

Meeting Summary

Russian River Water Forum

Russian River Resiliency Subcommittee

Meeting #1

Zoom

September 26, 2023, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Executive Summary

The Russian River Water Forum held the first meeting of the Russian River Resiliency Subcommittee via Zoom. The meeting was facilitated by Kearns & West. Presentation slides, an agenda, and a recording of the meeting are available on the project [website](#) at the following links:

- [Slides](#)
- [Recording](#)
- [Agenda](#)

The meeting objectives were as follows:

- Discuss a vision for water resiliency in the Russian River basin.
- Discuss the focus and potential work products the Resiliency Subcommittee could develop or inform.
- Select Subcommittee co-chairs.
- Provide opportunity for public observation.

The meeting agenda and a list of attendees are provided in Appendices A and B. The meeting had a total of 29 attendees.

Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from the meeting included:

- Members engaged in a discussion where they envisioned what a resilient Russian River means to them, identified key challenges to achieving this vision, named subtopics of resiliency that the group should work on, and began to define the group's central purpose.
- Members expressed support for the Subcommittee's role as a hub for information sharing about resiliency projects that are occurring in the Russian River Basin as well as a convener for regional collaboration on future resiliency projects.
- The group identified three Subcommittee Co-Chairs: Jaime Neary (Russian Riverkeeper), Jay Jasperse (Sonoma Water), and Adam Gaska (Redwood Valley County Water District).

Action Items

Action Items included:

- **K&W** will send out a Doodle poll to the Subcommittee to schedule a recurring meeting time.
- **Subcommittee Members** will add programs to the Resiliency Project Matrix spreadsheet which was distributed during the meeting.

Meeting Summary

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Ben Gettleman, Kearns & West, provided a welcome to the group and reviewed the membership and participation guidelines before reviewing the purpose of the Russian River Resiliency Subcommittee:

The purpose of the Russian River Resiliency Subcommittee is to develop sustainable project concepts (beyond the PVP) that will improve insight on water availability, address water supply reliability, and reduce demand in the Russian River watershed under drought and climate change conditions in an equitable manner for the benefit of all beneficial uses.

Recap of July 13 Planning Group Meeting

Henry DeRuff, Kearns & West, provided a recap of the resiliency discussion that occurred at the July 13 Planning Group meeting. Henry reminded the Subcommittee that the Planning Group meeting included presentations on six resiliency projects in the Russian River watershed as well as discussion of several potential future projects. Henry also reviewed the main discussion questions which were raised at the meeting and ideas the group generated in response to them. The full list of these items can be viewed on the meeting slides.

Henry then opened the floor for questions. A few members helped further clarify the definition of resiliency, emphasizing the importance of sustainability and the idea that resources should be managed so their benefits will continue undiminished for all future generations. One member highlighted the work that the Russian River Confluence is doing and emphasized how regional hubs give a great opportunity to drive towards grants.

Resiliency Project Matrix

Henry then introduced the group to the Resiliency Project Matrix, a collaborative spreadsheet whose purpose is to catalog the resiliency projects that are happening in the Russian River basin.

Henry then introduced Elise Weiland, Russian River Confluence, who presented on the work the Russian River Confluence is doing in the region, particularly through the Respect Russian River campaign. [Russian River Confluence](#) brings together multi-sector stakeholders to work together to improve the health of the watershed.

Setting a Vision for Water Resiliency in the Russian River Basin

Ben moved the group into an exercise focused on setting a vision for water resiliency in the Russian River Basin. Ben then introduced the group to a Miro whiteboard where they could provide responses to four questions, which were reviewed and categorized by the Facilitation team. The four questions and themes that emerged in response to them are reproduced below. Screenshots of the Miro board with the group's full responses can be found in Appendix C.

1. Envision that it's 2040 – what does a resilient Russian River Basin look like?
 - A sustainable and healthy ecosystem in and around the Russian River.
 - Water supply that is consistently able to meet the needs of all users.
 - Ground water is recharged through practices such as building healthy soil, constructing infiltration basins, and implementing Low Impact Development (LID) measures.
 - Water that is distributed equitably and efficiently and used conservatively.
2. What are the main challenges to achieving basin-wide resiliency, and how can they be addressed?
 - Lack of accurate data.
 - Limited funding.
 - Excessive demand.
 - Difficulty coordinating efforts across jurisdictions.
 - Complicated water rights system and weak enforcement.
3. What subtopics should the Subcommittee address within resiliency (e.g., supply, water quality, conservation, demand reduction, etc.)?
 - Water quality.
 - Conjunctive use and groundwater recharge.
 - Ecosystem restoration.
 - Metering, monitoring, and reporting.
 - Demand reduction.
4. How can the Subcommittee most effectively contribute to achieving the vision of resiliency?
 - Provide a forum for information sharing, discussion, and collaboration on regional and basin-wide solutions.
 - Help one another identify and prioritize projects and secure funding for them.
 - Educate and empower those in the watershed.

Focus and Potential Work Products

Henry then asked the group to share their thoughts about what they believed the focus of the Subcommittee should be. Comments included:

- Elise Weiland of the Russian River Confluence suggested that the Confluence could help the Subcommittee disseminate information through their newsletter and website.
- Multiple members shared successful resiliency projects they had experience with, while one member offered to compile and distribute a list of sources of grant funding they had tapped into.
- One member suggested that the Subcommittee could act as a vehicle to develop larger projects requiring cross county collaboration. A discussion around the importance of cross-jurisdiction collaboration emerged. Some members discussed the necessity of forming special districts along the Russian River to create a tax base for funding the diversion. If special districts couldn't be formed, another member suggested that close bi-county watershed wide collaboration would be necessary, particularly around regional permitting processes.
- The importance of filling data gaps was raised by another member, who suggested that volunteer programs and programs being run by the State Water Board could help close those

gaps but were not sufficient. The Russian River Independent Science Review Panel was suggested by another member as a good resource to help understand data gaps. Another member stated that the State Water Resources Control Board has the UPWARD initiative to make a new water reporting and data access system replacing eWRIMS with CalWATRS.

- Another member suggested that resiliency efforts would be aided by the region engaging in economic planning that phased out water intensive industries.

Identification of Subcommittee Co-Chairs

Henry then introduced the Co-Chair role and responsibilities:

- Work with facilitation team to plan Subcommittee meeting agendas and coordinate with presenters
- Support coordination/information sharing between Subcommittee and Planning Group, and across Working Groups
- Participate in report-outs during Planning Group meetings
- Communicate with Subcommittee members between meetings as needed
- Co-chairs are not expected to be decision makers or lead Subcommittee meetings.

The group reached consensus on three members becoming Co-Chairs of the Subcommittee: Jaime Neary (Russian Riverkeeper), Jay Jasperse (Sonoma Water), and Adam Gaska (Redwood Valley County Water District).

Recap of Meeting and Next Steps

Ben then recapped the meeting and reminded members to that the next Water Forum Planning Group meeting would be occurring on Thursday, October 5th, from 10:00am-1:00pm.

The Subcommittee was polled on the frequency at which they'd like to meet, and monthly was the most supported option. The facilitation team committed to send out a poll to the Russian River Resiliency Subcommittee to find a recurring monthly meeting time.

The facilitation team requested that members of the subcommittee add programs to the Resiliency Project Matrix spreadsheet which was distributed during the meeting.

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

Time	Topic
1:00 p.m.	Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review
1:15 p.m.	Recap of Planning Group Meeting #3 Resiliency Discussion (July 13)
1:35 p.m.	Vision for Water Resiliency in the Russian River Basin
2:15 p.m.	Focus and Potential Work Products for Resiliency Subcommittee
2:35 p.m.	Selection of Subcommittee Co-Chairs
2:55 p.m.	Recap of Meeting and Next Steps
3:00 p.m.	Adjourn

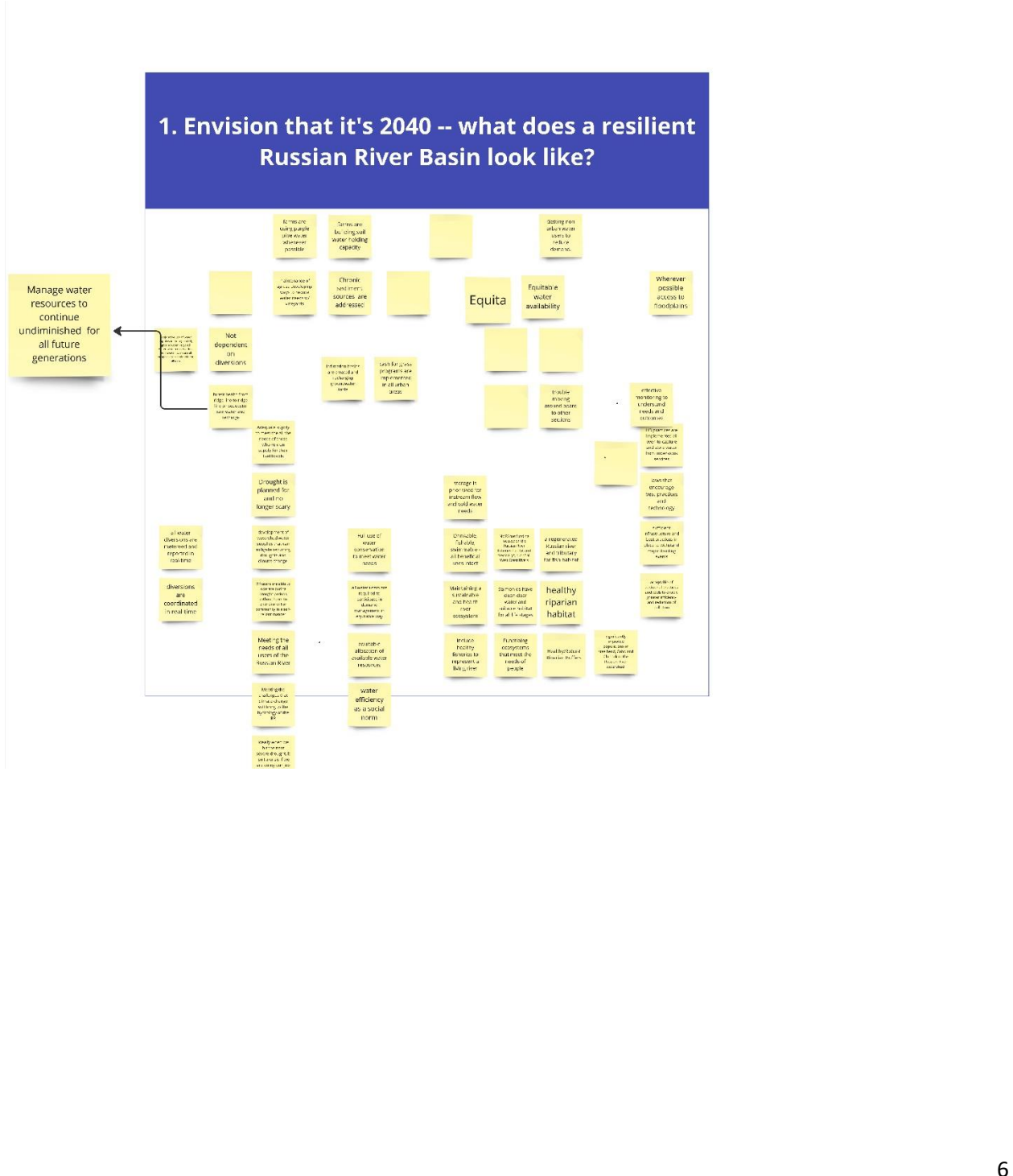
Appendix B: List of Attendees

Working Group Members	
Full Name	Organization
Adam Gaska	Redwood Valley County Water District
Adriane Garayalde	Agriculture Landowner, Russian River Confluence
Andy Colonna	Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
Brenda L. Tomaras	Lytton Rancheria
Cathy Monroe	Mendocino County Resource Conservation District
Charlie Schneider	CalTrout
Don Seymour	Sonoma Water
Elizabeth Salomone	Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District
Jaime Neary	Russian Riverkeeper
Jay Jasperse	Sonoma Water
Jennifer Burke	City of Santa Rosa
John Nagle	Sonoma Resource Conservation District
Justin Frederickson	California Farm Bureau
Michael Makdisi	County of Sonoma
Mike Thompson	Sonoma Water
Robert Pennington	County of Sonoma
Sean White	City of Ukiah
Stephen Maples	Sonoma Water
Steven Elliott	Potter Valley Irrigation District
Terri McCartney	Pinoleville Pomo Nation
Vivian Helliwell	Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations

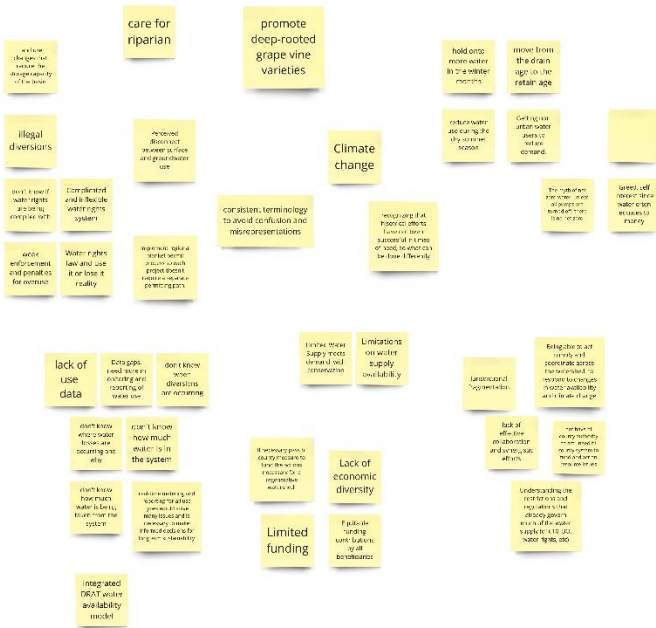
Other Attendees	
Full Name	Organization
Denise Woods	Mendocino County Resource Conservation District
Don McEnhill	Russian Riverkeeper

Elise Weiland	Russian River Confluence
Linda MacElwee	Mendocino County Resource Conservation District
Mike Shaver	Potter Valley Tribe
Monica Huettl	Mendo Fever
Rue Furch	Sierra Club
Tom Johnson	Inland Water and Power Commission

Appendix C: Miro Board



2. What are the main challenges to achieving basin-wide resiliency, and how can they be addressed?



3. What subtopics should the Subcommittee address within resiliency (e.g., supply, water quality, conservation, demand reduction, etc.)?



4. How can the Subcommittee most effectively contribute to achieving the vision of resiliency?

