

Meeting Summary

Russian River Water Forum

Planning Group Meeting #8

Zoom

May 15, 2024, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Executive Summary

The Russian River Water Forum Planning Group met on May 15, 2024, online via Zoom. The meeting was facilitated by Kearns & West (K&W), a neutral third party. Presentation slides and a recording of the meeting are available on the project [website](#).

The meeting objectives outlined in the agenda were as follows:

- Review RRWF process and accomplishments.
- Provide update and discuss the New Eel-Russian Facility alternatives analysis and Eel-Russian Project Authority recommendation.
- Present and discuss State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) telemetry pilot project.
- Provide the opportunity for public comment.

The meeting agenda can be found in Appendix A. The meeting had a total of 34 participants, including 13 Planning Group members, 8 alternates, and 13 other attendees. The list of meeting attendees can be found in Appendix B.

Meeting Summary

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Ben Gettleman, facilitator with K&W, welcomed Planning Group members, alternates, and other attendees to the meeting, introduced the K&W facilitation team, and shared the meeting objectives.

Planning Group members then introduced themselves.

Ben reviewed the agenda, which is included in Appendix A, and reminded the attendees of the Planning Group's purpose and participation guidelines.

Review RRWF process and accomplishments.

Ben reviewed the process and accomplishments of the Russian River Water Forum meetings, which included:

- **Interviews:** K&W conducted 38 interviews with a total of 73 individuals representing county and city governments, water providers, agricultural interests, recreation interests, business groups,

environmental groups, state and federal regulatory agencies, and resource conservation districts. The Summary of Interview Findings was shared with the Advisory Team and informed the structure of the RRWF and the formation of the Planning Group.

- **Briefings:** Following the interview process, RRWF Advisory Team members and K&W conducted 13 briefings on the RRWF concept with elected officials, state and federal agency staff, and NGOs.
- **Discussions with Tribal Representatives:** K&W coordinated and supported eight individual briefings with Tribes in the Eel and Russian river basins and one meeting with the Mendocino, Lake, Sonoma Tribal Environmental Professionals (MLSTEP) group. Outreach was initiated through a government-to government invitation. Each briefing consisted of a presentation with information on the Potter Valley Project and its decommissioning, along with context on the formation of the RRWF, followed by an open dialogue. The briefings were attended by representatives of the Water Forum Advisory Team, including staff from Sonoma Water, Sonoma County, the Mendocino Inland Water & Power Commission, and the Russian River Flood Control & Water Conservation Improvement District. The Summary of Findings informed the structure of the RRWF and the formation of the Planning Group.
- **Development of Governance Charter and Planning Group Roster:** A representative Interim Steering Committee was convened and met in February and March 2023 to develop a governance charter for the Planning Group and provide recommendations on Planning Group representation.
- **Meetings:** Over the course of a year, the following meetings took place:
 - The Planning Group met 7 times.
 - The Steering Committee met 6 times.
 - The Water Rights & Water Management Working Group had a technical briefing and met 5 times.
 - The Water Supply & Fisheries Working Group had a technical briefing and met 1 time.
 - The Russian River Resiliency Subcommittee met 1 time.

Ben then opened the floor for comments and questions.

- Question (Q): How long will the Water Forum website stay up?
 - Response (R): Sonoma Water has not decided how long it will stay up, but we think it will stay up for quite a bit of time. I expect we'll renew it at least one more time and I believe it's an annual renewal process.
- Comment (C): I'd just like to thank you for your efforts on this and say that the Tribe (Potter Valley Tribe) and other Tribes meet regularly, and we still have interest in the topic of water resiliency. If some of the existing groups such as the flood control district, watershed group, and Sonoma Water are doing any type of water conservation in the future, hopefully you could help host those and move some of these forwards. Regarding fisheries, I would still like to continue Tribal efforts to coordinate with organizations such as CalTrout or the Russian River Keeper. In the Eel watershed there's still the Eel River Water Forum, and I see on their website that that's hosted by CalTrout. Hopefully some of these organizations that have overlapping goals continue the same type of effort in the Russian River as they have up in the Eel. We'll still be here at Potter Valley, and any of those entities that want to reach out to continue those efforts, just let us know.

Update on the New Eel-Russian Facility Alternatives Analysis

David Manning, Sonoma Water, then gave an overview of the New Eel Russian Facility Alternatives Analysis. Slides from the presentation are available [here](#).

David then opened the floor for comments and questions.

- Question (Q): Is the loss of fish to the pumps lower because of the higher velocities? Has there been a comparison between the two alternatives?
 - Response (R): The screens prevent the fish from being entrained. The mesh size is smaller than any of the fish that would be passing by this site. There are two kinds of velocity criteria that are considered for keeping fish safe, the sweeping and the approach velocity. The sweeping velocity is the velocity of water moving past the screen, which on this site is faster than the rate at which water is being drawn through the fish screen, so the fish would not be trapped. The pumps rotate and have cleaning mechanisms on them that burst air and remove algae, but the mesh size and water velocity will keep them out.
- Question (Q): What capacity of intake are you designing for, in cubic feet per second? ?
 - Response (R): The maximum capacity is 300 cfs which matches the theoretical maximum tunnel capacity.

SWRCB Telemetry Pilot Project

Laurel Dodgen and Brent Vanderburgh, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), then introduced themselves and presented on the pilot telemetry project which would be occurring in the Russian River. Slides from the presentation are available [here](#).

Public Comment

Ben then opened the floor for public comment.

Andy Colonna: I noticed in the beginning you were talking about reviewing what we've done so far, and one of those things was when you invited us to declare our interests in this process, and so on. You also in that same sentence asked us for our positions on issues. I've been toying with that the whole time we've been doing this because I knew that we would be coming to a point like this down the line and one of the things that bothered me is at the end of the last meeting that we had when we were all together there was a lady at the back of the room, a very nice elderly lady, that spoke about why can't we keep the dams in place and somehow mitigate for them rather than take them out because of all the benefits that we've enjoyed so far. And I realized that there's a gap in the information here that these people do not have, but they need to have to get past the denial part of this separation anxiety from what we used to have and what we expected to have in the future. And to do that we've got to take a look at what the real situation is and how we got to where we are at. It's been a political football. The whole idea of taking the dams out. Whether we were for or against them coming out completely or partially, whatever, it's out of our hands. And people don't realize that. And this was really underscored when they had the meeting with the group to talk about the decision to have the roughened channel or the pump alternative, and there were 2 or 3 gentlemen, they were about in my age group, they were over 80, which I am, I'll be 81 next month, that spoke in a way that I don't think many of you younger people really got and I'd like to comment on that. And these people really need to understand the chain of events that caused PG&E to take these dams out rather than keep messing around and trying to keep

them going. And the best information I have on that is this letter regarding the Scott Dam from April 12th, 2023, from Vice President, Power Generation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company to a Chief of Dam Safety Engineer. And in that letter, they talk about this study, which is part of Pacific Gas and Electric Company's ongoing reevaluation of the dam that was initiated in response to the dam safety department's letter dated January 22nd, 2021, to address potential dam safety concerns. Now, I don't know where that letter is, but it seems to me that it is a real missing link in the understanding of what the hell is really going on here that caused all of this stuff that we're talking about today to occur. And so, if you can't get these old guys like me, that were World War II babies, they're not baby boomers, we were born in the middle of that war, and it was a real thing some of us might of fought, the older brothers might have fought in Korea, many of us might have fought in Vietnam, and we really care about the resource as well. And these people just don't get it that it wasn't PG&E's idea alone. They were told by dam safety people to start taking a really close look at this because of their information. And I'd like to see you guys get a hold of that letter. That started this process according to PG&E, that really started this whole thing going, and get these other people that are that are still don't get it to get it. Otherwise, we're still going to have an ongoing controversy and acrimony as we go on. And this reflection to the whole voting community where people like Huffman are under duress because people might vote them out of office because they don't really understand what's going on here. Thank you.

Glen Spain: One of the things that was very valuable that came out of this process is a long list of various water conservation measures in the Russian River. Water conservation measures, water reuse aquifer recharge programs, some of them quite successful, some of them good models for duplicating elsewhere. I want to make sure that that does not get lost. If you can package that up somewhere and put it somewhere where it can be obtained on the website that would be really interesting and an important move forward to break through the gridlock over water issues in the basin. *[Note: These materials are in the [Planning Group Meeting #3 section of the RRWF website.](#)]* I think that is one of the more valuable spinoffs of the kind of discussions and cooperative work we've been having. Don't lose sight of it. Don't let any of us lose sight of it.

Next Steps, Future Meetings, and Action Items

Ben summarized the meeting discussion and confirmed that all slides as well as a summary and recording would be posted to the Russian River Water Forum website [here](#). Ben then reiterated that the website would still be active, and that the facilitation team can help participants track down materials if they cannot locate them.

Ben thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

Time	Topic	Presenter
2:00 pm	Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ben Gettleman, Kearns & West
2:10 pm	Review of RRWF Process and Accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ben Gettleman, Kearns & West
2:30 pm	Update on New Eel-Russian Facility Alternatives Analysis and Eel-Russian Authority Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Manning, Sonoma Water Tom Johnson, Mendocino IWPC
3:20 pm	SWRCB Telemetry Pilot Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laurel Dodgen, Brent Vanderburgh, Erik Ekdahl, State Water Resources Control Board
3:40 pm	Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of public
3:50 pm	Recap of Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ben Gettleman, Kearns & West
4:00 pm	Adjourn	

Appendix B: Meeting Attendance

Planning Group Members, Alphabetized

Name	Organization/Affiliation	Present?	Name	Organization/Affiliation	Present?
Alicia Hamann	Friends of the Eel River	✓	Hank Seemann	Humboldt County	
Allan Nelson	Agriculture Landowner		Jaime Neary	Russian Riverkeeper	✓
Anna FarPorte	Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians	✓	Janet Pauli	PVID; IWPC	✓
Bert Whitaker	Sonoma County Regional Parks		Jennifer Burke	City of Santa Rosa Water	✓
Brandon Axell	Mendocino County Farm Bureau		John Mack	Permit Sonoma	
Bree Klotter	Redwood Valley County Water District		John Nagle	Sonoma RCD	
Brenda L. Tomaras	Lytton Band of Pomo Indians		President Lewis Whipple	Round Valley Indian Tribes	
Vice Chair Brian Mead	Wiyot Tribe		Luis Santana	Robinson Rancheria	
Carol Cinquini	Lake Pillsbury Alliance	✓	Matt Clifford	Trout Unlimited	
Cathy Monroe	Mendocino County RCD	✓	Nikcole Whipple	Save California Salmon	
Charlie Schneider	CalTrout	✓	Orval Elliott Jr.	Hopland Band of Pomo Indians	
Dennis Murphy	Agriculture Landowner, Sonoma RCD		Sean White	City of Ukiah	
Supervisor Eddie Crandell	Lake County		Shannon Cotulla	Town of Windsor	
Elizabeth Salomone	RRFCWCID	✓	Terri McCartney	Pinoleville Pomo Nation	
Gary Helfrich	Camp Meeker Rec. & Park District		Terry Crowley	City of Healdsburg	✓
Sup. Glenn McGourty	Mendocino County		Tony Williams	North Marin Water District	✓
Grant Davis	Sonoma Water	✓	Sgt.-at-Arms Tyrone Mitchell	Yokayo Tribe of Indians	
Gregg Young	Potter Valley Tribe		Vivian Helliwell	PCFFA; IFR	✓
Total Planning Group Member Attendance					13/36

Planning Group Alternates, Alphabetized

Name	Organization/Affiliation	Present?	Name	Organization/Affiliation	Present?
Adam Gaska	Redwood Valley County Water District	✓	Glen Spain	PCFFA; IFR	✓
Adriane Garayalde	Agriculture Landowner; RR Confluence	✓	Guinness McFadden	PVID; IWPC	
Alicia Beecher	Hopland Band of Pomo Indians		Javier Silva	Yokayo Tribe of Indians	
Andy Colonna	PCFFA; IFR	✓	Mari Rodin	City of Ukiah	
Bill Ricioli	Agriculture Landowner		Mary Grace Pawson	City of Rohnert Park	
Supervisor Bruno Sabatier	Lake County		Maureen Mulheren	Mendocino County	
Chris Shutes	California Sportfishing Protection Alliance		Meghan Quinn	American Rivers	
Chris Watt	RRFCWCID		Michael Makdisi	Sonoma County Administrator's Office	✓
Craig Tucker	Humboldt County		Mike Shaver	Potter Valley Tribe	✓
Dakota Perez	Pinoleville Pomo Nation		Pam Bacigalupi	Agriculture Landowner	
Dan Herrera	City of Petaluma		Pam Jeane	Sonoma Water	✓
David Kelley	City of Cloverdale		Paul Sellier	Marin Municipal Water District	
David Manning	Sonoma Water	✓	Redgie Collins	CalTrout	
Denise Woods	Mendocino County RCD		Shayna Williams	Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians	
Don McEnhill	Russian Riverkeeper		Chair Ted Hernandez	Wiyot Tribe	
Don Seymour	Sonoma Water		Tyler Rodrique	RRFCWCID	
Eric Schanz	Sweetwater Springs Water District		Wyatt Smith	Round Valley Indian Tribes	
Frank Lynch	Lake Pillsbury Alliance				
Total Planning Group Alternate Attendance					8/34

Other In-Person and Virtual Attendees, Alphabetized

Name	Affiliation
Bob Anderson	
Abigail Black	
Laurel Dodgen	State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
Jim Downing	Kearns & West
Tom Fischer	Kearns & West
Ben Gettleman	Kearns & West
Candace Horsley	Inland Water and Power Commission (IWPC)
Nancy Horton	Lake Pillsbury Alliance
Francis Mendoza	
Kristin Peer	Bartkiewicz, Kronick & Shanahan (BKS)
Brent Vanderburgh	State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
Derek Wadsworth	State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
Kasil Willie	