

*Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control
& Water Conservation Improvement District*

General Manager's Report for December 2022

Presented at Regular Meeting of Monday, January 9, 2023

Priority 1: Security ~ Ensure reliable, resilient, and available sources of water.

(1: Improved river & reservoir operations. 2: Fair & reliable inter-basin. 3: Expanded water sources. 4: Increased storage capacity)

See also the Agenda Item on Water Supply Conditions

2-Russian River Water Forum: The Project Management Advisory Team continues to meet, discussing interview findings, preparing briefings, developing draft Forum structure and outreach materials. Roll out of public outreach expected in late January, early February.

3-Water Right Applications: Meetings were held with RRFC's engineering consultants and Sonoma Water to expand and refine the Water Availability Analysis (WAA) and an time extension was requested to finalize the work. A Status Conference with the State Water Board's Administrative Hearing Office was held, however, due to uncontrollable conditions, the Conference was continued to Monday, January 30, 2023. During the brief meeting in December, the Administrative Hearing Officer clarified public comment dates and acknowledged the District's collaborative work with formal protestants and stakeholders.

Priority 2: Collaboration ~ Work with partners to achieve aligned goals for a common benefit.

(1: Trusted relationships with community partners for regional water security. 2: Improved diversity, equity, and inclusion in the stewardship of water resources. 3: Expanded relationships with non-traditional partners and stakeholders in pursuit of enhanced Environmental Stewardship.)

1-Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA): The GSA continues to coordinate with Mendocino County in developing an ordinance to outline the well-permitting process in compliance with the Governor's Executive Order. The GSA Board met twice in December and the GSA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met once (see Meetings section for more information). The GSA submitted an application for the Dept of Water Resources (DWR) Implementation Grant and the District provided a support letter. Work continues coordinating the 2023 workshops and update presentations to stakeholders.

2-Russian River Water Forum: (See Priority 1)

2&3- Expanded and Inclusive Partnerships: The Water Forum Advisory Team representatives met with Redwood Valley Rancheria representatives, providing a background and overview of the forum, receiving feedback and questions. It was a very positive experience and Tribal representatives expressed eagerness to participate and offer support and help.

Priority 3: Advocacy ~ Influence outreach, education, funding, regulation, and legislation in support of equitable water resource stewardship.

(1: Improved public awareness and understanding of the importance of water issues. 2: State and Federal governmental policy and funding support for the region.)

Nothing to report outside of advocacy work done in Russian River Water Forum, Groundwater Sustainability Agency, and other work.

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Priority 4: Use ~ Ensure effective and beneficial use of water as a public resource.

(1: Maximum beneficial use of water under District water right license. 2: Strategic use of water by customers.)

1-Water Accounting: Significant time has been dedicated to preparing the annual water reporting to the State Water Resources Control Board. Reporting requirements are shifting from calendar year to water year (Oct 1 – Sept 30) and it is the first year when final reports are due February 1st instead of April 1st. Challenges include meter failure or recording discrepancies, access to meters due to weather, upgrading the conversion program, reporting for the Water Sharing Program, and continued clarification with Customers on allocating water use to District contract vs own water rights. A preliminary report will be made by the deadline, however an amendment is expected at a later date.

Priority 5: Administration ~ Foster sustainable leadership and management of agency resources.

(1: Capable and high quality executive leadership. 2: Engaged, diverse, and knowledgeable Board leadership. 3: Effective systems and human resources to execute the strategic plan. 4: Sound and sustainable management of District finances.)

1-Executive Leadership: Attended the Department of Water Resources (DWR) LunchMAR series on How Beaver Restoration Can Benefit California's Watersheds. Attended a webinar on Demystifying Communications Strategies for Diverse Communities, sponsored by ACWA. Attended a webinar discussion hosted by Secretary Wade Crowfoot with biodiversity champions from around the globe, live from Montreal at the COP 15 global meeting. Highlights from this pivotal COP 15 global meeting were shared and a discussion of how California is pushing for faster, more impactful action to protect nature across our planet.

2-Board Leadership: Board members were provided with further education and mandatory training options currently available.

4-Finances: Continuing work with District Accountant and Auditor to address financial planning, reporting, and enhancement. The FY 2021-2022 audit is underway and end of calendar year tasks nearly complete.

Community Meetings Attended This Month

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors (12/6/22): Assemblymember Wood provided an end of year update.

Upper Russian River Water Agency (URRWA) (12/7/22): Cancelled

Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Board (12/8/22): After careful consideration, the Board approved the Implementation Grant application, authorizing the ad hoc committee to make final updates, edits, and approve for staff to submit. An update was provided on the independent GSA website development and the Board approved a contract with a consultant to develop, host, and maintain the website.

Mendocino County Inland Water & Power Commission (MC IWPC) (12/8/22): The Commission approved filing a Motion to Intervene in the issue of PG&E license reopening with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC.) Budget update was provided, indicating there are currently sufficient funds for the workload. A presentation of the Sonoma Water and MC IWPC funded Potter Valley storage study will be given at the Potter Valley Irrigation District (PVID) January meeting.

Hopland Public Utility District (12/8/22): No one from the District attended the meeting.

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North Coast Water Resource Quality Control Board (12/8/22): (1) A new Land Acknowledgement was shared, which will be memorialized in each Agenda Packet and on the website. (2) St. John is shifting gears after 10 yrs as the Executive Director to a new role as a Climate Specialist. Valeria Quinto has been appointed the new ED. She has served on the North Coast Board and was the Executive Director of the Sonoma Resource Conservation District. Matt shared some complimentary comments during the meeting. (3) State Water Board Vice Chair complimented the panelists of the recent ACWA Conference session on the Upper Russian River Water Sharing Program, including GM Salomone. She also shared that the North Coast region led the way in urban CA conservation in October with a 23% reduction from October 2020 (Healdsburg: 36%, Santa Rosa: 30%.) These numbers only consider cities – no Ag or the small water districts in the region.

North Coast Resource Partnership (12/9/22): The Leadership Council received a report and voted on the Prop 1 Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) Round Two Project Selection. There was some opposition expressed in public comment, but the Council approved the recommendations presented. A potential

Willow County Water District (12/12/22): OPERATIONS: Parts for Spanish Canyon Tank telemetry are being shipped. Had another main line leak to fix up there. Still running manual operation on tank. Still waiting on surveyor to respond with proposal for easement locating. The water line replacement grant for Willow may be coming through for \$500k of the \$1.3M requested. SERVICE CONTRACTS: Working on annual updates to service district contracts. Redwood Valley - Surplus water from RRFC in RV used about 200 AF. Need to talk with RRFC if more surplus will be available for frost and irrigation next year. Equipment has been ordered for SCADA upgrade at RV treatment plant. PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION: The next ad hoc schedule for Jan 10th. At a previous ad hoc meeting, all the districts legal counsels met and consensus was the current draft agreement is not workable. Big concern is how water enterprise fund would be used proportionally. City is saying fund only pays for water related costs and expenses. DWR funds may be more viable than Waterboard funds. State funding is concerned if existing districts remain intact then it isn't a consolidation. If City annexes all of Willow and Millview, those districts will dissolve. LAFCo process and county tax sharing are part of consolidation/annexation processes. GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY FUNDING: GM Walker reached out to Groundwater Sustainability Agency for more information on the invoice received for annual contributions and a letter and budget breakdown was received. The Board approved payment of the annual dues.

Board of Supervisors (12/12/22): The BoS held an extensive budget discussion. They approved the Professional Services Agreement with EKI Environment & Water, Inc. in the amount of \$223,000 through December 31, 2023, to Serve as The Water Resource Specialist and to Create a Mendocino County Water Resource Team to Serve as the Mendocino County Water Agency (Countywide.) The lead for EKI is Amir Mani, previously with Larry Walker Associates and developed the model for the Groundwater Sustainability Agency who is looking forward to working with local water leaders again in a collaborative process. The BoS also funded the Resource Conservation District for 2 years out of the drought line item under PG&E funds.

Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Board (12/15/22): The Board received reports on compliance issues around serving on the Board and meeting logistics, Budget update, DWR facilitation support services on the Communication and Engagement Plan, and the recent public workshop on well permitting. The Board approved updates to two consultant contracts, directed staff on potential funding opportunities, and approved the Rate and Fee Study RFP.

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Millview County Water District (12/20/22): OPERATIONS: Installing cellular meters where existing close range radio units are failing. \$100k for a major change out. Supplier is backlogged. Well 6 pump house building - issues with getting building permit and need for full plan set. PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION: Willow GM Walker reported meetings continue, though will pause over holidays. He reported all parties agree on need for consolidation. Discussions continue on retention of assets, governance, enterprise fund, and district "buckets." Millview Legal Counsel Chris Neary passed out a copy of draft agreement with redlines from the Willow attorney. Chris Neary, Phil Williams (City Attorney), and Walker will be meeting soon. Hopefully will have rough draft for Millview to consider in January. GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY FUNDING: The Board approved payment of the annual dues. DROUGHT UPDATE: PGE released info about not fixing powerhouse.

Calpella County Water District (12/21/22): Cancelled due to lack of quorum.

City of Ukiah (12/21/22): Nothing to note

Redwood Valley County Water District (12/15/22): Willow GM Walker gave verbal report out of agricultural water use survey (no written report) and reported 111 acre feet of water was sold to agricultural customers, breaking even on cost of service. Walker reported RRFC has asked for water demands for January 2023 and based on past results, about 40 acre feet would be sufficient. CONSOLIDATION: Walker reported there have been additional meetings with attorneys and Redwood Valley's attorney is heavily involved. GRANT FUNDED PROJECT: Consultant LACO provided an update on groundwater resource evaluation project including a desktop study and geophysical survey. No information yet available on monitoring wells at former elementary school property. The Board approved mapping services proposal from LACO. GSA: Board approved payment of annual fees. DEBT: Board discussed the Bureau of Reclamation letter drafted by legal counsel. Legal counsel reached out to debt collector about options. Recommendation to wait a month on pursuing action and have legal counsel make a presentation. Debt will have an impact on credit score and interest rate. OPEN BOARD SEAT: It will be posted and Board will interview candidate. OFFICER APPOINTMENTS: Boar members Gaska and Schoeneman were both nominated to the President position. With no consensus or majority, the issue was tabled until the January meeting following appointment of open seat (to break the tie.)

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) (12/19/22): The Commission approved both the City of Ukiah and the Ukiah Valley Sanitation District Municipal Services Review and Sphere of Influence updates. This was a considerable milestone. The Commission membership is experiencing a large turnover, with all Special District representative seats empty, including the alternate, and the loss of both the Chair and Vice Chair. Interim officers were appointed: Chair: Commissioner Mulheren and Vice Chair: Commissioner Ward.

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Prepared and submitted to the Board of Trustees by: *Elizabeth Salomone, General Manager*