

Upper Feather River IRWM Regional Water Management Group

FINAL MEETING SUMMARY

For the Regular Meeting
On May 29, 2015

Meeting materials are available on the website at: http://featherriver.org/rwmg_meetings/.
Note: due to a technical error, no meeting video is available.

Call to Order and Roll Call

Sherrie Thrall, Chair, called the meeting to order on May 29, 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
Roger Diefendorf, Plumas County Community Development Commission
Trina Cunningham, Maidu Summit Consortium
Jeffrey Greening, Public Member
Joe Hoffman, Plumas National Forest (Advisory)

Members Absent:

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
Paul Lackovic, Deer Creek Resources, Inc.
Leah Wills, Uplands and Forest Management Workgroup Coordinator
Terri Rust, Floodplains, Meadows, Waterbodies Management Workgroup Coordinator
Sherri Norris, California Indian Environmental Alliance
Lauren Hughes, California Indian Environmental Alliance

Additions or Deletions from the Agenda

None noted

Public Comment Opportunity

None noted

Announcements / Reports

Uma Hinman provided a report on the IRWM Plan Update project to date, including a summary of task work and overall budget expenditures. Work completed is reflected appropriately in the budget expenditures to date.

Consent Agenda

a. RWMG Approval of Meeting Minutes for May 29, 2015

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Terry Swofford, the Meeting Minutes for May 29, 2015 were unanimously approved.

Regular Agenda

1. Stakeholder Outreach Updates

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

1a. Update on Tribal outreach efforts. Informational.

Sherri Norris of California Indian Environmental Alliance, Tribal Outreach Coordinator, provided an update on Tribal coordination. A meeting of the Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) was held on May 18th. Sherri noted that the TAC is working on developing four projects to submit for the IRWM Plan project consideration.

The TAC have extended an offer to interested project proponents to provide Tribal Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and collaboration with the Tribes on projects. Such a collaboration may make projects stand out to DWR and make them more competitive in future grant solicitations.

Other topics covered in the TAC meeting included selection of priority RMS and review of the Administrative Draft Baseline Study.

During this meeting it was determined that the TAC would most effectively work as a separate Workgroup.

1b. Update on Workgroup efforts. Informational.

Uma Hinman reported that Workgroups have all held their third meetings. The third meetings were focused on identification of linkages between issues, Plan objectives, and resource management strategies; review and identification of additional RMS selections; and discussion of the project development process.

Uma Hinman, Coordinator of the Municipal Services Workgroup, provided a summary of the Municipal Services Group Meeting, noting that there were 15 participants at the April 17th meeting. Next meeting TBD in mid-June.

Carl Felts, Chair of the Meadows, Meadows, Floodplains and Waterbodies Workgroup, provided a summary of their April 24th meeting. Next meeting is scheduled for June 26th at 9am.

Mike De Lasaux, Chair of the Uplands and Forest Workgroup, provided a summary of the May 12th meeting. Deer Creek Resources has been working on mapping to support their Workgroup's efforts. Next meeting is scheduled for June 30th at 9am.

Willo Vieira, Chair for the Agricultural Land Stewardship Workgroup, provided a summary of the Workgroup's May 26th meeting. The Workgroup selected Willo as their Chair at the May meeting. Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 20th at 2pm.

Uma reported that two press releases were sent to the Plumas and Sierra newspapers: (1) notice of “call for projects” on April 8th, and (2) notice of two public project solicitation meetings in Chester on May 5 and Portola on May 6.

2. Resource Management Strategies

Uma Hinman presented, requesting the RWMG (1) discuss and possibly assign unselected RMS to Workgroups. The seven remaining RMS were reviewed and assigned to Workgroups. Sherri Norris and Trina Cunningham noted that the TAC would likely be interested in providing RMS recommendations for a number of RMS with the caveat that the TAC would need to approve those tasks at a later date. The following assignments were made:

- RMS 5 Conveyance regional/local: Agricultural Lands Stewardship
- RMS 10 Precipitation Enhancement: Floodplains, Meadows, Waterbodies Management
- RMS 16 Matching water quality to use: Tribal Advisory Committee
- RMS 18 Salt and salinity management: Municipal Services
- RMS 23 Land use management: assigned to all
- RMS 29 Water and culture: Tribal Advisory Committee
- RMS 31 Other Strategies: assigned to all

It was clarified that the assignments were solely to make sure that the regionally relevant RMS had an identified responsible Workgroup. All Workgroups are welcome to submit recommendations on any of the RMS.

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Bill Nunes, the RMS assignments were unanimously approved.

3. Project Development Process

3a. Project Solicitation Meetings. Informational.

Uma Hinman presented information and feedback from the two public project solicitation meetings, which were held on May 5th in Chester and May 6th in Portola. Participant feedback included (1) concern regarding project submittal deadlines, (2) whether meadow restoration projects would be accepted, and (3) concerns regarding a general lack of capacity in putting together and administering grants.

3b. Joint Workgroup Integration/Climate Change Workshop

Uma Hinman requested approval of the tentatively scheduled day of workshops for August 21, 2015 from 9am to 4pm at the Plumas County Fairgrounds Tulsa Building.

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Bill Nunes, the joint Workgroup Integration/Climate Change Workshop schedule was unanimously approved.

3c. Draft Eligibility Worksheet

Uma Hinman introduced a draft eligibility worksheet for use in the initial vetting of conceptual projects (Step 1). Uma noted three elements from the PRC that were inadvertently omitted and

recommended their inclusion in the list. Additionally, Uma suggested adding a review factor for land owner approval or support for projects.

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Bill Nunes, the draft eligibility worksheet was unanimously approved with the noted additions.

3d. Request for Special RWMG Meeting

Uma Hinman requested the RWMG schedule the special RWMG meeting to review the Conceptual Project Summary (Step 1) submittals, suggesting mid-June. It was suggested that project proponents attend so as to answer questions that may arise during the review.

Upon motion by Paul Roen and second by Bill Nunes, the special meeting was unanimously approved for Monday, June 15, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in the Plumas County Planning Conference Room.

3e. Memorandum of Understanding

Uma Hinman provided an update on the submittal of signed MOUs, stating that only nine had been received to date. The RWMG had previously made a signed MOU a minimum eligibility requirement for the Conceptual Project Summaries (Step 1). Uma noted that several project proponents had indicated their inability to meet that deadline due to Board meeting dates, etc., including Plumas County. After some discussion, the RWMG extended the deadline for MOU submittals to 5:00 p.m. on June 14th, the day before the special RWMG meeting.

4. Project Monitoring

Sherrie Thrall opened the discussion on Project Monitoring, which will apply to beyond the IRWM planning period when projects are applying for and receiving grant funding. The question raised for discussion is “how to manage projects during implementation?” There was some discussion on whether the projects should be monitored by the project proponent or a third party. Monitoring should be objective, transparent, available, and science-based. There was some discussion regarding CEQA/NEPA as well, and where that might fit into the Project Monitoring Policy.

It was recommended by several that there be a central location for hosting the monitoring results, such as the IRWM website or similar site. It was noted that the hosting of project monitoring results would only apply to those projects which are sanctioned by the IRWM RWMG. Randy and Sherrie noted that they could ask the Plumas County Flood Control District Board to discuss it at their regular June 9th meeting.

Tim Beals noted that the Policy, depending on how it is worded, could affect project budgets; consequently it will be important to establish project monitoring policy prior to project proponents submitting grant applications and budgets. Tim also noted that CEQA/NEPA can significantly extend and derail project schedules, which would impact grants.

Randy Wilson suggested that Policy wording should clarify that CEQA/NEPA is the responsibility of the project proponents, thereby necessitating a project sponsor that can act as a lead agency for purposes of CEQA/NEPA.

The RWVG directed staff to develop a Draft Project Monitoring Policy for RWVG review at the June 15th special meeting.

5. Draft Project Selection and Prioritization Criteria

Uma Hinman presented two proposals for project selection and ranking criteria. The first was a modified version of the initial proposal presented at the March 27th RWVG meeting, and the second was a methodology based on the Upper Pit River IRWM Plan.

Staff suggested a method for listing projects that consisted of categorizing projects and would result in ranked projects under each category, thereby reducing some of the conflict and sense of competition. Staff presented some options for categorizing projects including by workgroup, UFR IRWM Plan goals, and tiers with project readiness being the most likely top tier. Staff noted that the established Workgroups are a reflection of the resource management strategies contained in the California Water Plan that were most prominent in the UFR region. Additionally, by setting the Workgroups as categories, it recognized the substantial work effort of Workgroup participants and reflected the integration that was already being developed within the Workgroups. The RWVG unanimously agreed that projects would be categorized by Workgroups, with the addition of the Tribal Advisory Committee, which was included as separate Workgroup earlier in the meeting.

The RWVG worked primarily with the first proposal, directing a number of modifications. Remove the following considerations:

- Matching funds
- Leveling criteria of number of projects submitted

Move the following review factors from assignment of points to a simple “yes/no” criteria:

- Technical feasibility of the project
- Economic feasibility
- Project status
- Contribution of the project in adapting to the effects of climate change
- Contribution of the project in reducing GHG emissions as compared to project alternatives

Sherri Norris suggested making sure the minimum requirements for Proposition 84 were included, as required in the Proposition 84 IRWM Guidelines, as well as integrate some of the Proposition 1 Guidelines to get a jump on that criteria.

Workgroup Coordinators will continue to coordinate with each other and work to integrate projects. Projects that cross categories (Workgroups) will need to be assigned to one category. Project proponents should indicate which category they feel their project should be assigned; if none (or multiple) selected, the RWVG will make that determination.

CEQA/NEPA was again brought up in discussion. It was noted that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will need to have a lead agency sponsor for the purpose of CEQA. Randy noted that the requirement for CEQA preparation can be passed down through the grant agreement at the time of grant award.

The RWVG directed staff to make the changes described above and bring the project selection/ranking criteria back for review and consideration at the June 15th special meeting.

Uma Hinman requested clarification that the weighting factor for each of the scoring criteria would be addressed at a later date, which was affirmed.

6. Next Meeting

A special meeting was scheduled for Monday, June 15th, 2015 at 10:00am. Meeting topics will include draft project monitoring policy, review directed changes to project selection/ranking criteria, and review of the conceptual project summaries.

The next regular meeting was scheduled for Friday, July 31st, 2015 at 1:00pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:00 p.m.