

Upper Feather River IRWM Program

To: Upper Feather River Regional Water Management Group

From: Uma Hinman, Hinman & Associates Consulting, Inc.

cc: Tracey Ferguson, AICP, Plumas County Planning Director

Date: October 12, 2022

Re: Upper Feather River IRWM Quarterly Report (2022 Quarters 2-3)

This Quarterly Report covers Quarters 2 and 3 and provides an update to the Upper Feather River (UFR) Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Group (RWMG) on activities associated with implementation of the UFR IRWM Plan and coordination with stakeholders and surrounding IRWM regions.

The RWMG was finally able to hold its first in-person meeting on March 11, 2022 since the COVID-19 pandemic. The draft meeting minutes summary is attached for information. Please note that until the meeting minutes are approved by the RWMG, the summary is not an official record of the meeting.

The following is an update on coordination and implementation efforts since the March 2022 meeting on behalf of the UFR RWMG.

Regional Water Management Group

Since 2014, Sherrie Thrall has been the representative for the Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District seat on the RWMG. Sherrie will be retiring as County Supervisor and from the District at the end of 2022. The District will be considering assignment of the seat in the coming months.

Staff is working to develop a recommendation(s) for the RWMG's consideration regarding a public member to fill the current public member seat vacancy. The public member seat must be a representative of the Almanor Basin in order to balance and ensure representation on the RWMG from all areas of the UFR Region.

Prop 1 Round 1 Implementation Projects

On April 6, 2021, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) executed a Grant Agreement with Plumas County under the Proposition 1 IRWM Round 1 Implementation Grant (P1R1) for the UFR

Water Supply Reliability Project in the amount of \$1,002,536. The UFR Water Supply Reliability Project is being administered by Plumas County (Grantee) and includes two implementation projects: Sierraville Public Utilities District (SPUD) and Indian Valley Community Services District (IVCSD).

Project 1 – Sierraville Public Utilities District

The Sierraville Public Utilities District (SPUD) project is progressing and has gone through the construction bid process. During the bid process, it became clear that with the current inflation rates, the project was substantially underfunded and SPUD was not going to be able to complete construction of the project with the P1R1 award.

In late 2021, DWR announced a new infusion of funding for the Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) Drought DAC Set Aside Grant. This funding was distributed through the existing funding area grantees for the Proposition 1 DACI Grant, which for the Mountain Counties Funding Area was Sierra Institute.

Upon RWMG approval, staff worked with the SPUD to apply for the UFR Region's share of the funding (\$525,000) to offset the inflated project costs. The funding has been tentatively awarded and DWR and Plumas County are working on an Agreement Amendment to add the funds to the P1R1 grant administration and Project 1 budgets.

Project 2 – Indian Valley Community Services District

The Indian Valley Community Services District's (IVCSD) originally approved project (Project 2) was for a water storage tank above Greenville. However, the destruction caused by the Dixie Fire necessitated a re-evaluation of community needs for Greenville. A revised water line project has been identified, submitted for consideration, and tentatively approved by DWR. DWR and Plumas County are working on an Agreement Amendment to revise the scope of the project for IVCSD. No change to the budget is proposed or possible under the P1R1 award.

Prop 1 Round 2 Grant Application

The Project Solicitation Package (PSP) for Round 2 of the Prop 1 IRWM Implementation Grant was released in spring 2022 with the first deadline for applications being August 19, 2022. Based on the MCFA Coordinating Committee agreement for the Funding Area, Round 2 was also a non-competitive process similar to Round 1. The remaining Prop 1 IRWM Implementation funds available to the UFR IRWM region totaled approximately \$143,000.

At its March 2022 meeting, the RWMG supported allocating the UFR Region's share of P1R2 funding to the IVCSD to further the P1R1 project and support the restoration of services to Greenville. Staff assisted IVCSD with the P1R2 application, which was successfully submitted on August 18, 2022 with Plumas County again serving as the Grantee.

IRWM Roundtable of Regions

UFR continues to participate in the [IRWM Roundtable of Regions](https://www.roundtableofregions.org/) bi-monthly meetings as well as the Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) Working Group meetings, which are generally held quarterly. Roundtable of Regions activities and information can be found on their website: <https://www.roundtableofregions.org/>.

Financial Summary

Hinman & Associates Consulting, Inc.'s contract with Plumas County to provide support services to the UFR IRWM Plan Program runs with the fiscal year. The fiscal year 2022-23 contract budget is \$25,000, which includes support labor as well as website hosting costs. Following is a summary as of 8/31/2022:

Tasks/Expenses	Amount (\$)
Strangecode Web Hosting Service	276.00
Domain Renewal (GoDaddy)	21.17
<i>UFR IRWM Plan Program Support Services</i>	
Coordinator Activities	4,790.00
Total to Date	5,087.17

Much of staff's efforts this fiscal year has been focused on coordination and development of the Proposition 1 Round 2 grant application and implementing the Proposition 1 Round 1 UFR Water Supply Reliability Projects. Note that implementation of the Proposition 1 Round 1 projects are billed to the grant.

Action Items from March 11, 2022 UFR IRWM RWMG Meeting

The following summarizes the action items from the last meeting of the RWMG and current status:

- Staff was directed to develop recommendations for the vacant public member seat for discussion at the next RWMG meeting.

The public member was established to include representation from the Almanor Basin of the UFR Region. Jeffery Greening of Chester held the seat since 2014 and which has been vacant since his passing in 2020. Staff is coordinating with Plumas County Supervisor for District 3 Sherrie Thrall and District 3 Supervisor-Elect Tom McGowan to develop recommendations for the public member to represent the Almanor Basin.

- Staff was directed to advocate with the Roundtable of Regions for water storage and headwaters funding and projects.

Staff will relay the UFR Region's support for water storage in general and funding for storage and headwaters project at upcoming Roundtable of Regions' meetings.

- Staff was directed to assist with disseminating information regarding the Plumas Watershed Forum to IRWM regional stakeholders.

Staff has been coordinating with Rob Thorman, Plumas County Public Works and Coordinator for the Plumas Watershed Forum, and has assisted with distributing Watershed Forum meeting notices and invitations for interest in the intended Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the Forum.

- Staff will assist IVCS D in preparing and submitting the P1R2 grant application.

As noted above, staff assisted IVCS D with the P1R2 grant application, which was successfully submitted on August 18, 2022.

- Staff will file and post on the Upper Feather River IRWM website.

The Upper Feather Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Performance Annual Report 2016-2021 has been posted to the IRWM website at <http://featherriver.org/plan-performance-reports/>.

Next RWMG Meeting

Direction was provided to staff to schedule a meeting for fall 2022 or as needed. Staff attempted to schedule a meeting for the fall but was unable to receive commitment for a quorum. As there are no pressing matters that require action by the RWMG, this quarterly report is being provided in lieu of an in-person meeting to update the RWMG on activities of the coordinator and relevant to the UFR IRWM Program.

Staff will keep the RWMG Chair and Vice Chair apprised of any pressing issues that arise.

Please contact Uma Hinman at uhinman@comcast.net or (916) 813-0818 with any questions.

Attachment:

Attachment 1. Draft Summary Minutes for the March 11, 2022 UFR IRWM RWMG Meeting

Attachment 1

Upper Feather River IRWM Regional Water Management Group

DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES

March 11, 2022

Call to Order and Roll Call

Sherrie Thrall called the meeting to order on July 18, 2019 at 1:03 pm at the Plumas County Planning Conference Room, 555 Main Street, Quincy, California.

Sherrie noted this is the first meeting of the Upper Feather River Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) since July 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members Present:

Sherrie Thrall, Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
Doug Teeter, Butte County Board of Supervisors
Trina Cunningham, Maidu Summit Consortium
Roger Diefendorf, Plumas County Community Development Commission
Jeff Engel, Plumas County Board of Supervisors
Rick Roberti, Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District
Russell Reid, Feather River Resource Conservation District
Kurt Sable, Plumas National Forest (Advisory)
Rachel Hutchinson, Tahoe National Forest (Advisory)
Don Kozlowski, Lassen National Forest (Advisory)

Members Absent:

Paul Roen, Sierra County Board of Supervisors
Einen Grandi, Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District

Staff Present:

Tracey Ferguson, Plumas County Planning Director
Uma Hinman, Hinman & Associates Consulting, Inc.

Additions or Deletions from the Agenda

None

Public Comment Opportunity

None

Announcements / Reports

Leah Wills, retired Plumas County Water Consultant, was presented a Certificate of Appreciation and Recognition for her many years of service in development, support, and implementation of the Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program. Leah was integral to development of the IRWM Program in the Upper Feather River and has worked tirelessly in the watershed to implement the Program and Upper Feather River IRWM Plan. Leah served as Plumas County's Water and FERC consultant for many years and provided senior advisory support for the IRWM Program.

Tracey Ferguson gave an update on the Sierra Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan (SVGSP) project. The SVGSP was developed over a period of two years under a \$2 million grant from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR); the final SVGSP was submitted to DWR in January 2022 and the first annual report is due in April 2022.

CONSENT AGENDA

a. Regional Water Management Group Business

1. RWVG Meeting Summary for the regular meeting held on July 11, 2019.
2. Ratification of the following Letters of Support:
 - a. Lake Basin Forest Health Phase II Project, SNC #1232, October 9, 2019
 - b. Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District application for Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Grant, Round 3, SGM Planning, October 18, 2019
 - c. Climate Resilience Bond for Integrated Water Management, February 24, 2020
 - d. SB 45, March 1, 2021
 - e. Request inclusion of IRWM funding in Drought Relief and Resiliency Package, May 18, 2021
 - f. Sierra Institute’s application for Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement (DACTI) Drought Funding DAC Set Aside for the Mountain Counties Funding Area, February 15, 2022
 - g. Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District’s Application for 2022 Prop 1 Watershed Restoration Grant Program, March 1, 2022
3. Mountain Counties Funding Area IRWMs Memorandum of Commitment to equally divide Prop 1 IRWM Implementation funds.
4. Support Services financial report.

Upon motion by Trina Cunningham and second by Russell Reid, the Consent Calendar was unanimously approved as presented.

ACTION AGENDA

1. Regional Water Management Group Administration

a. Membership and Representation

A brief history of the current membership of the Regional Water Management Group (RWVG) was provided in the staff report and summarized by staff. Staff noted that the current membership was established to ensure a cross section of representation focused on water managers in the region as well as geographic representation. Discussion was encouraged regarding the future membership of the RWVG, with specific consideration of the now vacant public member seat.

➤ ***Staff was directed to develop recommendations for the vacant public member seat for discussion at the next RWVG meeting.***

b. Selection of Officers

Sherrie Thrall has been the RWVG Chair since 2014 and will be retiring from the Plumas County Board of Supervisors at the end of 2022. She will continue to serve on the RWVG until December 2022. Sherrie invited nominations for Chair and Vice Chair.

Chair: Paul Roen was nominated by Russell Reid, seconded by Trina Cunningham

Ayes – Sherrie Thrall, Doug Teeter, Russell Reid, Roger Diefendorf, Trina Cunningham, Jeff Engel

Noes – Rick Roberti

Motion passed

Vice Chair: Trina Cunningham was nominated by Russell Reid, seconded by Sherrie Thrall

Ayes – Sherrie Thrall, Doug Teeter, Russell Reid, Roger Diefendorf, Trina Cunningham, Jeff Engel, Rick Roberti

Noes – none

Motion passed unanimously

c. Almanor Basin Representative Vacancy

A public member was originally included on the RWMG so as to ensure representation from the Almanor Basin area, which was underrepresented at the time. The public member was an individual from the region appointed by the RWMG members. Jeffery Greening served on the RWMG from 2014, serving during the development of the Upper Feather River IRWM Plan and its implementation, until his passing in 2020. The seat has remained vacant. Members of the RWMG expressed their support for continuing to include a public member from the Almanor Basin on the RWMG. Under Item 1.a., staff was directed to present recommendations on the vacant public member seat at the next RWMG meeting.

d. Support Services for Fiscal Year 2022-23

Staff presented the staff report, noting that this it is an annual discussion of continuing to fund a contracted coordinator to implement the Plan, ensure regulatory requirements are met for the IRWM Program, and to represent the RWMG to the IRWM Roundtable of Regions and the state. The RWMG has contracted with Hinman & Associates Consulting, Inc. since completion of the Upper Feather River IRWM Plan.

Upon motion by Russell Reid and second by Trina Cunningham, the RWMG supported Plumas County's contract with Hinman & Associates Consulting, Inc. to continue to provide Support Services for Fiscal Year 2022-23.

2. IRWM Roundtable of Regions

Staff presented an update on the Roundtable of Regions activities and the White Paper, Moving Forward: Charting a Course for Future Regional Water Resilience.

The group discussed the importance of the IRWM Program and the benefits realized in the Upper Feather River Region. The discussion focused on messages to bring to the Roundtable of Regions meetings:

- Rick Roberti noted the need for water storage for increased flows and storage and encouraged staff to push the topic forward whenever possible. Russell Reid agreed, adding that small scale storage was just as important as larger storage facilities.
- Tracey Ferguson advocated continuing to emphasize the need for additional funding and support for the headwaters regions.

Trina Cunningham reported that she is part of the Watershed Solutions 5th Cohort. Through that organization she understood the San Diego Watershed Authority is talking about headwaters funding. She agreed that storage is important and forest health, groundwater, surface water, system retention, and forest thinning is necessary for increased water yield.

Leah Wills noted that restoring the wildfire burned watershed areas will be critical to combatting climate change, supporting the natural hydrology of the headwaters, and is critical to integrating the land and water connection.

- ***Staff was directed to advocate with the Roundtable of Regions for water storage and headwaters funding and projects.***

3. Plumas Watershed Forum

Rob Thorman, Plumas County Public Works/Plumas County Coordinator for the Monterey Settlement Agreement, reported that the Agreement case had been resolved and Plumas County would be receiving the second payment of \$4 million, which started with \$1 million received in March 2022. The additional \$3 million will be made in \$1 million payments over the next three years.

The Plumas Watershed Forum has been revived for disbursement of the second payment and the first meeting will be held in April 2022. The Forum's voting members consist of Plumas County representatives (Supervisors Engel [Primary] and Thrall [Alternate]), DWR, and the State Water Contractors. The purpose of the funds is to:

- Improve water retention and storage
- Improve water quality
- Improve upland forests
- Improve groundwater storage

The first task of the Forum will be to establish a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which will include non-profit groups. Staff will assist with disseminating information regarding the Plumas Watershed Forum and its activities to the Upper Feather River IRWM Region stakeholders.

- ***Staff was directed to assist with disseminating information regarding the Plumas Watershed Forum to IRWM regional stakeholders.***

4. Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement Project

Uma Hinman and Tracey Ferguson provided a summary of the Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement (DACTI) Project completed by Sierra Institute on behalf of the Mountain Counties Funding Area and through a \$2 million grant from DWR.

a. Community Well-Being & Water and Wastewater Needs Assessments for Upper Feather River Region and the Mountain Counties Funding Area. The Assessments were the primary deliverables of the DACTI Grant and have been completed by Sierra Institute. Links are available on the Sierra Institute website: <https://sierrainstitute.us/program/dactip/>.

b. DACTI Technical Assistance Grant. Plumas County implemented a \$45,000 technical assistance grant through Sierra Institute's DACTI Grant on behalf of the Upper Feather River Region. The project was a pilot project that analyzed state small and local small water systems within unincorporated areas of Plumas County. The pilot project was implemented by the Plumas County Environmental Health, GIS, and Planning departments and included a survey of all state and local small systems, comprehensive database, internal GIS mapping of results, and an informative webinar of the methodology and results that was shared with stakeholders and county departments within the Upper Feather River Region.

Leah Wills noted that it will be important that the Environmental Health Department determine what needs to be done post-Dixie Fire to support these water systems, including encouraging advocacy for consolidation at the state level. The lack of grant development, management, and financial capacity of these entities must be emphasized. Further, distinguishing a clear definition of what consolidation means

in these rural headwaters regions is fundamental, which is different than in the Central Valley areas where topographic constraints are minimal.

c. Prop 1 DACTI Drought Funding DAC Set Aside. Staff provided an overview of the new infusion of funding being distributed by DWR through the DACTI Program. Because the IRWM regions within the Mountain Counties Funding Area (MCFA) have a Memorandum of Commitment to equal distribution of the funds received under Prop 1, each region was allocated \$525,000 of the Drought Funding DAC Set Aside funding. The funds will be distributed through Sierra Institute, as the DACTI contractor for the MCFA, which in turn will distribute through the existing Technical Assistance Grantees in each IRWM Region. For the Upper Feather River, Plumas County is the Grantee under Sierra Institute.

The RWMG unanimously supported applying the new Drought Funding DAC Set Aside funds amounting to \$525,000 to the Sierraville Public Utilities District (SPUD) project to ensure the SPUD could proceed with a viable project. Plumas County, as the Grantee, will retain some funding for grant administration.

5. Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant

The Prop 1 IRWM Implementation Round 1 application was successfully submitted by staff and were awarded in 2021. The projects currently being implemented in the region are managed by Plumas County (Grantee) for two local project sponsors: SPUD and the Indian Valley Community Services District (IVCSD).

The IVCSD project has been delayed because of the Dixie Fire. Plumas County and staff continue to support IVCSD and work with DWR to assess the needs of the Greenville community and determine the best way to support the community with the awarded funds.

The SPUD project is progressing and is ready to bid for construction; however, costs have risen dramatically due to inflation and have nearly doubled the original budget of the project. They are seeking additional funding to close the shortfall before committing to construction. Paul Rose, Rose Water Systems on behalf of SPUD, noted that they received a California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) grant to purchase a generator for the project.

6. Proposition 1 Round 2 IRWM Implementation Grant

Staff introduced the item, noting that the Round 2 solicitation would be opened in summer 2022. Under the MCFA Memorandum of Commitment, the amount of funding available to the Upper Feather River IRWM Region for Round 2 is approximately \$143,000. Staff recommended supporting the community of Greenville through the IVCSD and requested direction to assist the IVCSD, through Plumas County, in developing the grant application.

Tashianna Towers, IVCSD, noted that the District is still assessing and prioritizing the infrastructure needs, but will need to increase their distribution lines and meters to support rebuilding and to address fire suppression needs.

Upon motion by Sherrie Thrall and second by Rick Roberti, the RWMG unanimously supported allocating all of the Round 2 funding available to the IVCSD.

➤ ***Staff will assist IVCSD in preparing and submitting the Prop 1 Round 2 grant application.***

7. IRWM Plan Implementation Projects

Staff presented three new projects submitted by the Sierra County Waterworks District 1 for consideration to be included in the IRWM Plan as implementation projects:

- 140,000-gallon storage tank
- Groundwater well and treatment facilities
- Well 1 treatment facility

Upon motion by Russell Reid and second by Roger Diefendorf, the RWVG unanimously approved Resolution No. 21-22-01 adopting the afore-mentioned projects as Upper Feather River IRWM Plan implementation projects.

8. Upper Feather River IRWM Reporting

a. Proposition 50 Implementation Project Post Performance Reports. Staff announced that the final round of required Project Post Performance Reporting had been completed and submitted to DWR for all seven Prop 50 projects. The reporting period was three years post project completion and the reporting was coordinated by staff.

b. Upper Feather River IRWM Plan Implementation Report. Staff summarized the item, explaining that the IRWM Plan has an implementation and reporting component (Chapter11), which specifies annual implementation reports be provided to the RWVG. The *Upper Feather Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Performance Annual Report 2016-2021* is the first Plan performance report. Upon acceptance, the report will be uploaded to the website.

Upon motion by Russell Reid and second by Sherrie Thrall, the RWVG unanimously accepted the *Upper Feather Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Performance Annual Report 2016-2021*.

➤ **Staff will file and post on the Upper Feather River IRWM website.**

9. Coordinator's Report

Staff requested discussion regarding scheduling the next meeting of the RWVG. Options discussed ranged from quarterly to annually to as-needed. The consensus reached was to try to hold a meeting in the fall or as-needed, and for staff to continue to provide written quarterly reports, particularly in the absence of meetings.

Trina Cunningham and Uma Hinman noted that they had been approached by an organization that is interested in developing two pilot projects in the state that would be a collaboration between urban end-users and headwater regions. Russell Reid noted that it will be important to coordinate with the Plumas Watershed Forum on these types of proposals.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm in memory of Jeffery Greening. Jeffery served on the RWVG as the Public Member from 2014 to 2020 and was a consistent contributor and voice for the Almanor Basin.

ATTENDEES:

Leah Wills, Plumas County resident
Robert Baehler, Westwood CSD
Tashianna Towers, Indian Valley CSD
Paul Rose, Rose Water Systems (Sierraville PUD and Calpine)
Rob Thorman, Plumas County Public Works
Larry Terrill, Grizzly Lake CSD
Willo Vieira, Plumas and Sierra Agricultural Commissioner