

New Modeling Confirms Water Will Be Available Through Future New Eel-Russian Diversion Facility

Analysis reinforces the region's path forward with new diversion infrastructure, secured water rights, and expanded storage to protect long term water reliability following PG&E decommissioning of Potter Valley Project

(Ukiah, CA — 8/9/26) New water supply modeling confirms that water would be available for diversion from the Eel River into the Russian River watershed through the proposed New Eel-Russian Facility, including during drought years.

The analysis, completed by Sonoma Water, evaluated how water transfers would have occurred in past years, under the diversion rules that have now been established in the 2025 multi-party [Water Diversion Agreement](#). It modeled potential transfers through the NERF over the past 13 years and found that water would have been available for diversion in every year and across all water-year types.

“The modeling confirms that the New Eel-Russian Facility can work, and that water will truly be available for diversion, every year, including during drought years,” said Dave Koball, Alternate Commissioner for Mendocino County IWPC. “It also reinforces why diversion and storage must be pursued together. Additional storage will allow us to capture more water when it is available and preserve it for the farms, businesses and communities that need it later in the year.”

The modeling shows that there would have been possible water transfers through the NERF that ranged from approximately 18,000 acre-feet during the severe 2021 drought, to approximately 86,000 acre-feet in the wet year of 2017. For the most recent 21 months analyzed (Oct 2024 – June 2026), the modeling shows that stored transfers through the NERF would have totaled approximately 52,000 acre-feet, compared to the approximately 56,000 acre-feet in stored transfers that were actually observed under the existing system. These values are preliminary and will be updated as new information becomes available.

In general, the average annual volume available for transfer through the NERF under the Water Diversion Agreement will be similar to transfers that have occurred historically under the Potter Valley Project's current license. The major difference is the timing of water availability for transfers. More water would be available during wet winter months, when existing storage options may already be full. That reinforces the need to pursue additional, expanded storage options.

The analysis found that during non-drought years, an average of approximately 40,000 acre-feet of additional water could be put to use each year if more storage were available in the Russian River watershed.

These findings reinforce the efforts of IWPC and regional partners to respond to PG&E's decommissioning plans through a coordinated plan to:

- Uphold the multi-party Water Diversion Agreement, which provides the legal framework for continued diversions after PG&E's exit.
- Support the Eel-Russian Project Authority's work to design, permit and construct the NERF to move water from the Eel River into the Russian River watershed.
- Expand regional storage so water available during wetter months can be captured for use during the dry season and drought years.

"We have the essential elements of a workable solution: an agreement protecting continued diversions, a locally governed agency advancing the new facility, and identified opportunities to expand storage," said Mari Rodin, IWPC Commissioner and City of Ukiah Councilmember. "The modeling confirms that the region is moving in the right direction. Our focus now is on putting those pieces into place."

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