

FINAL MINUTES OF WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Utilities Field Operations Training Center
35 Stony Point Road, Santa Rosa, CA
November 6, 2023

Attendees:

Grant Davis, Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA or Sonoma Water)
David Rabbitt, SCWA
Christina Goulart, Town of Windsor
Laura Sparks, City of Cotati
Craig Scott, City of Cotati
Mike Healy, City of Petaluma
Dan Herrera, City of Petaluma
Natalie Rogers, City of Santa Rosa
Peter Martin, City of Santa Rosa
Matt Wargula, City of Sonoma
Ron Wellander, City of Sonoma
Emily Sanborn, City of Rohnert Park
Tony Williams, North Marin Water District
Jack Baker, North Marin Water District
Amanda Hudson, Valley of The Moon Water District
Jon Foreman, Valley of the Moon Water District
Paul Sellier, Marin Municipal Water District
Jed Smith, Marin Municipal Water District
Michelle Montoya, City of Santa Rosa

Staff/Alternates:

Lynne Rosselli, SCWA
Paul Piazza, SCWA
Pam Jeane, SCWA
Andrea Rodriguez, SCWA
Robert Rogers, SCWA
Kent Gylfe, SCWA
Brad Sherwood, SCWA
Jake Spaulding, SCWA
Carlos Diaz, SCWA
David Royall, SCWA
Emma Walton, SCWA
Ann DuBay, SCWA
Don Seymour, SCWA
Mike Thompson, SCWA
Brian Lee, SCWA
Dannielle Favela, City of Petaluma
Vanessa Garrett, City of Rohnert Park
Shannon Cotulla, Town of Windsor
Colin Close, City of Santa Rosa
Claire Nordlie, City of Santa Rosa

Public:

Brenda Adelman, Russian River Watershed Protection
Duane DeWitt
Dick Dowd

1. Check In
Mike Healy, WAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. Public Comment
Duane Dewitt spoke in support of Assembly Bills 1567 and 1573, as well as Senate Bill 867. Also, spoke regarding riparian corridors and restoration of trees.
3. Recap from the August 7, 2023 WAC/TAC Meeting and Approval of Minutes
Moved by Jack Baker, North Marin Water District, seconded by Jon Foreman, Valley of the Moon. Unanimously approved.
No public comment.
4. Recap from the October 2, 2023 TAC Meeting and Approval of Minutes (TAC)
Moved by Craig Scott, City of Cotati, and seconded by Tony Williams, North Marin Water District. Unanimously approved.
No public comment.
5. Water Supply Coordination Council – October 30, 2023
Mike Healy, WAC Chair, presented. The Water Supply Coordination Council met on October 30, 2023 and created the agenda for today's WAC/TAC meeting.
No public comment.
6. Approve – 2024 WAC/TAC Meeting Schedule
Moved by Jack Baker, North Marin Water District, and seconded by Laura Sparks, City of Cotati.. Unanimously approved.
No public comment.
7. FY 2022/23 SCWA Water Transmission System Budget Year-End Review
Jake Spauling, SCWA, presented.
Water deliveries form the basis of water rates, which are fully volumetric and pay for operations and maintenance, capital improvement projects, debt service, and Biological Opinion compliance. Actual FY22-23 water deliveries were 36,032 acre-ft. Revenue was 21% lower than budget. Lower deliveries meant less revenue was generated. Expenditures also came in 23% under budget. For the fiscal year 2023-24 quarter one water deliveries, as of September 30, are at 34% of budget. This is slightly above budget currently, but it is too early to tell where final deliveries will end up. The current trend is predicting deliveries of 40 - 41,000 acre-ft for next fiscal year. Waiting for October, November, and December deliveries to come in before making the determination definitive. Next steps include providing the draft budget to TAC Ad Hoc Budget Subcommittee by January 17, the draft budget will go to TAC for a recommendation on March 4, presenting budget to City Councils/District Boards in March, WAC consideration on April 1, and finally consideration of adoption by Sonoma Water's Board by April 30.

Duane Dewitt asked where this information is available to view and how to provide public comment.
Mike Healy, WAC Chair, shared that this was a tight budget with not a lot of money for other projects.
8. Water Supply Conditions and Temporary Urgency Change Order
Don Seymour, SCWA, presented.
Currently, Lake Mendocino is just under 67,000 acre-ft and Lake is Sonoma is just over 223,000 acre-ft. There is significant carry over storage for this time of the year. FERC has approved PG&E's variance and the order will sunset once Lake Pillsbury goes above 36,000 acre-ft. PG&E excepted the variance to be approved earlier, so the later approval has resulted in a 20 cfs (cubic feet per second) in Eel River water flowing into the Potter Valley Project and into the Russian River watershed. PG&E does intend to file another variance next year due to not being able to raise the gates on Lake Pillsbury. The plan is for PG&E to file after the first of the year, so that it is in place earlier. This will have

substantial consequences on water supply in the Russian River and to water rights holders whose permits are dependent on the Eel River imports.

Tony Williams, North Marin Water District, asked if PG&E's longer term variance request had been approved.

Don Seymour responded that it is not a variance, but a flow schedule regime or license amendment. FERC did respond with a substantial number of questions and concerns for PG&E to respond to. More that likely PG&E will continue with the short-term variance requests since they are also moving forward on the license surrender.

Brenda Adelman shared that it is great that reservoirs are full, however, would like to know where information is available on how reservoir flooding will be avoided.

Don Seymour said that, even though both reservoirs are full, the flood pools are empty. The Temporary Urgency Change Order (Order) that Sonoma Water has been operating the Russian River and Dry Creek under expired on October 15. Currently Sonoma Water is operating the system per decision 1610 which is a normal water supply condition, with flows on the upper Russian River at 150 cfs minimum and the lower Russian River at 125 cfs minimum. Sonoma Water did file a new Temporary Urgency Change Petition with the State Water Board and anticipates a new Order will be issued in December.

Jed Smith, Marin Municipal Water District, asked how much water storage supply Sonoma Water has for its contractors and itself.

Don Seymour responded that, with Sonoma Water's two reservoirs, they have approximately 1.5 years of storage in Lake Mendocino, and approximately 2.5 to 3.5 years of storage in Lake Sonoma.

9. Sonoma Marin Saving Water Partnership (TAC)

a. 2023 Water Production Relative to 2013 Benchmark

Peter Martin, Santa Rosa Water, presented.

September 2023 water usage compared to August 2013 is down by 26% total for the partnership. Water usage to date 2023 compared to 2013 is down 27% total for partnership.

No public comment.

b. Water Use Efficiency Messaging

Andrea Rodriguez, SCWA, presented.

Summer messages included: sprinkler spruce up, irrigation scheduling tool, maintenance manual, and water smart plant labels. Moving into Winter 2023 messaging which will include Flora Fridays, water smart plant labels, garden sense program, irrigation scheduling tool, water smart gardens maintenance manual, and water smart plant picker tool. Sonoma Water has been working with KBBF and Hugo Mata for Spanish language outreach. Interviews with Hugo can be found at SonomaWater.org/espanol.

No public comment.

c. Sonoma Marin Saving Water Partnership FY22-23 Annual Report

Paul Piazza, SCWA, presented.

The annual report is up on Sonoma Water's website. This report spans the summer of 2022 where the Partnership was under the drought emergency. Some highlights include the campaign to stay water smart, focused on meeting people in the community, including pop-up campaigns, and an in-person Eco-Friendly Garden event, which included 17 locations. Due to the success of that campaign, Sonoma Water is deciding between less gardens or adding an additional day for next year. Through the K-12 education programs, 13,000 students received direct education.

Peter Martin, Santa Rosa Water, shared that Santa Rosa received a lot of positive comments on Eco-Friendly Garden tours.

No public comment.

d. Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life Rulemaking

Paul Piazza, SCWA, presented.

On August 18, the State Board initiated the formal rulemaking for “Making Conservation a California Way of Life” (Regulation) and released draft regulatory text intended to implement AB 1668 and SB 606. There are four primary goals: Use Water More Wisely, Eliminate Water Waste, Strengthen Local Drought Resilience, and Improve Agricultural Water Use Efficiency and Planning.

The proposed regulations will require agency-specific urban water use objectives be met starting in 2025. Urban Retail Water Suppliers will also need to identify all Commercial, Industrial, Institutional (CII) buildings in suppliers’ service areas, ban irrigation of non-functional turf on CII landscapes, and classify all CII customers including identifying all that are served by mixed-use meters. Annual reporting requirements will start January 2024. DWR (Department of Water Resources) has put together a reporting template and it is in the best interest to be active in the process to help develop this template. Next steps: Public Hearing was held on October 4 and was well attend, currently going through comments looking for revisions, followed by a second comment period, an adoption hearing, submission to Office of Administrative Law (OAL), and finally rulemaking becomes effective.

Duane Dewitt shared that as increased development occurs, believes it will be interesting for well users and asked that this be kept in mind while moving forward.

e. 2023 EPA WaterSense Awards

Paul Piazza, SCWA, presented.

The Partnership was the recipient of two EPA WaterSense awards. The first was a consecutive win for Promotional Partner of the Year. The second was the Sustained Excellence award, which is EPA’s highest award.

No public comment.

f. League of CA Cities Beacon Award

Peter Martin, Santa Rosa Water, presented.

The Partnership was awarded the Beacon of Leadership and Innovation Award at the League of California Cities this year.

No public comment.

10. Biological Opinion Status Update

Pam Jeane, SCWA, presented.

Fish Flow Project – Work is continuing even though status has not changed.

Dry Creek Habitat – Work on Phase 4 and 5 continued over the summer, with Phase 6 starting next year. Issues gaining property access in Phase 6. Projects have been completed by Army Corps. of Engineers. Did need to redesign some of the pieces due to high winter flows. Phase 5 is being completed with an extension to continue working until mid-November. Expect to finish this portion in 2024.

Habitat Maintenance and monitoring – Since June of this year, a lot of monitoring has been going on. One of the sites is on reach 13 and one is on reach 14. Will be using drones to prioritize and plan for maintenance activities such as invasive vegetation management, removal of nuisance sedimentation, and repair of flood damage or erosion that impairs project function.

Fish Monitoring – Camera installed at Mirabel dam and recording has started. On October 27, 634 Chinook salmon were counted going past facility. Typically, there is a peak between mid-October and November.

Russian River Estuary Management Project – The estuary is open, as it was breached manually. The maximum water surface elevation in the lagoon was 8.77 ft. When above 9 ft flooding starts to be seen.

Biological Assessment for New Biological Opinion – New assessment filed with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Waiting to hear formally when the consultation will be given.

No public comment.

11. Potter Valley Project Update

Pam Jeane, SCWA, presented.

Completed grant work on the Russian River Water Forum, so work is being done to close out the grant. Three proponents submitted a proposal to PG&E that would continue a portion of the diversion from the Eel River into the Russian River. PG&E did accept the initial proposal and will include it in their draft license surrender and decommissioning proposal. The draft will not be submitted to FERC but will go to stake holders and the public for a 30-day comment period.

No public comment.

a. Recommendation – Letter: Water Suppliers’ Support for New Eel-Russian Facility (TAC)

Laura Sparks, City of Cotati, would like more explicit support for ecologically healthy river.

Jed Smith, Marin Municipal Water District, had similar comments but their Water District Board did approve the letter.

Dan Herrera, City of Petaluma, shared that Petaluma needs to go to Council, and will submit a separate letter.

Mike Healy, City of Petaluma, shared the letter is very focused on the Potter Valley diversion and would like acknowledgement that will include habitat restoration where Lake Pillsbury currently sits.

David Rabbitt, SCWA, shared that both rivers need to be healthy. What is in front of us is a generational change.

Moved by Tony Williams, North Marin Water District, seconded by Matt Wargula, City of Sonoma.

No public comment. The recommendation was unanimously approved.

b. Consideration of Letter: Water Suppliers’ Support for New Eel-Russian Facility

Moved by Jon Foreman, Valley of the Moon, seconded by Jack Baker, North Marin Water District.

No public comment. The letter was unanimously approved with Town of Windsor absent.

12. Russian River Water Forum Update

Grant Davis, SCWA, presented.

Funding for the continuation of the Russian River Water Forum is going to become harder to come by. The Water Forum will need to adjust, and possibly move from monthly to bi-monthly or quarterly meetings. Looking at how to extend the Forum with the remaining funds. The next meeting is December 7 in Ukiah with ability to attend via Zoom but asking for members to attend in-person. The agenda will include an update from conservation groups on the broader Eel River restoration project.

Laura Sparks, City of Cotati, asked about the third option for the diversion.

Grant Davis answered that there is still a lot of work happening. However, based on feedback from the environmental community, a decision was made to focus on the other two options.

Brenda Adelman shared that her group, the Russian River Watershed Protection, had been asked to be involved in this process, but can only have limited involvement. One concern is that the lower river is affected by Lake Sonoma, and that during drought, the water flows can go down to 25 cfs which kills recreation and has other serious impacts.

13. Community and Government Affairs Update

Brad Sherwood, SCWA, presented.

Assembly Bill 30, which appropriates \$10 million for Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations and Hazard Resiliency Program, was a home run. Sonoma Water is working on their 2024/25 legislative platform that goes to their Board of Directors in December and would like to work together on this platform. An outreach trip to Washington D.C. occurred in September.

David Rabbitt, SCWA, shared that while in D.C. they were able to meet with representatives from Scripps, also met with the National Weather Service, and with the Department of Interior.

Brad Sherwood, SCWA, shared that on the community engagement side, Sonoma Water is helping to staff the visitor's center at Lake Sonoma. There have been about 25,000 visitors, and without these volunteers staffing the center, the center would not have been able to run. Sonoma Water would like to work with everyone on public outreach regarding water rates. Finally, there is an open invitation to go out and tour Dry Creek.

No public comment.

14. Integrated Regional Water Management Plan(s) Update

Tony Williams, North Marin Water District presented.

Last week a camera was deployed at the North Marin Aqueduct by Olimpoli State Park, to look for damage that may have been caused by the landslide. There does not appear to be interior damage, however, they have lost the window of opportunity for pipe replacement. The plan now is to do annual inspections since there is an easier access.

Grant Davis, SCWA, presented.

North Coast Resource Partnership has one of the highest rankings in state for government programming. Last Friday, visited the site where the C-Band will be installed, which will offer an almost 360-degree view off west coast. Looking to see what DWR will do next with the program.

Jed Smith, Marin Municipal Water District, shared that he believes we are still in crisis with only 2 years of water storage and would like to partner together as a region.

No public comment.

15. Items for Next Agenda (next combined WAC/TAC meeting is February 5, 2024)

None.

16. Check Out

Chair Healy adjourned the meeting at 10:43 a.m.