

# Upper Feather River IRWM Regional Water Management Group

## FINAL SUMMARY MINUTES

March 11, 2022

*Approved by the RWMG March 29, 2024*

### **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 and 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 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 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, Plumas County Planning Director, 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 Department of Water Resources (DWR); the final SVGSP 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 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 RWVG 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 rest of the RWVG. Jeffery Greening served on the RWVG from 2014, serving during the development of the Upper Feather River IRWM Plan and its implementation. The seat has remained vacant since his passing in 2019. Members of the RWVG expressed their support for continuing to include a public member from the Almanor Basin on the RWVG. Under Item 1.a., staff was directed present recommendations on the vacant public member seat at the next RWVG 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 RWVG to the IRWM Roundtable of Regions and the state. The RWVG has contracted with Hinman & Associates Consulting since completion of the Upper Feather River IRWM Plan.

Upon motion by Russell Reid and second by Rick Roberti, the RWVG unanimously supported Plumas County's contract with Hinman & Associates Consulting 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, Plumas County Planning Director, supported 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 5<sup>th</sup> Cohort. Through that organization she understood the San Diego Watershed Authority is talking about headwaters funding. She agreed that storage is important as forest health, groundwater, surface water, system retention, and including forest thinning for increased water yield.

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

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

### 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 of two \$4 million payments in 2022. The first payment was received in 2003 and was managed and distributed via the Plumas Watershed Forum established by the Agreement. The Forum has been revived for disbursement of the second payment and the first meeting will be held in April 2022.

The Forum consists of Plumas County representatives (Supervisors Thrall and Engel), 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 to assist with disseminating information regarding the Plumas Watershed Forum to regional stakeholders.

### 4. Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement Project

Uma Hinman and Tracey 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 their 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 the region. The pilot project was implemented by Plumas County Environmental Health 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 noted that it will be important that the Environmental Health Departments determine what needs to be done post-Dixie Fire to support these systems, encouraging advocacy for consolidation at the state level. The lack of grant development/management and financial capacity of these entities must be emphasized. Further, a clear definition of what consolidation means in these rural headwaters regions, 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 Prop 1 IRWM Implementation Round 1 projects currently being implemented in the region are managed by Plumas County (Grantee) for two local project sponsors: Sierraville Public Utilities District (SPUD) and the Indian Valley Community Services District (IVCSD). The IVCSD project has been delayed because of the Dixie Fire. 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.

The RWMG unanimously supported applying the new Drought Funding DAC Set Aside funds amounting to \$525,000 to the SPUD project to ensure the District could proceed with a viable project; Plumas County will be the Grantee and will retain some funds 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: Sierraville Public Utilities District (SPUD) and the Indian Valley Community Services District (IVCSD). The IVCSD project has been delayed because of the Dixie Fire.

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 had received a Cal OES grant to purchase a generator for the project.

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.

#### **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 fire suppression needs.

Upon motion by Sherrie Thrall and second by Rick Roberti, the RWMG unanimously supported allocating all of the Round 2 funds available to the IVCSD and directed staff to assist Plumas County and the IVCSD in preparing and submitting the 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* for filing and posting on the 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 and Uma 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 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. Mr. Greening 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 Departments