

DRAFT* MINUTES OF WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Utilities Field Operations Training Center
35 Stony Point Road, Santa Rosa, CA
February 5, 2024

Attendees:

Grant Davis, Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA or Sonoma Water)
David Rabbitt, SCWA
Sam Salmon, Town of Windsor
Christina Goulart, Town of Windsor
Laura Sparks, City of Cotati
Mike Healy, City of Petaluma
Dan Herrera, City of Petaluma
Natalie Rogers, City of Santa Rosa
Jennifer Burke, City of Santa Rosa
Mike Berger, City of Sonoma
Emily Sanborn, City of Rohnert Park
Vanessa Garrett, City of Rohnert Park
Tony Williams, North Marin Water District
Jack Baker, North Marin Water District
Matt Fullner, Valley of The Moon Water District
Jon Foreman, Valley of the Moon Water District
Paul Sellier, Marin Municipal Water District
Ranjiv Khush, 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
Don Seymour, SCWA
Peter Martin, City of Santa Rosa
Claire Nordlie, City of Santa Rosa

Public:

Brenda Adelman, Russian River Watershed Protection
Duane DeWitt

1. Check In
Mike Healy, WAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.
2. Public Comment
Duane Dewitt spoke regarding flooding currently taking place on Roseland Creek and placing storm water retention bases along urban creeks.
3. Recap from the November 6, 2023 WAC/TAC Meeting and Approval of Minutes
Moved by Natalie Rogers, City of Santa Rosa, seconded by Jack Baker, North Marin Water District. Unanimously approved, with City of Sonoma being absent.
No public comment.
4. Recap from the January 8, 2024 TAC Meeting and Approval of Minutes (TAC)

Moved by Matt Fullner, Valley of the Moon Water District, seconded by Christina Goulart, Town of Windsor. Unanimously approved, with City of Cotati absent.

No public comment.

5. Water Supply Coordination Council – January 29, 2024

The Water Supply Coordination Council met on January 29 and finalized today's agenda.

No public comment.

6. Water Supply Conditions and Temporary Urgency Change Order

Don Seymour, SCWA, presented.

Lake Mendocino is currently at 88,000 acre-ft, which is about 8,000 acre-ft above the deviation pool. Lake Sonoma is currently at 288,000 acre-ft. The Army Corps. Will be conducting releases to get both reduced to the top of deviation pool.

Brenda Adelman spoke regarding the Russian River being at almost flood stage and shared concerns about flooding and the collection system at the treatment plant if flooding were to occur. Don Seymour said that the Army Corps. will not be adding water on top of what is already in the river and will be waiting for water levels in the river to come down before starting releases.

The Temporary Urgency Change Order was issued in December and put into place January 1. On January 1, the classification was a dry water supply condition, however, as of February 1, it has changed to normal water supply conditions. In April it will be determined if another temporary urgency change petition is needed.

Jennifer Burke, Santa Rosa Water, asked if we are not in drought condition would SCWA need to file a Temporary Urgency Change Petition for the Biological Opinion. Don Seymour, SCWA, said most likely it will be for the Biological Opinion, but things are a little uncertain regarding what type of storage will be in Lake Mendocino and what our water supply conditions will be at that time. PG&E will soon be filing a variance to reduce flows similar to last year's filing, which will have greater impact than last year. Last year, PG&E's flow variance was not in effect until late September.

7. Regional Water Supply Resiliency Study Update

Don Seymour, SCWA, and Armin Munevar, Jacobs Engineering, presented.

The goal of this study is to look at the various risks our water supply system may face. The primary tasks include: preparing scenarios, metrics, and Decision Support Model (DSM) development; evaluating baseline level of resilience; developing and evaluating adaptation strategies to improve resilience; and report preparation, stakeholder engagement, and project management.

Jacobs accelerated the drought resiliency analysis in 2022. The risks being evaluated in 2024 will be seismic scenarios, wildfires, flooding, power loss, and the uncertainty of the Potter Valley Project. Completion of risk scenarios is scheduled for April, with the cascading risk scenarios analysis anticipated to be done in June and anticipate that recommended strategies will be completed in summer and a finalized study completed at the end of 2024.

Brenda Adelman asked if vacancy rates, and new building construction is taken into account for the general amount of water that is needed and if the risk analysis includes downstream outside of the urban districts.

Armin Munevar, Jacobs Engineering, answered that projected population and land use conditions is from the urban water management plan which will next be updated in 2025, but for now working with information from the 2020 urban water management plans. Those outside of the retail customer system are currently not being looked at as part of this study. Duane Dewitt asked if Jacobs is reaching out to people who live on the creek to get information.

Armin Munevar, Jacobs Engineering, answered that they do include historical flooding information as well as projected climate change flooding in their analysis and welcomes any additional information that they may have.

8. Sonoma Marin Saving Water Partnership (TAC)

a. 2023 Water Production Relative to 2013 Benchmark

Jennifer Burke presented.

December 2023 water usage compared to December 2013 is down by 31% total for the partnership. Water usage to date 2023 compared to 2013 is down 27% total for partnership.

b. Water Use Efficiency Outreach Messaging

Andrea Rodriguez, SCWA, presented.

March 18 -24 is "Fix-A-Leak Week". This Winter look out for the irrigation scheduling tool, plant picker, and the dye tab challenge.

Jennifer Burke, Santa Rosa Water, announced that Santa Rosa will be kicking off fix a leak week at the annual St. Patrick's Day 5k run.

c. Update on Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life Rulemaking

Paul Piazza, SCWA, presented.

Reminder that October 4 the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) held a public workshop that lasted 12 hours with significant public comment. As of now, the State Board is reviewing all the public comments received. In early January, the Office of Administrative Law released a report that was in alignment with the public comments that were received. One of the issues cited is that the regulation regarding the requirement for outdoor irrigation is overly complex and difficult to achieve, while having additional significant costs which could lead to higher rate increases. They also said the timeline for these regulations are overly aggressive.

Jennifer Burke, Santa Rosa Water, said there was an Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) meeting, and an update was provided. The State Water Board has been holding meetings with environmental interests and representative of water suppliers. Some agreements have been made to make changes to the Commercial, Industrial, Institutional (CII) performance measures, the reporting requirements, and for an alternative compliance pathway. There was no agreement on changes to the outdoor standard or water budget. A new version of the regulation will be released shortly, hopefully in February or March. Water purveyors should continue to provide comments on this rule making as it moves forward.

No public comment.

9. TAC Finance Subcommittee Update - FY2024-25 SCWA Water Transmission System Budget (TAC)

Christina Goulart, Town of Windsor, presented.

The subcommittee received the draft water transmission system budget on January 17, and met with Sonoma Water staff on January 22 to discuss the draft budget as presented.

Sonoma Water staff asked to have WAC approve using the 36-month average deliveries in calculating the wholesale water rate.

On January 29, the subcommittee met and recommended using 36-month average deliveries in lieu of the last 12-months of deliveries for the wholesale rate calculation..

Jennifer Burke confirmed with Christina Goulart, Town of Windsor, that the subcommittee's recommendation is to support using the 36-month average.

Lynne Rosselli, SCWA, presented.

Water rates are calculated based on the lower of 12 months of deliveries or 3-year average. Some risks to consider include: if water deliveries fall below 42,826 acre-ft, water rates could spike the following year, SCWA may need to use part of the Prudent Reserve, and this may impact SCWA's revenue bond obligations. SCWA is asking for a WAC vote to approve using the 36 month (or 3 year) average deliveries instead of the prior 12-months of deliveries.

Moved by Matt Fullner, Valley of the Moon Water District, seconded by Tony Williams, North Marin Water District. Unanimously approved with City of Cotati absent.

Mike Healy, City of Petaluma, asked what the rate increase would be for the 12-month deliveries compared to the 36-month average deliveries option.

Lynne Rosselli, SCWA, answered that it would be roughly a 4% decrease in the rate increase to use the 36-month option.

Moved by Jon Foreman, Valley of the Moon, seconded by Natalie Rogers, City of Santa Rosa. Unanimously approved with City of Sonoma absent.

No public comment.

10. Biological Opinion Status Update

Pam Jeane, SCWA, presented.

Fish Flow Project – Work is continuing in preparation for the recirculation of the draft Environmental Impact Report or potentially a new Environmental Impact Report.

Dry Creek Habitat – Work on Phases 4 through 6 continue. The recent rain events have increased flows to moderate levels and are testing the recently constructed sites. Phase 6 is still working on right of way with property owners.

Habitat Maintenance and Monitoring – The 2023 effectiveness monitoring being used to evaluate newly and previously constructed reaches, to quantify the habitat areas meeting desired conditions, and to identify maintenance needs has finished. This will also help control invasive vegetation and removal of sedimentation.

Fish Monitoring – The cameras at Mirabel Dam were taken down in December. Crews are doing ground surveys and are out in the field looking to count fish redds (nests) looking for an index of abundance.

Russian River Estuary Management – Russian River Estuary is open. Laguna Management starts on May 15 and will end on October 15. The annual Pinniped Monitoring Volunteer Training hosted with Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods will be held on February 23, 2024, from 11 am to 1 pm. This is a virtual meeting, with several in field trainings sessions for new volunteers to follow. Visit <https://stewardscr.org/events/2024-pinniped-monitoring-volunteer-training-zoom/> for details.

Biological Opinion – Formal consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the next Biological Opinion has begun.

No public comment.

11. Potter Valley Project Update

Director David Rabbitt, SCWA, presented.

The inaugural meeting of the Eel-Russian Project Authority (ERPA) was held on January 31. ERPA will select which design option to move forward with for the decommissioning project.

Pam Jeane, SCWA, said ERPA is shooting for mid-March for the next meeting. As of now, PG&E is still on schedule with their draft license surrender application. The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is working on a single design option to move forward with. The Potter Valley investigation is still ongoing. Last week the Governor released a salmon strategy, and in that strategy the removal of Cape Horn and Scott Damns, as well as the construction of a new facility, was included.

Jennifer Burke, Santa Rosa Water, commented on the big lift that Sonoma Water has done and how they continue to listen to comments and concerns and provide great representation.

Brenda Adelman spoke about a study done when the Environmental Impact Report came out, one of the recommendations was to consider contribution of the tributaries. Asked for confirmation on whether or not the tributaries will be considered.

Pam Jeane, SCWA, confirmed that when they do the modeling work, tributaries are accounted for.

12. Russian River Water Forum Update

Grant Davis, SCWA, presented.

Recognized efforts of Congressman Huffman and Congressman Thompson. As part of the two basin solutions, \$2 million dollars was secured from the US Bureau of Reclamation. The next Russian River Water Forum planning group will take place sometime in March or April and due to limited funding, will likely be the final meeting.

No public comment.

13. Government Affairs Update

Brad Sherwood, SCWA, presented.

Sonoma Water Government Affairs program is working to defend state funding for programs. If your agency has DWR funding, contact your program administrator to ensure that the funding is intact and let them know that you will be seeking that funding. As an example, the lobby team is actively protecting the forecasted informed reservoirs operations (FIRO) program. The next Sacramento lobby day will be early to mid-March. On the federal side, coordinating with ACWA D.C. office on appropriations. Want to make sure agencies are organizing earmark requests and suggest using last year's form so that you are ready to submit your request as there will likely be only two to three weeks to submit requests. Sonoma Water is continuing to work with DWR and the Western States Water Coalition on the \$15 million ask for sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasting needs. Sonoma Water held a great tour of the transmission system with some of the water contractors staff a couple weeks back.

Jennifer Burke, Santa Rosa Water, asked if the Sacramento lobby day could be the third or fourth week in March since some of the water contractors will be in D.C.

Brenda Adelman shared that the worst system for spills is in Guerneville. The system had several issues needing repairs. It would take approximately \$47 billion dollars to fix the system. Shared concerns that once the river goes over 42 feet, there have been serious SSO during flooding periods.

14. Communications Update

Andrea Rodriguez, SCWA, presented.

For monthly updates including information on public tours of the sanitation system and water transmission system, you can sign up at sonomawater.org/e-news. Since tracking started at Lake Sonoma Visitor Center, there have been 7601 visitors. Steelhead Festival will be Saturday, February 10 from 10am to 4pm.

Brad Sherwood, SCWA, provided a handout on the Water and Energy Education Program and said he was available for questions.

No public comment.

15. Integrated Regional Water Management Plan(s) Update

Grant Davis, SCWA, presented.

The Watershed Resiliency Strategy is going to pick 5 to 6 pilots that would produce the regional water resiliency plans, with the Russian River being one of the designated areas. The hope is that there will be an opportunity for us to secure a path forward on one of the 5 to 6 pilots. There is concern that once other regions begin to join, they will be pushed out to a later time, due to the lack of funding capacity. The building of the platform for the C-band radar at Mount Barnabe, in Marin County, is underway. Once the radar is up and running, there will be more precise precipitation modeling and will improve our abilities to respond to upcoming events. Looking at the possibility of having one more radar in Santa Rosa with possible FEMA funding. North Coast Research Partnership met last month and looked at grant programs for small disadvantage communities.

No public comment.

16. Items for Next Agenda (next combined WAC/TAC meeting is April 1, 2024)

None.

17. Check Out
Chair Healy adjourned the meeting at 10:29 a.m.