

Upper Feather River IRWM Regional Water Management Group

FINAL SUMMARY MINUTES

October 13, 2017

Recordings of the meeting are available here:

Video #1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dY7_wqk2KEg&feature=youtu.be

Video #2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyrbdycH-Q&feature=youtu.be>

Video #3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2FGTUyhx9o>

Video #4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocbhu6ahU6c>

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

Call to Order and Roll Call

(Video#1 0:05)

Sherrie Thrall called the meeting to order on October 13, 2017 at 1:03 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 Board of Supervisors

Russell Reid, Feather River Resource Conservation District

Roger Diefendorf, Plumas County Community Development Commission

Rick Roberti, Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District

Doug Teeter, Butte County Board of Supervisors

Jeffrey Greening, Public Member

Joe Hoffman, Plumas National Forest (Advisory)

Members Absent:

Jeff Engle, Plumas County Board of Supervisors

Jim Roberti, Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District

Trina Cunningham, Maidu Summit Consortium

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 & Associates Consulting

Additions or Deletions from the Agenda

(Video#1, 0:00:35)

None noted

Public Comment Opportunity

(Video#1, 0:01:00)

John Sheehan, coordinator of Plumas Fire Safe Council, asked the board for Public Support Letters for two projects that will be submitted to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy November 1, 2017. First project is for 480-acres in Little Grass Valley near LaPorte. This project is left over from the Quincy Library Group and the Forest Service is taking over the last remaining 1200-acres. The second project recently had its decision notice for 460-acres in Butterfly Valley that encompasses both commercial and non-commercial use projects.

Noting the deadline of November 1st, John offered the Fire Safe Council's assistance in drafting the letters based on project descriptions to give to the planning department this week. Not having any documentation readily available to disseminate, John explained both projects are within the wildland urban interface and have been previously approved by the RWMG as fire safe activities in Plumas County. Although the RWMG was unable to take an action on the request, the board agreed to draft a letter using RWMG letterhead.

Announcements / Reports

(Video#1, 0:05:10)

Uma Hinman announced that Holly Jorgenson with the Sacramento River Watershed Program is on the phone and will be discussing Item 1d on the agenda with the group.

Uma also announced a notice was received from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy that the Strategic Assessment of the Sierra Nevada region is underway and they are welcoming written ideas. They are interested in critical issues such as large wildfires, tree die-off, and upper watershed designation.

Randy Wilson announced the cancellation of a workshop meeting on October 23, 2017 concerning cross-laminated building construction materials. Due to lack of outreach and the fires currently happening in Nevada County, Yuba County, and Butte County, the workgroup will be postponed to a later date. Sherrie Thrall offered a suggestion regarding the detailed nature of the planned workshop to split it into two segments; the first a generalized description for interested parties and the second more focused on the details involving those in the construction industry.

CONSENT AGENDA

a. RWMG Approval of Meeting Minutes for August 19, 2017

(Video#1, 0:10:39)

Upon motion by Paul Roen and seconded by Roger Diefendorf, the RWMG Meeting Minutes for June 23, 2017 were unanimously approved as presented.

ACTION AGENDA

1. Integrated Regional Water Management Regional Coordination

(Video#1, 0:11:10)

A. Sierra Water Work Group

Uma Hinman reviewed the Sierra Water Workgroup Summit that occurred July 24-25, 2017. The UFR Region was represented by Uma Hinman, Randy Wilson, Leah Wells, and Trina Cunningham. The focus of the Summit was on "Legal and Legislative Strategies to Protecting our Headwaters." The first day was spent on 4 main breakouts:

- Unrepresented (DAC's, human rights to water, tribal involvement);
- Climate Change (water quality, water supply, forest management);
- IRWM's (how they worked and what should be done to promote them more);
- Coordinated Advocacy for the Headwaters

The second day consisted of discussions with legislative members on the IRWM's and headwater issue. Randy Wilson informed the group that the Summit engaged a large range of geographical areas from the headwaters to the rest of the state. A committee was formed, although no follow up has occurred to date, to strategize how more attention can be brought to the Sierra's and its issues. Randy emphasized that in the larger counties, there is no real sensitivity to where their water comes from and that managing natural resources within headwater regions for natural, human and economic is not necessarily recognized as working towards the benefit of the state of California. The committee also worked on a project description for headwaters.

Randy also discussed the concerns for the proposed Park Bond and the fact that it does not include funds for the IRWMs. The legislative members of the Summit did confirm that the bond is more focused on Parks. Uma Hinman added that there was an emphasis on the IRWM regions to get the information out on what IRWMs do for communities and watersheds and how they are beneficial to the region, the headwaters in particular. Sherrie Thrall added the fact that the state decided to fund Proposition 84 and people spent time, money, and effort to orchestrate a Plan and set up the governance structure. At the point of Plans being ready to run, the state appears to be questioning the importance of IRWMs I

Randy noted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act has changed emphasis to the Groundwater Management Act, which appears to be impacting IRWM funding. Sherrie added that it was never just about surface water. The IRWM's can be used as the mechanism for the state to address groundwater as well; this is a huge disconnect between the state.

B. Roundtable of Regions

(Video#1, 0:17:10)

As a refresher, Uma Hinman noted the Roundtable of Regions is an all-volunteer forum with representatives from each of the IRWM's throughout the state. They have been meeting for a number of years and this year they have broken out into working groups for more focused work on specific subjects. Uma has been attending Community Involvement, Needs Assessment, and Program Evaluation Working Group meetings.

Uma noted that there was an update from the DWR staff at the last meeting. There are currently three Proposition 1 compliant plans, the Upper Feather River being the first. Fifteen regions have been awarded planning grants and are currently in the process of updating. Although not in writing, one of the DWR staff noted that there have been some internal staffing changes over the summer, which is delaying the program roughly six months. DWR's IRWM website still shows that Proposition 1 Implementation funding will most likely happen in early 2018 but there is a possibility that it will occur later.

C. Inter-regional Outreach

(Video#1, 0:19:37)

Uma Hinman let the group know that email notifications from adjacent IRWM regions (Upper Pit River Watershed IRWM and Yuba County IRWM) have been received. Both are currently updating their plans and are inviting participation from the UFR Region. Over the course of the next few months they will be holding public meetings.

D. Sacramento River Watershed Program

(Video#1, 0:20:37)

Uma Hinman introduced Holly Jorgenson, communicating via phone, as the Executive Director for the Sacramento River Watershed Program. Holly reached out to the RWMG in an effort to share information and discuss a few projects that are currently ongoing. Holly let the group know she will be covering the next three agenda items, D, E and F. After introducing herself and giving a brief history of the Sacramento River Watershed Program, she pointed out that many of our forest are unhealthy. Overgrown forests are more susceptible to disease and intense wildfires. There is a broad consensus that science based ecological restoration of our forests needs to be increased. As a result, they have partnered with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the Butte County Fire Safe Council, as well as other key stakeholders to work together to increase the capabilities of forest restoration, focusing on fuels and fire management as an access to watershed health. As a result of their collaborative efforts, Butte County has been selected to host a multi-agency training at a prescribed burning event known as TREX. TREX is a fire training and learning opportunity designed to increase professional burning capacity. Holly will provide more information on the project if needed.

The Sacramento River Watershed Program recently signed a MOU with the Butte County Fire Safe Council to develop a landscape level planning framework in Butte County. They believe that forest recreation

management should be implemented comprehensively at the landscape scale to be most effective and yield watershed benefits.

Components of this planning effort include the design and development of portal planning tool. This will support the prioritization, implementation, and monitoring of forest health projects for all three planning areas. They will work with stakeholders to gather and digitize key planning area data information, including GIS layer maps, assessment data, plans, project, and programs. Key aspects of the portal include communication, coordination, and technical assistance for stakeholders. Uma and Holly agreed to demonstrate the portal to the group at the next meeting.

E. Butte County Fire Safe Council Request for Letter of Support

(Video#2, 0:07:48)

The Little Butte Creek Forest Health Project Phase II.

F. Sacramento River Watershed Program Request for Letter of Support

The Forbsetown Ridge Forest Health Project.

Sherrie Thrall asked the group if there were any questions. Paul Roen asked if the projects were within UFR's boundaries; Uma Hinman explained they are not but are directly adjacent.

Upon motion by Paul Roen and seconded by Doug Teeter, the RWVG unanimously approved providing letters of support for the Little Butte Creek Forest Health Project and the Forbestown Ridge Forest Health Project.

2. Disadvantaged Community Involvement Grant Update

(Video#2, 0:10:14)

Uma Hinman discussed information disseminated at their last meeting and as of October 4, 2017, the grant funding has been awarded to the Mountain Counties Funding Area. From this point, they will move into the draft agreement process, which was submitted to the Sierra Institute October 10, 2017. The review process for the draft agreement will take a few weeks and is anticipated to be completed at the end of October or beginning of November. The DACI funding allows for an advance payment of 50%, which has been requested. They will have 18 months to complete the work that was pre-paid and 2.5 years to complete the project in its entirety. Grant tasks include a needs assessment for all DACs in the Mountain Counties Funding Area. Planned activities include outreach and community engagement, community capacity and needs assessments, capacity building, and some technical support. The intent is to build capacity within the DACs to enable them to compete for funding and to facilitate development of projects ready to apply for the second round of funding, which is for implementation. She asked the group to review the list of DACs included in the agenda packet and if there are communities that are not on it to please contact Jonathan Kusel (contact information provided on page 42 of the agenda packet).

Sherrie Thrall emphasized the importance that the group to take a careful look at the list because they may be aware of DACs in the region that have not yet been identified. Uma mentioned that the Sierra Institute is restructuring the way they identify DACs to develop more accurate methodology than DWR's current method of 80% of the median household income. Further discussion ensued regarding the state creating a state-wide criterion for better and consistent definition and identification of DACs so all organizations are on the same page.

Uma noted that statewide, two DACI grant agreements have been finalized to date; three additional grant proposals have been approved and are in the grant agreement process, including the Mountain Counties Funding Area.

3. Upper Feather River IRWM Support Funding (Video#2, 0:18:57)

Sherrie Thrall began the discussion by recapping the conversation of splitting the administrative costs between the three represented counties that benefit from the UFR IRWM Program. Plumas County Board of Supervisors has approved a budget of \$25,000 to utilize Hinman & Associates Consulting services for fiscal year 2017-18. To introduce potential shared funding approaches, Uma presented two possible options including dividing the costs between population or percentage of plan area (acreage).

Paul Roen asked if funding becomes more available, e.g., through implementation grant funding, is there a way to pull a small percentage from the top to go directly towards administrative costs. Uma stated that it all depends on the specification of each grant but it is definitely something that can be looked at in the future.

Further discussion ensued about other possibilities in splitting the cost. Sherrie emphasized that the group needs to establish a reliable source of income to move forward with IRWM, noting that the fairest distribution in determining cost may be by geographical area. Doug Teeter agreed that was a place to start, stating that in time it may need to shift toward the counties that have the most projects. This will have to be discussed on a yearly basis.

Upon motion by Doug Teeter and seconded by Paul Roen, the RWVG unanimously agreed to bring the geographic area financial contribution model to UFR counties' respective boards for consideration.

4. IRWM Implementation Projects (Video#3, 0:15:28)

Two projects identified in the UFR IRWM Plan have been partially funded. Roger Diefendorf reported that he has made contact with grant managers from the State Water Resources Control Board to generate potential support for eligible projects. As a preliminary step to identify who potentially would be eligible, Uma Hinman, Randy Wilson, and Roger generated an initial draft table summarizing the implementation projects for the Drinking Water Proposition 1 Grant Program. Eight municipal service projects were identified based on need, DACs, and meeting eligibility needs. Roger mentioned there are also opportunities for wastewater projects as well but time was short.

The Plumas County Development Commission has experience in grant administration and management staff that can assist UFR IRWM implementation project sponsors with applying for grants and/or loans as well as managing awarded funds. An administration cost would be applicable. Sherrie Thrall added to the conversation about deciding whether or not to allow more projects into the Plan by next RWVG meeting. Randy Wilson suggested simplifying the process for the next solicitation.

Staff was directed to review the UFR Plan's list of implementation projects, pulling out any that may meet the criteria for SWRCB funding and providing to Roger Diefendorf in the next week.

5. Grant Opportunities (Video#5, 0:00:31)

Uma Hinman presented the staff report and noted that websites were provided that contained specific information about each grant opportunity. Additionally, grant opportunities and information are posted on the website and shared with the contact lists via email.

Uma also discussed DWR's next round of Proposition 1 funding. DWR is trying to change the way they interact with the regions. They are no longer going to just through applications out but rather work with the regions to help guide them. DWR is also trying to ensure that DACs and Tribes have equal opportunities to obtain funding.

6. Next Steps (Video#5, 0:13:17)

Next meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2018 at 1pm at the Plumas County Planning Conference Room, 555 Main Street, Quincy, California.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 pm.