

## 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:** April 30, 2023

**Re:** Upper Feather River IRWM Quarterly Report (2023 Quarter 1)

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This Quarterly Report covers Quarter 1 of 2023 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 following is an update on coordination and implementation efforts during the last quarter.

### **Regional Water Management Group**

The last meeting of the RWMG was in March 2022, as a quorum was not met to hold an in-person meeting in the fall of 2022 or spring of 2023.

### **Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement (DACTI) Project**

The regional DACTI project timelines have been extended through 2023 due to the recent multiple heightened fire seasons. The results of much of the needs assessment work for each of the Mountain Counties Funding Area (MCFA) regions is up on Sierra Institute's [website](#), as are the recommendations on the CalEnviroScreen.

Sierra Institute continues to work with MCFA project subrecipients on the drought funding projects, funded by DWR's DAC Set Aside grants through the Urban Multi Benefit Program. Sierra Institute reports that it has been challenging to keep the momentum going for the MCFA drought projects, primarily due to the catastrophic wildfires. Sierra Institute is also leading the DAC Set Aside for drought projects in the Sac River Funding Area.

Lastly, Sierra Institute is wrapping up a water funding white paper and recommendations for IRWM processes and governance that came out of the DACTI project work and interviews Sierra Institute conducted with representatives in the UFR.

## **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*. The P1R1 grant includes two implementation projects:

### Project 1 – Sierraville Public Utilities District (revised budget of \$1,132,660)

The Sierraville Public Utilities District (SPUD) Project 1 *Alternative Water Source Development Project* is underway and approximately 30% has been invoiced to date. Construction activities have been delayed due to the extended 2023 winter; however, Sierraville PUD is looking forward to starting construction as soon as weather and site conditions are favorable.

### Project 2 – Indian Valley Community Services District (\$304,000)

The Funding Agreement is executed with Indian Valley Community Services District's (IVCSD) and Plumas County for Project 2 *North Main Water Use Efficiency Project*. The Project will replace approximately 250 feet of water main and install 2 new hydrants, in addition to connecting with other pipeline replacement projects funded under separate grants (including the Prop 1 Round 2 Implementation Project noted below) in an overall effort to upgrade aging and damaged infrastructure that will support the rebuilding of Greenville. The Project is being initiated in anticipation of construction beginning in summer 2023.

In the first quarter of 2023, coordination occurred with DWR to amend the P1R1 Grant Agreement to include the Round 2 funding for IVCSD's *North Main Extension Water Use Efficiency Project*. To date, two Agreement Amendments have been approved. The Amendments have included changes in the work plan for Project 2 (IVCSD), budget adjustments to include additional grant funding, and necessary schedule adjustments. The third Amendment is in process and is summarized below under Prop 1 Round 2 Implementation Project.

## **Prop 1 Round 2 Implementation Project**

The UFR IRWM Region's remaining share of MCFA Prop 1 grant funds total \$143,697 and have been awarded under Round 2 (P1R2) to Plumas County on behalf of IVCSD for its *North Main Extension Water Use Efficiency Project*. The Project replaces approximately 270 feet of pipeline and 60 feet of laterals and install 1 new hydrant, in addition to connecting with other pipeline replacement projects funded under separate grants (including the P1R1 Implementation Project noted above) in the overall effort to upgrade aging and damaged infrastructure that will support the rebuilding of Greenville.

Rather than execute a separate grant agreement for the P1R2 award, DWR and Plumas County are developing an amendment to the P1R1 Grant Agreement to administer the funds under one agreement.

### **IRWM Roundtable of Regions**

UFR continues to participate in the [IRWM Roundtable of Regions](#) bi-monthly meetings as well as the Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) Working Group meetings, which are generally held quarterly.

The quarterly meetings have been delayed while the Roundtable of Regions hosted four smaller, regional meetings to discuss local needs, stakeholders, priorities, and concerns with IRWM, funding, and interagency collaboration (Attachment 1). The information collected during the regional meetings will inform future conversations with DWR and other state agencies.

The Roundtable of Regions submitted an advocacy letter in support of Assemblymember Garcia's Assembly Bill 1567 and requested an increase in IRWM specific funding from \$200 million to \$660 million, consistent with the Proposition 1 amount (plus inflation). Additionally, the UFR submitted a support letter for Assembly Bill 1567, recognizing the need to provide consistent IRWM state funding as an instrument for the continued implementation of identified UFR IRWM Plan projects (Attachment 2).

More Roundtable of Regions activities and information can be found on their website: <https://www.roundtableofregions.org/>.

### **Plumas Watershed Forum**

The Plumas Watershed Forum was formed in 2003 because of the Monterey Settlement Agreement. The Forum's purpose is to implement watershed management and restoration activities in the Feather River Watershed for the mutual benefit of Plumas County and the State Water Project (SWP). The Plumas Watershed Forum goals include:

1. Improve water retention for baseflow in streams
2. Improve water quality and streambank protection
3. Improve upland vegetation management
4. Improve groundwater retention and storage in major aquifers

The Forum currently anticipates directing \$1.74 million dollars toward projects within the watershed that meet the Forum's goals and released a Request for Proposals (RFP) on January 23, 2023. In the first stage of the RFP process, project proponents submitted a concept document that the Watershed Forum Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be reviewing for merit based on the priorities described in the [Feather River Watershed Management Strategy](#).

Two concept proposals were received in response to the RFP, one of which is also an implementation project identified in the UFR IRWM Plan: [Taylorsville Mill Race Farmers' Dam Resurfacing](#). The second project is the [Synergistic Sierra Valley Groundwater Recharge and Irrigation Efficiency Project](#), sponsored by the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District.

If a project fits the priorities and criteria and is economically feasible, the TAC may invite the project proponent to submit a full proposal for additional consideration by July 30, 2023. Multiyear projects will be considered with expected Watershed Forum approval in November 2023 and notice to proceed occurring in February 2024.

For more information see: <https://www.plumascounty.us/2354/PlumasWatershed-Forum>.

### **FY 2022-23 Financial Summary**

Hinman & Associates Consulting, Inc.'s contract with Plumas County to provide support services to the UFR IRWM Plan Program runs during the fiscal year (FY). The FY2022-23 contract budget is \$25,000, which includes support labor as well as website hosting costs. Following is a summary as of 3/31/2023:

<b>Tasks/Expenses</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
StrangeCode Web Hosting Service	276.00
Domain Renewal (GoDaddy)	21.17
<i>UFR IRWM Plan Program Support Services</i>	
Coordinator Activities	9,337.50
<b>Total to Date</b>	<b>9,634.67</b>
Remaining Budget	15,365.33

UFR staff coordinated distribution of funding opportunities to the Region's stakeholders and maintained the UFR IRWM Plan implementation project list, identifying potential funding connections and connecting local project sponsors. Staff also continue to participate in local and regional watershed and IRWM coordination efforts including the Plumas Watershed Forum meetings and the Roundtable of Regions general and technical advisory meetings. Additional routine tasks included stakeholder email list maintenance, website updates, and regular coordination meetings with Tracey Ferguson, Plumas County Planning Director.

### **Action Items from March 11, 2022, UFR IRWM RWMG Meeting**

The following summarizes the five action items from the last meeting of the RWMG and status as of April 30, 2023, being three of the five action items are complete and the other two are in process.

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

The public member seat was established to include representation from the Almanor Basin of the UFR Region and has been vacant since 2020. Staff is coordinating with District 3 Plumas County Supervisor, Tom McGowan, to develop recommendations for a new public member to represent the Almanor Basin.

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

Staff relayed the UFR Region's support for water storage in general and funding for storage and headwaters project at the Roundtable of Regions' northern regional meeting held on April 19, 2023. Staff will continue to advocate for these issues in future opportunities as well.

- **IN PROCESS:** 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 Department Assistant Director and Coordinator for the Plumas Watershed Forum, has assisted with distributing Watershed Forum meeting notices and invitations, and has solicited interest with participation in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the Forum, in addition to sharing the Watershed Forum RFP released in January 2023.

- **COMPLETE:** Staff will assist IVCSO in preparing and submitting the P1R2 grant application.

Staff assisted IVCSO with the P1R2 grant application, which was successfully submitted on August 18, 2022 and awarded on December 12, 2022 in the amount of \$143,697.

- **COMPLETE:** Staff will file and post the Plan Performance Annual Report 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

Staff will continue to keep the RWMG Chair (Paul Roen, representing Sierra County Board of Supervisors) and Vice Chair (Trina Cunningham, representing Maidu Summit Consortium) apprised of any pressing issues that arise. Additionally, staff will coordinate with the Chair and Vice Chair regarding scheduling the next in-person meeting in the fall of 2023. Please contact Uma Hinman, UFR staff, at [uhinman@comcast.net](mailto:uhinman@comcast.net) or (916) 813-0818 with any questions.

### Attachments:

1. *Roundtable of Regions Scope of Work to Develop IRWM Transition Plan*
2. *UFR Support Letter for AB 1567 (Garcia)*

## IRWM Roundtable of Regions Area 2

### Task 1.0 Small Regional Group Meetings

#### 1.1 Develop Transition Plan

- Facilitate 5 geographically based Roundtable of Regions small group meetings
- Gather input and create a list of stakeholders, funding needs and opportunities
- Prepare draft transition plan for IRWM

#### 1.2 Review Final Draft Plan

- Facilitate Review of Final Draft
- Confirm regional needs, stakeholders, priorities and concerns with IRWM, funding, and interagency collaboration

**Deliverable:** Regional IRWM Transition Plans

**Assumption:** Assumed project duration is 6 months. Assumes remote and in-person participation in meeting facilitation. One meeting prior to plan development and one meeting to review final draft. (10 regional meetings)

### Task 2.0 Agency Meetings with Roundtable Co-Chairs

#### 2.1 Schedule and Facilitate Meetings with 4 Agencies

- Meet with Roundtable Co-Chairs to determine goals and objectives for IRWM
- Define draft plan elements from regions
- Align strategies with desired outcomes and determine list of Agency Representatives for meetings
- Schedule Roundtable Co-Chair meetings with:
  - Department of Water Resources
  - State Water Board
  - Office of Planning & Research
  - Strategic Growth Council

**Deliverable:** Discussions and debrief of meetings with 4 agencies

**Assumption:** Meetings completed by end of June 2023.

### Task 3.0 Create Transition Plan

#### 3.1 Develop Plan

## IRWM Roundtable of Regions Area 2

- Develop IRWM Transition Plan for stakeholders that include state agencies, legislators, administration, regulators, funders, IRWM members and partners, and an expanded network of climate, watershed, and fire resilience practitioners
- Plan will include statewide funding sources, legislative and administrative priorities, and new state and federal grants and policy initiatives
- Include practical implementation tools for transition into IRWM 2.0

**Deliverable:** IRWM 2.0 Transition Plan

**Assumption:** Facilitated meetings will result in stakeholder and funding content for plan to be created by June 2023.

## Task 4.0 Department of Water Resources Meetings

### 4.1 Facilitate Transition Meetings with DWR

- Discuss Transition Plan with DWR
- Meet Monthly or Bi-Monthly depending on availability

**Deliverable:** Plan with Roundtable Co-Chairs and DWR to transition to IRWM 2.0

**Assumption:** Facilitated monthly meetings, 1-hour each

## ATTACHMENT 2

# Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group

555 Main Street | Quincy, CA | 95971 | (530) 283-6214 | <http://featherriver.org> | [ufr.contact@gmail.com](mailto:ufr.contact@gmail.com)

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April 10, 2023

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia  
California State Assembly  
1020 O Street, Room 8120  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Request to Include IRWM Funding Increased to \$660 Million in AB 1567 (Garcia)**

Dear Assemblymember Garcia,

The Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group, which represents the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program that covers Plumas County and portions of Sierra, Butte, Lassen, and Yuba counties, writes to show our great appreciation for the support of IRWM in AB 1567 (Garcia). We believe continuous financial support will help with the sustained success of IRWM, in being a valued and proven approach to regional water management in meeting state goals.

To further strength the program, **Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group respectfully requests the funding be allocated as grants directly to IRWM regions, and increased to \$660 million**, consistent with Proposition 1 (2014) for IRWM and considering inflation. Further, we request the funding be allocated through the California Department of Water Resources to IRWM Funding Areas based on hydrologic regions as defined by the California Water Plan.

Local communities have the necessary expertise and experience to leverage state resources and IRWM provides a proven forum for collaborative climate and watershed resilience planning. The **Governor's Water Supply Strategy** identifies actions that *"aim to spur local agency adaptation to a new reality and change the way the State does business in order to better support local and regional water management efforts."*

**The 48 IRWM regions represent 99% of the state's population and 87% of its land area**, and state investment in IRWM spans nearly two decades. Over the past several years, the state has invested approximately \$1.45 billion in bond funds for IRWM projects; IRWM regions have matched that amount with an additional \$5.6 billion invested locally. Projects developed cooperatively through IRWM provide resilience to the anticipated impacts of climate change, engage under-represented communities and Tribes in decision-making, and invest in the future of our watersheds, forests, and water supplies.

**The Upper Feather River IRWM Program of more than 20 years has proven to be an effective and successful collaboration of stakeholders in the region, which is the headwaters of Lake Oroville, the principal storage facility of the State Water Project, which delivers water to over two-thirds of California's population and provides an average of 34.3 million acre-feet per year of agricultural water to the Central Valley.**



Investments in IRWM planning provides a strong foundation for integrated, multi-objective, collaborative approaches to resource management that results in regionally appropriate solutions and decision-making. The Regional Water Management Group echoes the Water Bond Coalition's emphasis on the challenges faced statewide by water resource agencies to fund critical infrastructure projects and nature-based solutions. Funding for projects is necessary to create systems that are resilient to climate change and natural disasters. Indeed, under-represented communities stand to feel climate change and natural disasters impacts most, and often lack adequate financing mechanisms the IRWM funding could help remedy. IRWM is well suited to meet headwaters and rural community needs through collaborative and inclusive project coordination.

The Upper Feather River region has suffered the effects of catastrophic wildfire, drought, and tree mortality with increasing frequency and severity. Being a very rural, disadvantaged region, the Upper Feather River IRWM Program has filled a vital role in bringing our widely-varied stakeholders together to identify and support region-wide planning and implementation projects that will address climate change vulnerabilities.

**For the reasons stated above, Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group would like to express our strong support for allocation of funding specifically to the IRWM Program as an instrument for the continued implementation of identified Upper Feather River IRWM Plan projects.**

The Upper Feather River IRWM Group appreciates your leadership on water and climate issues and is prepared to answer any questions you may have about our request. Again, **we strongly urge inclusion of an increase to \$660 million in grants directly to IRWM regions to achieve regional and inter-regional water resilience** and look forward to engaging with you further on the importance of investing in locally driven integrated water resource management.

For more information, please contact me at [ufr.contact@gmail.com](mailto:ufr.contact@gmail.com) and (916) 813-0818, or Tracey Ferguson, Plumas County Planning Director, at [traceyferguson@countyofplumas.com](mailto:traceyferguson@countyofplumas.com) and (530) 283-6214.

Sincerely,



Uma Hinman  
Upper Feather River IRWM Coordinator

On Behalf of:

Paul Roen, Chair, Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group

Cc: President Pro Tempore Toni Atkins  
Speaker Anthony Rendon  
Sen. Dave Min, Chair Senate Natural Resources Committee  
Asm. Rebecca Bauer Kahan, Chair Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Asm. Luz Rivas, Chair, Asm. Natural Resources Committee  
Kevin Kiley, Congressional District 3  
Brian Dahle, Senate District 1  
Megan Dahle, Assembly District 1  
Karla Nemeth, Director California Department of Water Resources  
Kristopher Tjernell, Deputy Director California Department of Water Resources