric generation, recreational opportunities, forest health, habitat and species preservation, and carbon sequestration, etc.
- ◆ Facilitate communication and coordinated actions among the regional stakeholders.
- ◆ Coordinate planning and actions with neighboring or otherwise connected IRWM Regions.

The MOU also encourages California state agencies--the Department of Water Resources, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Department of Conservation, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife--to designate liaisons in order to promote coordination with State plans and actions with the work of the UFR RWMG.

## 2.3 Plan Governance Structure

The MOU sets forth the governance structure for the IRWM planning, adoption and implementation processes. The basic structure of how the RWMG communicates with its members, its workgroups and the public is depicted in Figure 2-1. In general, the RWMG is the decision-making body for the IRWM Plan Update process, with support and recommendations provided by the workgroups, through public comments and presentations, and through focused outreach as needed.

### 2.3.1 Regional Water Management Group

Per the Integrated Regional Water Management Act (California Water Code Section 10539), a RWMG is composed of three or more local agencies, two of which have statutory authority over water supply or water management, as well as those other persons who may be necessary for the development and implementation of an IRWMP. The Upper Feather River RWMG consists of twelve (12) member agencies (Table 2-1), all signatories of the MOU, with seven (7) of the agencies having statutory authority over water supply or management. The composition of the RWMG provides a broad representation of water resource, natural resource and land-use management interests for the Upper Feather River region. Members have agreed to work together to serve as the Upper Feather River Regional Water Management Group and to carry out the IRWM Program in the region throughout the planning and implementation phases.



*Regional Water Management Group meeting*

**Figure 2-1.** Upper Feather River IRWM Plan Governance Structure

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**Table 2-1. Regional Water Management Group (RWMG)**

AGENCY/ENTITY/WORKGROUP	REPRESENTING	STATUTORY AUTHORITY OVER WATER
County of Plumas	Local government, land use and disadvantaged communities	X
County of Sierra	Local government, land use, and disadvantaged communities	X
Feather River Resource Conservation District	Watershed issues and private landowner interests	
Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District	Watershed issues and private landowner interests	
Maidu Summit Consortium - Native American Representative	Federally and State recognized Tribes and Maidu Native American interests	
Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	Local government, flood and water conservation management, and State Water Project Contractor	X
Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District	Groundwater monitoring and management in Sierra Valley	X
Plumas County Community Development Commission	Disadvantaged communities, water and wastewater infrastructure, and affordable housing issues	
Representative from the Almanor Basin <sup>a</sup>	Water-related issues in the Almanor Basin	
Plumas National Forest – USDA Forest Service <sup>b</sup>	Plumas National Forest land, resource and water management	X
Lassen National Forest, Almanor Ranger District <sup>b</sup>	Lassen National Forest land, resource, and water management	X
Tahoe National Forest, Sierraville Ranger District <sup>b</sup>	Tahoe National Forest land, resource, and water management	X

<sup>a</sup> The representative from the Almanor Basin is a public member appointed by the Plumas County Board of Supervisors.

<sup>b</sup> Federal entities serve in an advisory role only; they are not voting members.

The governing body of each of the RWMG member agencies or entities has appointed a member representative, a first alternate, and a second alternate. The first alternate member representative may sit and vote with the RWMG in the absence of the primary member, and the second alternate may sit and vote in the absence of the primary member and first alternate. Once appointed, the RWMG member representative or alternate serves a two-year term or until a successor is appointed. Both the primary member representative and the alternates may be reappointed to successive terms and they may be replaced at any time by the appointing authority for the agency.

The RWMG selects from its members a Chair and a Vice-Chair, each serving a one-year term. The Chair will preside over the meetings of the RWMG; the Vice-Chair assumes the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair.

### 2.3.2 Workgroups

Any stakeholder or member of the public may participate in the workgroups. The workgroups provide input on project selection and prioritization criteria, receive and present comments on draft IRWMP

chapter reviews, and invite and schedule presentations by technical experts, scientists, and other interested parties for Workgroup and RWMG meetings. Five workgroups have been established<sup>2</sup> to focus discussions and to make recommendations for long-term stakeholder interest within the UFR IRWM region.

The workgroups (below) are focused on the resource areas identified in the California Water Plan, and on issues in the UFR region:

**Table 2-2. Workgroups of the Upper Feather River IRWM Planning Process**

<b>WORKGROUP</b>	<b>RESOURCE AREAS OF FOCUS</b>
Agricultural Land Stewardship	Irrigated lands, water quality issues, agricultural water supply reliability, and agricultural water use efficiency
Floodplains, Meadows, and Waterbodies Management	Recharge area protection, flood risk management, pollution prevention, ecosystem restoration, and conjunctive management and groundwater
Municipal Services	Recycled municipal water, urban water use efficiency, groundwater and surface water pollution prevention, water system reoperation, drinking water treatment and distribution, and perhaps groundwater and aquifer remediation, urban runoff management, and matching water quality to use
Tribal Advisory Committee	Cultural and environmental issues that cross all workgroup categories; topics such as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) toward restoration and stewardship
Uplands and Forest Management	Pollution prevention (wildfires, roads), watershed management (forest-water interactions), forest ecosystem restoration, upland recharge area protection, flood risk reduction (through wildfire risk reduction), precipitation enhancement (better groundwater infiltration and less evapotranspiration through forest stand density reduction), and other general issues

To encourage ownership and participation in the process, each workgroup's participants select a chair and alternate amongst themselves to assist the Workgroup Coordinator with meetings and to act as liaison to the RWMG. Workgroups review proposals for plans, projects, and any other actions and provide input to each of the Workgroup Chairs. A Workgroup Coordinator, provided by the IRWM Plan Update Consultant Team, coordinates and facilitates meetings, supports the workgroups with baseline data and information, and performs continuous outreach efforts throughout the Plan process. The Workgroup Coordinator and Chairs collaborate on workgroup meetings, coordinate workgroup tasks, and present proposals and recommendations for consideration to the RWMG members.

### **2.3.3 Decision-making**

The Plan Update process includes decision-making criteria at two levels. A majority of the RWMG membership constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business and decisions. The affirmative votes of at least a majority of the RWMG members shall be required for any action by the RWMG.

A process for decision-making at the workgroup level is also established in the MOU. Decision-making by workgroup members is structured to seek consensus (approval) through super majority agreement. In this

<sup>2</sup> Four workgroups were originally identified in the MOU. The RWMG added a fifth working group, identified as the Tribal Advisory Committee, at its May 29, 2015 meeting.

context, consensus does not necessarily mean that all workgroup members support an action, but rather no workgroup member should be opposed to the action that is forwarded to the RWMG for consideration.

The ultimate decision-making authority lies with the RWMG. In general, the nine voting members<sup>3</sup> of the RWMG participate in the decision-making process without hierarchical differentiation, and all major IRWM planning decisions and milestones are decided by vote during the meetings. For any action or major decision, a majority vote of the RWMG members (present or via conference call) is required

### 2.3.4 Plan Adoption

In accordance with Proposition 84 Guidelines, the governing bodies of each of the 12 participating agencies of the RWMG are responsible for the development of the IRWM Plan, have responsibility for implementation of the IRWM Plan, and must formally adopt the IRWM Plan. Signatories of the MOU are expected to adopt the IRWM Plan after it is approved by the RWMG. Proof of adoption is a resolution (or other written documentation) with signatory blocks for each governing body adopting the Plan.

## 2.4 Stakeholder Participation in the Plan Process

The governance structure and the processes of the RWMG are intended to elicit public participation and involvement in developing the IRWM Plan Update, project selection criteria, and other RWMG activities. To this end, all RWMG meetings are open to the public, in person or by video conference, and each meeting includes scheduled time for public input. Information regarding the Plan Update process and RWMG meetings is available on the Plan website



*Stakeholder participation*

(<http://featherriver.org>). Interested parties may sign up through the website or via e-mail at [UFR.contact@gmail.com](mailto:UFR.contact@gmail.com) to receive meeting notices and materials, attend meetings via teleconferencing, participate in discussions, and receive invitations to UFR project development activities.

## 2.5 Stakeholder and Public Involvement

Stakeholders are integral to identifying issues, developing resource management strategies (RMS), and defining objectives. Stakeholders in the UFR region include water management agencies, conservation groups, counties, federal entities, Tribal communities, regional watershed groups and councils, agricultural interests, disadvantaged communities (DAC), and the public. Stakeholders were initially identified (Appendix 2-2) by working with recent and existing regional planning efforts and organizations (i.e., Plumas County General Plan Update, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act, Plumas County Special Districts Association, Cattleman's Association, etc.). A Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) adopted by the RWMG in November 2014 sets forth outreach efforts to encourage a diverse group of informed local stakeholders throughout the UFR region (Appendix 2-2) to participate. Additionally, a Tribal Engagement Plan (TEP) was developed to describe outreach and involvement means for engaging Tribal communities in the Region (Appendix 2-3). Stakeholders may take part in the IRWM Plan update process through the workgroups and Tribal Advisory Committee as well as by attending RWMG meetings and

<sup>3</sup> The three National Forests represented on the RWMG (Plumas, Tahoe, and Lassen) serve in an advisory role and are not voting members.



workshops. All stakeholders are added to contact lists; they then receive Plan Update communications and notices.

Stakeholder outreach began long before the Plan Update process started in September 2014 through informal discussions with various agencies and entities throughout the region. To initiate the Plan Update process, in accordance with §6066 of the Government Code, the RWMG published a notice of intent to prepare the Plan on October 22 and 29, 2014. The RWMG will publish a notice of intention to adopt the Plan in a public meeting of the RWMG governing board on XXXX, XX, 2016 (CWC §10543).

### **2.5.1 Outreach to Disadvantaged Communities**

During the UFR IRWM Plan update process, DAC service providers were surveyed regarding their water issues and needs (Chapter 3 *Region Description*, Table 3-3). A Community Vulnerability Assessment (Appendix 10-1) was prepared in coordination with the Plumas and Sierra County Departments of Environmental Health, County staff, and IRWM Plan consultants who worked closely with disadvantaged community members in order to identify ground water well vulnerability factors and concerns. The study information will be used as a template to better identify drinking water pollution risks for the approximately 40 percent of groundwater-dependent households in the DAC-dominated region that rely on individual and/or community wells and septic systems for their water and wastewater needs. The study assesses nitrate pollution risks to municipal and domestic drinking water wells in high groundwater table areas with septic systems and agricultural livestock production.

### **2.5.2 Outreach to Native American Tribes**

Tribal outreach is led by the California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA) and includes a local Tribal member as an outreach coordinator. The local Tribal member is a designated representative for the Maidu Summit Consortium, a signatory of the MOU, and is a member of the RWMG. The outreach efforts have resulted in formation of a Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC meets approximately every other month to review and discuss IRWM process tasks, to review and discuss project proposal development and implementation, and to coordinate feedback and input on the process and Plan. The TAC's input is relayed to the RWMG through the designated Tribal member of the RWMG and through standing public comment, update opportunities, and presentations during RWMG meetings.

## **2.6 Communication Plan**

### **2.6.1 Methods, Technology and Information Access**

The overall communications strategy for the UFR IRWM Plan Update is designed to be accessible, inclusive and transparent. RWMG members and stakeholders receive timely and consistent updates and information regarding Upper Feather River IRWM Program activities and goals. Extensive communication efforts ensure that stakeholders, project proponents, and the public remain well informed of the latest UFR IRWM activities and accomplishments through:

- ◆ Traditional media
- ◆ Press releases, distributed to local newspapers
- ◆ Press releases, posted on the UFR IRWM website ([www.featherriver.org](http://www.featherriver.org))
- ◆ Notice of public meetings, meeting summaries and videos, reports, background information, a document library, GIS mapping tool, and information on the Plan process and content, posted on the UFR IRWM [website](#)

- ◆ Continuously updated contact lists, including e-mail, mail, or phone numbers
- ◆ Personal communications
- ◆ Printed materials, available at meetings and workshops, such as IRWM Plan pamphlets and educational handouts
- ◆ Presentations to organizations as requested, including four public information meetings held in different locations in the region to promote accessibility

The Stakeholder Involvement Plan (Appendix 2-2) contains a detailed communication strategy for the UFR IRWM Plan update process.

The MOU requires that public education opportunities be solicited on behalf of the Plan Update process, such as presentations to community organizations and at community functions, media interviews and the distribution of educational materials to the MOU signatories, or at conferences and workshops. All meetings of the RWMG, except those closed sessions authorized by the “Brown Act” (California Government Code Section 54950, et seq.), are open to the public and noticing of such meetings shall be in accordance with the Brown Act and include public comment opportunities.

## 2.7 Coordination

### 2.7.1 *Adjacent IRWM Regions*

Neighboring IRWM planning regions include Lahontan, Tahoe-Sierra, Cosumnes-American-Bear-Yuba (CABY), Upper Pit, Yuba County, and Northern Sacramento Valley IRWM groups. The RWMG and consultant team members communicate with neighboring IRWMs to share lessons learned, process feedback, and share resources where appropriate. Additionally, members of the UFR IRWM Plan update team regularly attend and are involved in the Sierra Water Workgroup, a group that works to coordinate local and regional water planning efforts in the Sierra.

### 2.7.2 *State and Federal Agencies*

The three National Forests represented on the RWMG—Lassen, Tahoe and Plumas—manage approximately 70 percent of the region. California state agencies—the Department of Water Resources, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Department of Conservation, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife—also have significant management interests in the region; the RWMG has encouraged them to designate liaisons to attend and participate in meetings. Outreach also includes communicating with energy and water supply utilities, such as Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) and local municipal services providers. For example, PG&E presented information and data developed for the current efforts to relicense its Feather River hydroelectric development, which runs from Lake Almanor nearly to Lake Oroville (known as the “Staircase of Power”).