

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

STAFF REPORT

To: Board of Trustees
From: E. Salomone, General Manager
Meeting: Monday, November 7, 2022
RE: Agenda Item 4: Water Supply Conditions Update & District Response

The Strategic Plan relevant priorities are: **Security** through ensuring reliable, resilient, and available sources of water; **Advocacy** in support of equitable water resource stewardship; and **Use** of water in effective and beneficial ways as a public resource, all in alignment with the District's Mission to steward water resources for the benefit of people and environment.

Inter-Basin Diversion of Water Through PG&E Owned "Potter Valley Project"

PG&E is still operating the inter-basin diversion through Potter Valley Project under a FERC Variance Order variance and convening the PG&E Drought Working Group (DWG) every two weeks. Due to the reduction in demand from the Potter Valley Irrigation District (PVID) on its contract with PG&E, diversions have dropped to and starting November 1, PG&E will divert 5 cfs for PVID and 5 cfs for the East Branch RR. The flow variance will remain in place until storage at Lake Pillsbury is at or exceeds 36,000 acre feet (af) at which time the minimum required flow in the East Fork RR will increase to 45 cfs. **Power Generation:** PG&E is currently compiling a long-term plan and schedule for submittal to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), due December 15, 2022, in accordance with its February 7, 2022 filing. PG&E has committed to updating the Russian river water managers when it updates FERC.

Lake Mendocino and the Mainstem Upper Russian River

Lake Mendocino storage level on October 31, 2022 was 37,963 af, down from 41,528 af on September 26, 2022. Irrigation and harvest season has come to a close, reducing demand on the water system significantly. Maintaining soil moisture throughout the winter months can help to reduce water demand in the summer months. Last week's light precipitation and recent drops in temperature are helpful though much more precipitation is needed to recover from the multiple year drought.

Curtailments in the Upper Russian River

The State Water Board updated the curtailment list as of November 1, 2022. RRFC's main water right, License 13898, is now curtailed. Any diversions occurring under this license will be allocated fully to the use of stored water.

The number of affected water rights and claims in the recent curtailment update is at 730 appropriative water rights, including 725 from the mainstem and tributaries in the upper portion of the Russian River Watershed. The additional scope of curtailments with this update is driven by seasonal increases in water diversion demands and reduced water deliveries from the Eel River diversion through Potter Valley Project. Additionally, appropriators in the tributaries have a lower priority than riparian demands, including those riparian diversions along the mainstem of the Russian River. The light precipitation forecasted for early November does not appear that it will impact the scope of curtailments. A revised Curtailment Status List will be posted should supply conditions change with additional precipitation beyond current forecasts.

(Continued...)

The Upper Russian River Voluntary Water Sharing Agreement Program

The Program continues to be suspended due to the reduction in diversions from the Eel River to the East Branch Russian River above Lake Mendocino. The Steering Committee has focused efforts toward writing the first annual report and adapting the Program for 2023 and beyond.

District 2022 Water Supply

Customer demand is historically low at this time of year, primarily only water retailers. As mentioned, the District's main water right is curtailed of direct diversion from the river and is now relying solely on storage. This may change with increased precipitation.

The State Water Resources Control Board recently issued an Amended Temporary Urgency Change Order to Sonoma Water that refers to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Sonoma Water and RRFCC, requiring that it be submitted by December 14, 2022. Staff of both agencies are collaborating and in a separate agenda item of this meeting, a presentation will step through how the MOU supports the District's annual water supply planning.

District Response:

The District Board passed Declaration #22-01 Stage III: Water Warning on October 3, 2022.

