

Upper Feather River IRWM Regional Water Management Group

FINAL SUMMARY MINUTES

For the Regular Meeting
On March 27, 2015

Meeting materials and video recording link are available on the website at:
http://featherriver.org/rwmg_meetings/

Call to Order and Roll Call

Sherrie Thrall, Chair, called the meeting to order on March 27, 2015 at 1:00 PM, at the Plumas County Planning Conference Room, 555 Main Street, Quincy, California.

Members Present:

Sharon Thrall, Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
Paul Roen, Sierra County
Terry Swofford, Plumas County
Russell Reid, Feather River Resource Conservation District
Bill Nunes, Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District
Jim Roberti, Sierra Groundwater Management District
Trina Cunningham, Maidu Summit Consortium
Jeffrey Greening, Public Member
Joe Hoffman, Plumas National Forest (Advisory)

Members Absent:

Tom Yagerhofer, Plumas County Community Development Commission
Quentin Youngblood, Tahoe National Forest (Advisory)
Carol Thornton, Lassen National Forest (Advisory)

Staff Present:

Randy Wilson, Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
Uma Hinman, Uma Hinman Consulting
Zeke Lunder, Deer Creek Resources, Inc.
Leah Wills, Uplands and Forest Management Workgroup Coordinator
Terri Rust, Floodplains, Meadows, Waterbodies Management Workgroup Coordinator
Holly Foster, Agricultural Land Stewardship Workgroup Coordinator

Additions or Deletions from the Agenda

None noted

Public Comment Opportunity

None noted

Announcements / Reports (Part 1, 00:1:36)

Chair Thrall shared information regarding PG&E's relicensing efforts of Lake Almanor (FERC License No. 2105); County comments on the SWRCB Draft EIR were submitted yesterday and can be made available to those who are interested.

Uma Hinman shared information on a PowerPoint presentation by the Roundtable of Regions on the Proposition 84 2015 Implementation Grant Solicitation and Proposition 1 Grant Program.

1. Stakeholder Outreach Updates (Part 1, 00:4:18)

Uma Hinman presented an update on the MOU, tasks and overall budget.

1a. Update on Tribal outreach efforts. Informational. (Part 1, 00:7:37)

Uma Hinman reported that the second Tribal Outreach meeting was held on March 20 in Greenville. The draft goals and objectives were discussed and comments submitted. Additionally, the UFR Tribal Engagement Chart was agreed upon and the Tribal Engagement Plan is in the process of being finalized.

Trina Cunningham from Maidu Summit Consortium summarized topics discussed at the last Tribal Outreach meeting. The Tribes have requested specific contact names for formal consultation with the County. She noted a desire for communication Consortium. Russell Reid asked if the Tribes will be able to put forward several concerns (of consensus) for inclusion in the Plan. Trina noted that at this stage the focus is engagement and participation, with intention for development toward strategizing and consensus. Tribal representatives have been encouraged to develop projects for inclusion in the plan and are encouraged to participate in the Workgroup meetings. Trina mentioned that Tribes from the lower Feather River have expressed some interest in involvement in the process.

Uma Hinman asked for clarification on the Tribes desired line of communication and involvement. Trina clarified that Tribal members will participate in the Workgroups, take information and feedback to the Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC); Trina will communicate feedback and input from the TAC to the RWMG. Either Trina or Sherri will provide updates at RWMG meetings.

1b. Update on Workgroup efforts. Informational. (Part 1, 00:13:41)

Uma Hinman reported that Workgroups have all held their second meetings. The second meetings were focused on identification of issues and potential projects, review/feedback on the draft goals and objectives, review/feedback on the project solicitation form, and selection of priority RMS.

Frank Motzkus, Chair of Municipal Services Communities, provided a summary of the Municipal Services Group Meeting, noting 15 issues were identified and 32 projects drafted during the recent meeting. Aging infrastructure, regulatory requirements, and limited capacity are some of the primary issues throughout the region. The IRWM “call for projects” has been placed on the agenda at the Plumas County Special District Association meeting.

Russell Reid noted that it was going to be difficult to prioritize projects when there will likely be so many projects and parts of the regions that need assistance, particularly for Municipal Services; how can the Workgroup help the RWMG make those decisions? Integration of projects may be a way to address common region-wide issues. The discussion was tabled until Item 7.

John Sheehan, Chair of the Uplands and Forest Workgroup, noting the Workgroup identified a number of strategies to address resource management strategies and overarching issues. The RWMG will need to sort out overlaps in Workgroup RMS selections.

Developed geographic strategies rather than themes: snow zones, dry lightning ridgeline strategy, roadway/railroad ignition strategy, wildland urban interface fire strategy, fire liability property line fire bumper strategy, critical habitat fire buffer strategy, and landscape ecological restoration strategy. Deer Creek Resources is working on maps to detail these strategies.

John noted that a two-step project submittal process would be beneficial to help the Workgroups focus and develop priority projects. Sherrie noted that the Quincy Library Group had developed a lot of projects that may be beneficial to bring into this process.

Holly Foster, Coordinator for the Agricultural Land Stewardship Workgroup, expressed appreciation to Holly George for assisting her in the Workgroups outreach and efforts. Holly reported that the Workgroup added a fifth goal and two additional objectives (summarized in Item 2). The Workgroup brainstormed a number of project ideas and issues, which they will be working on to refine.

Terry Rust, Coordinator for the Meadows, Floodplains and Waterbodies (MFW) Workgroup, reported they identified 22 issues and 19 potential projects. The Workgroup would appreciate the two-step project submittal process. Next meeting will be April 24th.

1c. Draft informational pamphlet. (Part 1, 00:37:09)

Uma Hinman presented the draft informational pamphlet and discussed proposed future distribution upon approval. Questions and comments were offered by RWMG members. Trina noted that although not a formal Workgroup, the Tribal Advisory Committee should be added to the list of Coordinators. Sherrie Thrall noted that the TAC should also be added to the Workgroup update list. Trina's UFR email will be the contact for the TAC.

Pamphlet will be posted on the website, distributed through Workgroup Coordinators, Chair and Alternate. Also put a stack in the Plumas County lobby.

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Jeffrey Greening the draft informational pamphlet was unanimously approved. **(Part 1, 00:40:29)**

2. Resource Management Strategies (Part 1, 00:41:14 and continued in Part 2)

Uma Hinman presented, requesting the RWMG (1) discuss and possibly assign Workgroup priority selections, as well as (2) determine whether remaining RMS are applicable to the UFR Region and assign them to Workgroups for developing recommendations. Questions and comments were offered by RWMG Members and Workgroup Coordinators as the strategies were reviewed individually.

RWMG provided direction that Workgroups select additional RMS to address those RMS that have not yet been selected. Assignment of remaining unselected RMS will be made at the next RWMG meeting.

Terri also noted that Workgroup integration meeting may provide an opportunity for addressing gaps and overlap of strategies.

The following strategies were removed from consideration due to irrelevancy to the region, by consensus:

- RMS 4: Conveyance – Delta
- RMS 9: Desalination (brackish and sea-water)
- RMS 12: Surface Storage – CALFED/State

Bill Nunes requested clarification on priority RMS selections and project submittals. Project submitted for consideration should be addressing those RMS that are selected as relevant to the region, and for inclusion in the Plan.

3. IRWM Plan Draft Goals and Objectives (Part 2, 00:00:00)

Paul Roen asked if this item should be considered with Item No. 7 Project Selection and Prioritization. Bill Nunes asked if the objectives are prioritized. Uma noted that it is up to the RWVG whether or not to prioritize the objectives. Sherrie noted she would rather not prioritize objectives. Bill and Paul Roen noted concern that prioritizing objectives would automatically make some projects more important than others with little room to determine which may be more beneficial for the region. Sherrie noted that the ranking criteria is intended to make the project selection process fair. Further, that the RWVG should ultimately be able to elevate those projects determined by the RWVG to have greater value to the region.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding the proposed ranking criteria in Item No. 7.

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Russell Reid, the Plan goals and objectives was unanimously approved. **(Part 2, 00:13:09)**

4. Administrative Draft Baseline Technical Study (Part 2, 00:15:00)

Uma Hinman introduced the staff draft Baseline Technical Study and presented the database and noted three data gaps to be addressed: 1) conjunctive water use and conjunctive water management resources, 2) recreation planning resources, and 3) water supply and management plans. She acknowledged the extensive work by Jessica Hankins and Zeke Lunder on the database, noting this is still a work in progress. Questions and comments were offered by RWVG members and direction was given to staff to place the database on the website. Uma confirmed that it is a work in progress and will be continually updated through the process.

5. Draft Project Solicitation Package (Part 2, 00:27:40)

Uma Hinman presented the Project Solicitation Package (PSP), noting that it was distributed through the Workgroups and Tribal Outreach Coordinator for review and input and no change requests were received. There were a number of requests for a “Conceptual Project Form” to assist potential project proponents with brainstorming projects and to submit ideas in the form of potential projects for future tracking in the Plan.

Uma reviewed the modifications to the forms that were made for clarification and efficiency. Questions and comments were offered by RWVG members.

Sherrie suggested that the phased approach may provide for an initial vetting to reduce time intensive application efforts that may not be eligible.

Terri suggested adding a question to the Conceptual Project Summary form that asks whether or not the project proponent is ready to move forward on the long form. RWVG affirmed the addition.

Russell Reid asked if it was a reasonable form in the world of grant writing, and is it consistent with other IRWM regions. Uma confirmed that it was based on various forms from other IRWM regions. She also mentioned that examples of awarded grant applications are available to review on DWR's IRWM website, and mentioned the examples available as handouts at the meeting.

Holly Foster mentioned that the Ag Workgroup had mentioned that capacity is an issue and how can we overcome that. Randy noted that addressing capacity is included in the Plan objectives.

Upon motion by Russell Reid and second by Paul Roen, the Project Solicitation Package (both forms, with noted addition) was unanimously approved for release. **(Part 2, 00:44:44)**

Deadline for submissions

Release forms: April 1

Deadline for Conceptual Project Summary (mandatory): June 1

Deadline for Project Information Form: August 1

Submittal of the Conceptual Project Summary is mandatory for the project submittal process. Feedback will be provided by the RWVG by mid-June. Project Information Form will be due August 1. The RWVG will vet projects immediately following the deadline for the conceptual project summary and provide feedback to the project proponents.

Project advocates may be present during the project vetting phase so as to be on hand to answer questions, which will be a public meeting. Randy suggested that we may need to find another space to meet that will accommodate folks. Sherrie suggested the Mineral Building at the Fairgrounds.

A ten minute break was taken.

Continuation of previous discussion...

Uma requested clarification of what criteria the RWVG would use for the initial vetting of projects: DWR's minimum eligibility requirements and including that the projects address at least one objectives, etc. Joe Hoffman suggested the RWVG provide feedback on collaboration, integration, and direction to project proponents regarding further development of projects.

Michael Jackson asked how does the public participate in the process and how do they know the process and results of the vetting and selection process. Sherrie and Paul noted that these were Brown Act meetings and that all meetings will be open to the public. Michael encouraged a clear

and open process. Uma clarified that the initial vetting of the Conceptual Project Summaries will consist of whether or not the project meets minimum eligibility requirements.

Terri Rust noted that the Conceptual Project Summary would benefit from adding the submitting entity; which will be included on the form.

Signatory to the MOU will be one of the minimum eligibility requirements. Sherrie Thrall noted that a signed MOU will be required for the Conceptual Project Summary phase.

6. Schedule Outreach Meetings (Part 3, 00:00:05)

Uma Hinman presented the proposal for two Project Solicitation meetings in different areas of the Region, a Workgroup Integration workshop and a Climate Change workshop. The project solicitation meetings are to be scheduled for first week of May. RWVG recommended 6:00 p.m., mid-week. Locations to be Chester and Portola, back to back.

It was suggested that the Workgroup Integration and Climate Change workshop be held on the same day, with one occurring in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Responding to a question regarding the purpose of the Climate Change workshop, Uma explained that it is a requirement of DWR's Guidelines and the Grant Work Plan. It is intended to be an open forum to present the climate change technical study and to get feedback on the study and regionally specific adaptations and recommendations.

The Workgroup Integration workshop should be held before the next RWVG meeting. Set for Wednesday or Friday in late August, early September. Regular RWVG meetings will be at the end of July and September. RWVG requested a summary of meeting dates/times be sent via email.

7. Draft Project Selection and Prioritization Criteria (Part 3, 00:27:00)

Uma Hinman presented proposed criteria for project selection and prioritization. A suggestion was to have two lists of projects for inclusion in the Plan: prioritized projects and tracked projects. Tracked projects will be those projects that are not ready to be move forward and be prioritized.

Sherrie Thrall discussed their experiences with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy project selection process. Project scoring/ranking didn't always reflect on-the-ground priorities.

Russell Reid suggested that the criteria needs to score all projects objectively, then select the top scorers more subjectively.

Carl suggested adding "objection" to the project scoring form.

Bill Nunes expressed concerns that once the scoring criteria is adopted, projects will nearly be selected already. Some criteria are not as important as some of the other criteria; not properly weighted. Bill noted that it isn't prudent to adopt the scoring criteria today. Uma clarified that it is not an item for adoption today, but for discussion and feedback. Bill recommended removing additional points for multiple objectives – if a project addresses an objective it gets a point, otherwise not.

Sherrie Thrall recommended removing Partners from the scoring criteria all together. Possibly assign something for true partnerships that are committed to seeing projects through.

Russell Reid requested a matrix to be used for the actual scoring. How do we do that initial screening? Do they have to rank the projects? Understanding is that ranking the projects is required.

Sherrie Thrall recommended removing shovel/ready project criteria because many small entities will likely be unable to put forward projects that are ready to go.

It was suggested that if there are no quantifiable selection criteria, perception of projects selected could be challenging. Urged methodology for equitable application of project scoring criteria.

Uma suggested another approach would be to categorize by category which would be more applicable to individual grant solicitations.

Joe Hoffman suggested another option may be to assign a weighting factor to those criteria that are more important to the region.

Bill Nunes suggested moving Community Benefits to just below Statewide Priorities on the scoring criteria list. Change to “community of interest” so as not to limit it to geographic definition.

It was suggested the “impact if not funded” be removed. Frank Motzkus noted that it is an important criteria for municipal services districts. Bill suggested that “endangered species risk” may not be appropriate in that criteria.

RWMG recommended removal of Preliminary Engineering/Scientific Backing from criteria.

RWMG decided that “project cost” should not be a leveling criteria.

Trina Cunningham requested that whatever is put forward is run past the group.

Randy suggested Uma send Word file of criteria to RWMG to provide some feedback. Members will provide further feedback to Uma Hinman via email.

8. Next Meeting (Part 2, 00:30:00)

Trina Cunningham noted that she is graduating on May 15, so she'll be more available after that.

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, May 29th, 2015 at 1:00pm.

9. Consent Agenda (Part 3, 00:32:00)

9a. RWMG Approval of Meeting Minutes for March 27, 2015

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Jeffrey Greening the RWMG Meeting Minutes for March 27, 2015 were unanimously approved.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.