

Meeting Summary

Russian River Water Forum

Working Group: Water Supply & Fisheries

Meeting #1

Zoom

July 19, 2023, 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Summary

The Russian River Water Forum held the first meeting of the Water Supply & Fisheries Working Group via Zoom. The meeting was facilitated by Kearns & West, a neutral third party. Presentation slides and a recording of the meeting are available on the project [website](#).

The meeting objectives were as follows:

- Review Working Group roles and responsibilities
- Provide a recap of the June 21 Water Supply & Fisheries Technical Briefing and relevant Planning Group discussions
- Identify Working Group co-chairs in closed session

The meeting agenda and a list of attendees are in Appendices A and B. The meeting had a total of 39 attendees.

The next section provides a summary of the questions, responses, and discussion during the briefing.

Meeting Summary

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review; Review of Working Group Roles and Responsibilities

Ben Gettleman, Kearns & West, provided a welcome to the group and reviewed the membership and participation guidelines:

- Working Groups participation open to all Planning Group members, alternates, and nominated technical experts.
- Some portions of meetings will be open to public (as observers), some will be closed sessions.
- Monthly meetings, regular participation expected
- Working Groups will identify co-leads.

Ben then reviewed the purpose of the Planning Group:

- Seek to identify water supply resiliency solutions that respond to PG&E's planned decommissioning of the PVP while protecting Tribal interests and supporting the stewardship of fisheries, water quality, and recreation in the Russian River and Eel River basins.

He then reviewed the Working Group Roles and Responsibilities:

- Provide local expertise and knowledge of the Russian River and Eel River basins and the Potter Valley Project (PVP), for informing the Water Forum planning process.
- Develop options and alternatives for consideration by the Planning Group
- Identify and evaluate the technical needs, feasibility, and benefits of options and alternatives
- Provide input/feedback to Planning Group re: what range of solutions is acceptable

Recap of June 21 Water Supply & Fisheries Technical Briefing and Relevant Planning Group Discussions

Jim Downing, Kearns & West, provided a series of takeaways from the June 21 Water Supply & Fisheries technical briefing and Planning Group discussions on the Huffman Ad Hoc Committee and Two-Basin Partnership processes (May 17) and Russian River water resiliency (July 13).

- Municipal and agricultural water providers and water users in the Russian River Basin have implemented, and continue to implement, many measures to reduce water demand and increase water resiliency.
- In the near term, eliminating the PVP diversion would result in water use curtailments and Lake Mendocino draining in 2 of 10 years.
- In the long term, further resiliency investments could reduce or eliminate the need for the PVP diversion.
- The Two-Basin Partnership (Round Valley Indian Tribes, CalTrout, Humboldt County, Mendocino IWPC, Sonoma Water) evaluated multiple scenarios for the future of the PVP.
- The Partnership's preferred alternative included:
 - Removal of Scott Dam
 - Improved fish passage at Cape Horn Dam
- This alternative best met the Partnership's shared objectives.
- Modeling conducted as part of the Huffman Ad Hoc shows that "run of the river operations" of the PVP diversion (Scott Dam removed) could, in most years, roughly match current annual water deliveries.
 - Assumes water diversions comply with Eel River flow requirements
 - Assumes Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations at Lake Mendocino and dam releases as specified under the "Fish Flows" project
- Three alternatives for improved fish passage at Cape Horn Dam developed through the Ad Hoc Committee process are currently being assessed as part of DWR-funded study.
 - New Fish Ladder
 - Dam Removal with Pump Station
 - Dam Removal with Roughened Channel

Group Discussion

Ben opened the discussion with three questions:

1. What information do you need – if any – before you can provide guidance/have an informed opinion re: the alternatives and the proposal that will be submitted to PG&E?
 - a. Is this information available?
2. To what extent is there currently broad support for an alternative? Could creative solution-making help address concerns and further broaden support?
3. What should be priority discussion topics for the Working Group considering the timeline?

He also noted the time sensitivity of these issues:

- Goal is to have WG review and provide input on alternatives to inform proposal to PG&E in alignment with decommissioning timeline.
- Initial proposal needs to be communicated to PG&E soon to allow possibility of maintaining diversion.

The group discussed the above questions.

The Working Group then discussed several issues, including:

- Cape Horn Dam Alternatives:
 - Working Group members discussed the three alternatives for Cape Horn Dam currently being evaluated as part of the DWR grant. Some members expressed opposition to the improved fish ladder alternative, asserting that the current fish ladder doesn't function well and a future one wouldn't meet needs for reliable fish migration and improved riverine processes. It was clarified that further engineering design (as is being performed now under the DWR grant) is needed to evaluate the alternatives for impacts to beneficial uses, and to inform resource agency consideration of the options, permitting etc.. The group was informed that the performance of the alternatives for fish passage and migration under a natural flow regime (assuming Scott Dam removal) is currently being studied under the DWR grant.
- Lake Mendocino and Coyote Valley Dam:
 - Some Working Group members brought up the importance of increasing storage capacity at Lake Mendocino. A long-proposed project to raise the height of the Coyote Valley Dam was discussed. It was clarified that the process had been stalled by inconsistent funding from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It was also made clear that in order to increase capacity at Lake Mendocino, the capacity of the spillway would have to be increased and the height of the dam would have to be raised by about 32 feet. Funding, the undersized spillway, the need for an emergency notification system, and seismicity issues were all identified as issues delaying the process.
- Scope of Russian River Water Forum:
 - Working Group members had questions about the scope of the Water Forum, asking if conversation around the future of Lake Mendocino or Scott Dam were within the group's mandate. The facilitation team asked the Working Group if having an updated set of objectives would be useful. Some believed that narrowing the scope of what the group was working on would be useful. Others expressed concern that further discussion of

objectives, which could lead to taking on too many objectives, would slow down a time-sensitive process.

- Diversion and Water Supply:
 - Some members of the Working Group emphasized the importance of quantifying the water budgets for the Eel and Russian Rivers in order to make informed decisions around continued diversions. Questions around how often curtailment would happen under run-of-the-river operations and how flows would change if Scott Dam were removed were raised.
- Recreation impacts
 - Some members noted that the removal of Scott Dam would harm recreation in the Upper Eel River, while other members contended that new forms of recreation would emerge.
- Considerations for a regional entity
 - Some members believed that the group also needed to come to a better understanding of the costs and liabilities that come with owning any type of diversion infrastructure if an entity would acquire it. Planning Group members also noted that clarity about the range of options on the table would be helpful.

The group discussed that the next meeting of the Working Group would be in roughly 1 month.

Selection of Co-Chairs (closed session)

Ben introduced the co-chair role and responsibilities:

- Work with facilitation team to plan Working Group meeting agendas and coordinate with presenters
- Support coordination/info sharing between Working Group and Planning Group, and across Working Groups
- Participate in report-outs during Planning Group meetings
- Communicate with Working Groups members between meetings as needed

The group then discussed co-chair nominees.

The group reached consensus on two co-chairs: Sean White (City of Ukiah) and Charlie Schneider (CalTrout)

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

Time	Topic
9:00 a.m.	Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review
9:15 a.m.	Working Group Membership, Roles, and Responsibilities
9:30 a.m.	Recap of June 21 Water Supply & Fisheries Technical Briefing and Relevant Planning Group Discussions
10:00 a.m.	Recap of Discussion and Next Steps
10:05 a.m.	Identification of co-chairs (closed session)
11:00 a.m.	Adjourn

Appendix B: List of Attendees

Working Group Members		
Full Name	Organization (from Master Contact List)	Attendance
Adam Gaska	Redwood Valley County Water District	Present
Adriane Garayalde	Russian River Confluence	Present
Alicia Beecher	Hopland Band of Pomo Indians	Present
Alicia Hamann	Friends of the Eel River	Absent
Andy Jahn	REMWC	Present
Bert Whitaker	Sonoma County Regional Parks	Absent
Cathy Monroe	Mendocino County RCD	Absent
Charlie Schneider	CalTrout	Present
Craig Tucker	Humboldt County	Absent
Dakota Perez	Pinoleville Pomo Nation	Present
Darren Mierau	California Trout	Present
Dave Koball	Agriculture Landowner	Present
David Manning	Sonoma Water	Present
David Noren	EBA Engineering	Absent
David Taber	Palomino Lakes Mutual Water Company	Present
Don Seymour	Sonoma Water	Present
Don Seymour	Sonoma Water	Present
Edward Ballman	Balance Hydrologics, Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District	Present
Elizabeth Salomone	RRFCWCID	Present
Frank Lynch	Lake Pillsbury Alliance	Present
Fritz Carlson	CH2M Hill	Present
Gregg Young	Potter Valley Tribe	Absent
Hank Seemann	Humboldt County	Absent
Jaime Neary	Russian Riverkeeper	Present
Janet Pauli	PVID; IWPC	Present

Joe Scriven	Mendocino County RCD	Present
John Mack	Permit Sonoma	Absent
John Reardon	RRFCWCID	Absent
Luis Santana	Robinson Rancheria	Absent
Matt St. John	North Coast RWQCB	Present
Mike Shaver	Potter Valley Tribe	Absent
Mike Thompson	Sonoma Water	Present
Pam Jeane	Sonoma Water	Present
Peter Martin	City of Santa Rosa	Present
Sean White	City of Ukiah	Present
Stephen Maples	Sonoma Water	Absent
Terri McCartney	Pinoleville Pomo Nation	Present
Tyrone Mitchell	Yokayo Tribe of Indians	Present
Vivian Helliwell	PCFFA; IFR	Present

Other Attendees		
Full Name	Organization (from Master Contact List)	Attendance
Rue Furch	Russian River Watershed Council	Present
Brenda L. Tomaras	Lytton Rancheria	Present
John Mendoza	Sonoma Water	Present
Todd Lands	City of Cloverdale	Present
Carol Cinquini	Lake Pillsbury Alliance	Present
Tom Johnson	IWPC	Present
Nancy Todd	Farm Bureau	Present
Tom Daugherty	National Marine Fisheries Service	Present
Laurel Marcus	California Land Stewardship Institute	Present
Steven Elliott	PVID	Present
Darren Mierau	California Trout	Present
Hollie Smith	Sierra Club	Present