

# 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:** February 22, 2024

**Re:** Upper Feather River IRWM Quarterly Report (2023 Quarter 4)

This Quarterly Report covers the fourth quarter 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 – Next RWMG Meeting – SAVE THE DATE!**

Please save the date for the next in-person meeting of the RWMG scheduled for March 29, 2024, starting at 1:00 p.m. in Quincy, CA at 555 Main Street (Planning/Building Services Conference Room); mark your calendars accordingly.

**Prop 1 Round 1 (P1R1) & Prop 1 Round 2 (P1R2) 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. Subsequently, the County has executed three amendments with DWR, including Amendment 1 on October 13, 2022, Amendment 2 on November 10, 2022, and Amendment 3 on July 20, 2023. The amendments included changes in the schedule and budget.

Project	P1R1 (\$)	P1R2 (\$)	UMBDRP (\$)	Total Grant Funding (\$)	% Billed to Date
Grant Admin (Plumas)	70,876	7,185	20,000	98,061	45%
Project 1 (SPUD)	627,660	0	505,000	1,132,660	90%
Project 2 (IVCSD)	304,000	136,512	0	440,512	4%
<b>Grant Award Totals</b>	<b>1,002,536</b>	<b>143,697</b>	<b>525,000</b>	<b>1,671,233</b>	

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

The Sierraville Public Utilities District Project 1 *Alternative Water Source Development Project* is a replacement of the booster station and related infrastructure for their water supply system. The project is nearing completion and approximately 90% has been invoiced to date. Construction was completed in December 2023, consistent with the schedule. Sierraville PUD and Plumas County are working on preparing the Project Completion Report and final invoicing for the project.

## Project 2 – Indian Valley Community Services District (revised budget of \$440,512)

The Indian Valley Community Services District Project 2 *North Main Water Use Efficiency, Reliability, and Extension Project* is an overall effort to upgrade aging and damaged infrastructure that will support the rebuilding of Greenville. Approximately 770 feet of water main pipeline will be replaced, 60 feet of laterals, and 4 new hydrants will be installed. A contractor has been selected, approximately 4% has been invoiced to date, and construction is expected to start in 2024.

## **Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District (SVGMD)**

*California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Restoration Grant Programs: Nature Based Solutions – [Wildlife corridors/ Wetlands and Mountain Meadows]*

The SVGMD in June 2023 was awarded a grant from CDFW in the amount of \$809,076 for a groundwater recharge multi-benefit project pilot study to enhance aquifer recharge and stabilize groundwater levels in areas of decline in the Sierra Valley Subbasin. The overall project objective is to evaluate benefits of groundwater recharge implemented in the headwaters of the Smithneck Creek watershed. This area has been called out by the Airborne Electromagnetic Surveys as one of the most promising recharge locations in the Sierra Valley. Stabilization of declining groundwater levels in this area is expected to provide security for wetland and meadow habitats, surface water systems, water availability for domestic wells serving Disadvantaged Communities (DAC), improve climate resiliency, and support stabilization of groundwater levels in the entire aquifer system. The contract agreement with CDFW was executed in September 2023. Larry Walker Associates, Inc. (LWA) was selected as the preferred contractor by the SVGMD in December 2023, being one of the qualified firms on the established Sierra Valley Subbasin GSP Implementation Activities On-Call Consulting Services List. Work is anticipated to begin in early 2024.

### *DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation Round 2 Grant*

The SVGMD's Sierra Valley Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Implementation and Planning project was awarded full funding (\$5,445,000) by DWR through the Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program's SGMA Implementation Round 2 grant program. The project will assist with all aspects of GSP implementation including data collection and data management, annual reports, outline for five-year update to the GSP, projects and management actions, and grant administration. Grant contract review and execution is in process with the SVGMD and DWR and the project is anticipated to be initiated in early 2024.

### *Plumas Watershed Forum Funding*

The SVGMD's Synergistic Sierra Valley Groundwater Recharge and Irrigation Efficiency Project full proposal for Plumas Watershed Forum funding was officially approved on November 13, 2023, with a total budget of \$1,220,000. The primary goal of the proposed project is to conduct a managed aquifer recharge (MAR) demonstration to evaluate the potential for groundwater recharge to improve groundwater levels in agriculturally dependent regions and evaluate and improve irrigation efficiency practices of ranches that are near the Little Last Chance Creek Recharge area. The contract agreement is under review and expected to go to the Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Board (governed by the Plumas County Board of

Supervisors) for approval in January 2024. Thereafter, the SVGMD will be considering notice(s) of offer(s) of work pursuant to the SVGMD Purchasing Policy Statement of Qualification (SOQ) Procedures to those qualified firms on the established Sierra Valley Subbasin GSP Implementation Activities On-Call Consulting Services List.

### **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.

A DACI Working Group meeting was held via Zoom on November 8, 2023. The meeting focused on updates on the status of the regional DACTI grant programs. Additionally, DWR presented an overview of the Watershed Resilience Pilot Grant Program, which will be focused primarily on the effects of climate change and emphasizes equity. The current availability of funds is \$53 million with planned appropriations of \$108 million in the future. The overall goal for the grant program is to achieve resilience, increase coordination across water related sectors, and align with other state opportunities and programs to ensure consistency. Funding will target grants for drought resilience and assessment of climate risks and focus on areas with highest risk. The next meeting of the DACTI Working Group is scheduled for February 14, 2024.

A quarterly meeting was held via Zoom on December 6, 2023. Topics expanded on DWR's shift towards "Watershed Resiliency" and the need for the IRWM Program to evolve. The CA Water Plan includes funding for watershed resiliency pilot programs, which was discussed at the November 8, 2023 DACTI Working Group.

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

### **FY 2023-24 Financial Summary**

Hinman & Associates Consulting, Inc.'s contract with Plumas County to provide support services to the UFR IRWM Plan Program follows the fiscal year (FY). The FY 2023-24 contract budget was \$20,000, which included support labor as well as website hosting costs. Following is a summary of expenses through 12/31/2023.

<b>Tasks/Expenses</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
Strangeocode Web Hosting Service	276.00
Domain Renewal (GoDaddy)	
<i>UFR IRWM Plan Program Support Services</i>	
Coordinator Activities	8,517.50
<b>FY 2023-24 Total Expenses</b>	<b>8,793.50</b>

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 continues 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. Further, staff continue to research funding opportunities for possible matches with the UFR IRWM Plan implementation project list. For possible matches, staff is coordinating with project sponsors to determine potential eligibility and readiness to proceed for funding. Additional routine tasks included stakeholder email list maintenance, website updates, and regular coordination meetings with Tracey Ferguson, Plumas County Planning Director.

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

The following summarizes the remaining action item from the last meeting of the RWMG and status as of December 31, 2023:

- **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 continues to coordinate with District 3 Plumas County Supervisor, Tom McGowan, to find a new public member to represent the Almanor Basin. Please contact Supervisor McGowan at [tommcgowan@countyofplumas.com](mailto:tommcgowan@countyofplumas.com) with questions and potential candidates for an Almanor Basin UFR IRWM RWMG public member seat representative.

### **Contacts**

The current RWMG officers are Paul Roen, Chair, and Trina Cunningham, Vice Chair, should any pressing UFR IRWM RWMG issues and/or opportunities arise. Please contact Uma Hinman, UFR staff, at [uhinman@comcast.net](mailto:uhinman@comcast.net) or (916) 813-0818 with any questions.