

Final Report

Appendix F. Stakeholder Engagement

October 2021

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Contents

1.	Introduction	F-1
2.	Stakeholder Engagement Approach.....	F-3
2.1	Stakeholders	F-3
2.1.1	Internal Stakeholders (Sonoma Water)	F-3
2.1.2	Contractors and Other Agency Customers	F-5
2.1.3	Close Partners	F-5
2.1.4	State and Federal Agencies/Research Institutions	F-8
2.1.5	General Public.....	F-8
2.2	Outreach Approach.....	F-9
3.	Stakeholder Meetings	F-11

Tables

F-1	Listing of Sonoma Water stakeholder outreach conducted for the Climate Adaptation Plan.....	F-11
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SECTION 1

Introduction

As part of the early development of the Sonoma Water Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP), a stakeholder engagement plan was developed to guide the engagement of both internal and external stakeholders in the implementation of the work plan and the CAP itself. This appendix summarizes the approach taken and engagement activities conducted to date. Further engagement with various stakeholder will continue as climate adaptation programs and activities are further developed.

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SECTION 2

Stakeholder Engagement Approach

2.1 Stakeholders

For most projects there are naturally various “tiers” of stakeholders that have different types of investments in the outcome of a project and also varying levels of contribution to a project both in terms of specific content and overall direction. For the purposes of defining appropriate outreach strategies, stakeholders for this effort can be divided into the following categories:

- Internal Stakeholders (Sonoma Water)
- Contractors and other Sonoma Water Customers
- Close Partners
- State and Federal Agencies and Research Institutions
- General Public

Each of the stakeholder groups and those with anticipated interest in the CAP are included in the following sections.

2.1.1 Internal Stakeholders (Sonoma Water)

The Internal set of stakeholders includes Sonoma Water staff, and members of the Board of Directors and advisory committees:

Core Sonoma Water CAP Team – The core team includes Jay Jasperse, Dale Roberts, Susan Haydon, Cory O’Donnell, Grant Davis, and Brad Sherwood. This core team, along with Jacobs team members Armin Munévar, Tapash Das, and Laura Harnish, was responsible for the overall completion of the CAP.

Sonoma Water Core Function Staff – Representatives of each of Sonoma Water’s core functions supported the development and review of the CAP within their respective area of expertise.

- Water Supply – Don Seymour, Marcus Trotta, Pam Jeane, Chris Delaney, John Mendoza, Paul Piazza, Andy Rick
- Flood Management - Mike Thompson, David Royal, Jon Niehaus, Kent Gylfe, Carlos Diaz
- Sanitation – Kevin Booker, Garrett Walker
- Environmental – Anne Crealock, Dave Manning, Jessica Martini-Lamb

- Community and Government Affairs – Brad Sherwood
- Administrative – Lynne Roselli, Joan Hultberg, Misha Bailey

Participation by key staff from water, flood control, sanitation, environmental, community and government affairs, and administrative was critical to the success of the CAP. Their knowledge of the system was important to understanding vulnerabilities and risks and for identifying feasible adaptation strategies.

Sonoma Water Board of Directors: Sonoma Water was created in 1949 by a special act of the California Legislature. Sonoma Water is a separate legal entity from the County, but the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors acts as Sonoma Water’s Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of five members elected from supervisorial districts for four-year terms. The Sonoma Water Board will ultimately make policy and funding decisions with respect to both the development of the CAP and the adaptation strategies identified.

2.1.1.1 Sanitation Districts and Zones

The Sonoma Water sanitation system is divided into four sanitation zones and four county sanitation districts. Sonoma Water owns and operates the sanitation zones, but only operates the independent county sanitation districts. The county sanitation districts have their own separate Board of Directors and hold ownership over the respective assets within their district.

- Occidental County Sanitation District
- Russian River County Sanitation District
- Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District
- South Park County Sanitation District
- Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup Sanitation Zone
- Geyserville Sanitation Zone
- Penngrove Sanitation Zone
- Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone

The Sanitation Districts and Zones have interest in understanding their climate vulnerabilities and potential adaptation strategies.

2.1.1.2 Flood Zones and Advisory Committees

Sonoma Water’s enabling legislation established nine flood zones within the Sonoma Water service area. Three of the zones have advisory committees (1, 2 and 3) that annually prioritize and approve capital projects for their respective zones:

- Zone 1A- Laguna de Santa Rosa – Mark West Creek Watershed
- Zone 2A-Petaluma River watershed
- Zone 3A- Valley of the Moon watershed (Upper Sonoma Creek)
- Zone 4A- Upper Russian River watershed (zone not formed)
- Zone 5A- Lower Russian River watershed
- Zone 6A- Dry Creek watershed – (zone not formed)
- Zone 7A- North Coastal watershed
- Zone 8A- South Coastal watershed
- Zone 9A- Bay watershed (zone not formed)

The flood zone advisory committees have an interest in vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies that are identified related to flood management to assure that their capital project approvals are consistent with the findings of the CAP.

2.1.2 Contractors and Other Agency Customers

Sonoma Water provides wholesale water, principally from the Russian River, to eight water contractors, other water transmission system customers, and to the Marin Municipal Water District (Marin Water), collectively referred to as Sonoma Water’s customers. Sonoma Water also supplies small quantities of water (when available) from its transmission system to surplus water customers, and allows other entities known as Russian River customers to divert water from the Russian River under Sonoma Water’s water rights using their own facilities.

- City of Petaluma
- City of Rohnert Park
- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Cotati
- City of Sonoma
- Town of Windsor
- North Marin Water District
- Marin Municipal Water District
- Valley of the Moon Water District
- Other water supply agreements (i.e., Healdsburg)

As consumers of water supplies, the contractors have a significant interest in the CAP and input into the understanding of the extent and nature of vulnerabilities. Additionally, some identified adaptation strategies may require significant involvement, including potentially funding and implementation, on the part of the contractors.

2.1.3 Close Partners

Close partners are organizations and jurisdictions that are closely linked to Sonoma Water either as partners on specific projects, customers, or closely aligned in regional efforts on climate resilience.

2.1.3.1 Key Organizations

- **Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA)** – The RCPA was created in 2009 to improve coordination on climate change issues and establish a clearinghouse for efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The RCPA is made up of the same Board of Directors as the Sonoma County Transportation Authority and includes representatives from each of the nine cities in Sonoma County and the Board of Supervisors.
- **North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP)** – The NCRP is a long term, innovative and successful collaboration among Northern California Tribes, counties, and diverse stakeholders. The NCRP region covers over 19,000 square miles – 12% of the California landscape – and includes the Tribal lands and the counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Siskiyou, Modoc, Mendocino and Sonoma. The NCRP serves as the Integrated Regional Water Management Program entity for the region.

- **Bay Area Integrated Regional Water Management Program (Bay Area IRWMP)** – The Bay Area IRWMP is a partnership between regional and local organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area to help address water supply, water quality, flood management, watershed protection, and habitat protection and restoration.
- **Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)** – RCDs are the state’s only grassroots conservation delivery system that identifies local conservation problems and guides solutions on a voluntary basis. There are 97 Districts throughout California – each covering a different geographic area. RCDs are special districts similar to districts created for needs such as fire protection, open space, or flood control. Sonoma RCD, Gold Ridge RCD, Mendocino RCD, and Marin RCD are principally in the watershed or service areas of Sonoma Water.
- **Sonoma County Department and Agencies** – Several Sonoma County departments and agencies have authority or responsibility for areas in which some vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies exist. The primary county departments or agencies that should be engaged are: Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space), Regional Parks, Transportation, Public Works, Permit Sonoma, General Services, and Fire and Emergency Services.
- **Sonoma Clean Power** - Sonoma Clean Power is a not-for-profit public agency based in Santa Rosa focused on offering customers clean energy solutions that enhance quality of life while helping solve climate change. Governed by the Sonoma Clean Power Authority, the board is made up of local representatives from participating cities throughout Sonoma and Mendocino Counties.
- **Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs)** – Three GSAs are public agencies formed to sustainably manage groundwater in priority basins throughout the state. Three GSAs exist in the services areas of Sonoma Water: Santa Rosa Plain, Sonoma Valley, and Petaluma Valley.
- **Marin and Mendocino Counties** - Because residents of Marin and Mendocino Counties rely on water from the Russian River system managed by Sonoma Water, these counties also have an inherent interest in the identification of vulnerabilities as well as the selection and implementation of adaptation strategies that may impact their constituents.
- **Native American Tribes** – Dozens of Native American Tribes have lands, cultural interests, and livelihoods dependent on the Russian River watershed. Many of the tribes participate in regional planning through the NCRP.

2.1.3.2 Local Environmental NGOs

A number of environmental non-governmental organizations work within the Russian River watershed and service area of the Sonoma Water. The following is a partial list of organizations:

- **North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative (NBCAI)** – The goal of NBCAI is to foster an open conversation between technical experts, land managers and policy makers in support of effective local scale climate adaptation strategies that preserve natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystem services. NBCAI’s purpose is to implement effective climate adaptation strategies that sustain ecological and human communities of North San Francisco Bay watersheds. NBCAI is a regional partnership with several NGO’s and governmental organizations actively engaged.

- **The Climate Center (formerly known as the Center for Climate Protection – Sonoma County):** The mission of The Climate Center is to inspire, align, and mobilize action in response to the climate crisis. They work with business, government, youth and the broader community to advance practical, science-based solutions for significant greenhouse gas emission reductions. The Climate Center has been a partner to Sonoma Water on numerous projects and it is expected that although it is primarily focused on mitigation, as the CAP is communicated more broadly, there may be interest in the adaptation solutions suggested and may be a partner for building community support for implementation.
- **Pepperwood** - Pepperwood manages a 3,200-acre biological preserve and the Dwight Center for Conservation Science. An important refuge for more than 900 species of native plants and wildlife, the preserve serves as a living laboratory hosting researchers from around the world. The Dwight Center has become a hub for ecological education and a conservation think tank.
- **Sonoma Land Trust** - Sonoma Land Trust works closely with private landowners, Sonoma Ag + Open Space and other public agencies at all levels of government, nonprofit partners and foundations. Since 1976, Sonoma Land Trust has protected nearly 58,000 acres of beautiful, productive and environmentally significant land in and around Sonoma County.
- **Sonoma Land Paths** - LandPaths was founded in 1996 with a mission to foster a love of the land in Sonoma County. LandPaths strives to create exceptional outdoor experiences for people as a way to increase their understanding, appreciation and desire to steward nature.
- **Russian River Watershed Protection Committee (RRWPC).** RRWPC's specific purpose is to serve as a civic association concerned with public interest issues related to the Russian River and its watershed. Their primary focus is on the lower river watershed and its major tributaries.
- **Russian Riverkeeper.** Originally Friends of the Russian River, Russian Riverkeeper actively pursues conservation and protection of the River's mainstem, tributaries and watershed through public education, citizen action, scientific research and expert advocacy.
- **Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation (Partner in NBCAI).** Founded in 1989, the Foundation is a place-based organization focused on the Laguna de Santa Rosa, a Wetland of International Importance. Their mission is to restore and conserve the Laguna de Santa Rosa and to inspire public appreciation of the wetland.
- **Sonoma Ecology Center (Partner in NBCAI and Sonoma Biochar Initiative).** The mission of the Sonoma Ecology Center is to work with the community to enhance and sustain ecological health in Sonoma Valley.
- **Sonoma County Water Coalition.** The Sonoma County Water Coalition consists of about 32 organizations working together to influence water policy issues in Sonoma County.
- **Sonoma County Farm Bureau.** The largest farm organization in the County, the Farm Bureau is a not-for-profit organization of farm and ranch families engaging on multiple issues at local, state and national venues. In Sonoma County they have engaged in endangered species issues, water resources issues, and agricultural tourism.

As NGOs with specific focus on the environmental and water resources of the region, there is a clear nexus of interest with Sonoma Water's CAP. As the CAP is presented to the public, it will

be important to meet with these organizations to better understand areas of common interest in either further understanding vulnerabilities or implementing adaptation strategies.

2.1.4 State and Federal Agencies/Research Institutions

Several adaptation strategies will require engagement of regulatory agencies such as with the USACE on operations involving Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma. Additionally, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)/Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) are collaborators with Sonoma Water on ongoing research on atmospheric rivers and their potential impact on local climate conditions. Continued outreach and coordination with these agencies to understand and support adaptation strategies will improve the likelihood of success. State and federal agencies and research institutions that should continue to be engaged are:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
- NOAA
- USGS
- SIO

2.1.5 General Public

The general public within the Sonoma Water service area is an important stakeholder, particularly in the support and implementation of regional solutions. Outcomes of the plan include new projects which will come with associated new costs and potentially rate increases. Engaging with the community on water and climate education, and CAP strategy implementation and refinement will be important in building the support necessary to ultimately implement projects.

Members of the general public include:

- Residents in the service area
- Established Advisory Commissions (ex: Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission)
- Business, Agricultural Industry, and Trade Organizations (ex: Sonoma County Alliance, Sonoma County Winegrape Commission, North Coast Builders Exchange)
- Identified vulnerable communities

The general public's interest could range from interest in assuring that their level of service for flood, water and sanitation is continued uninterrupted and protected against impacts of climate change, concern about increases in rates, and compatibility, promotion of, or opposition to, specific proposed adaptation strategies.

2.2 Outreach Approach

The CAP team formulated an outreach approach in the early phases of the project. During the development of the CAP, and as plan recommendations are implemented, there are various objectives for the engagement of the different stakeholder groups. Suggested objectives for stakeholder engagement are:

- Solicit technical feedback on the CAP from internal stakeholders and close partners
- Solicit input from the general public and ratepayers on the adaptation strategies
- Identify and respond to concerns from all stakeholder groups
- Build and gain support for decisions/funding
- Inform and involve community members

The CAP team conducted outreach during various phases of the CAP development: scoping, vulnerability and risk assessment, adaptation strategy development, and plan development.

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SECTION 3

Stakeholder Meetings

Initial conversations were held with many of the stakeholders in the early phase of the CAP scoping and development phases. However, the region was also hit by numerous extreme events during the CAP development period: major wildfires in 2017, 2019, and 2020 that caused widespread evacuations and emergency response prioritization by Sonoma Water staff, major river flooding in 2019, at least two substantial public safety power shutoff events in 2019 and 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders in 2020 and 2021, and severe drought in 2020-21. Thus, the actual engagement fell short of the original planned engagement.

The team transitioned to virtual engagement in the post-pandemic world and pivoted to more targeted, individual outreach than previously envisioned. Table F-1 lists some of the outreach efforts conducted during the course of the Sonoma Water CAP development. In each of these outreach efforts, the CAP team presented the goals and status of the efforts, asked and responded to questions, and sought feedback on either science that should be incorporated or specific strategies that could be considered. Early climate scenarios and hydrological modeling was the result of engagement with the USGS and NBCAI, while integrated strategies stemmed in part from other County outreach.

Upon Board approval of the CAP, additional outreach, education, and engagement will be needed to convey the impacts and strategies in the plan to a larger regional audience. Outreach will also be needed to start to form partnerships for some of the more integrated regional strategies. In this fashion, the CAP is really the start of the engagement effort.

Table F-1. Listing of Sonoma Water stakeholder outreach conducted for the Climate Adaptation Plan

Stakeholder Group	CAP Phase
Sonoma Water General Manager	Scoping
Sonoma Water Board Members	Scoping
Water Advisory Committee (WAC)/Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	Scoping
North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative	Vulnerability Assessment
Regional Climate Protection Authority	Scoping
U.S. Geological Survey	Vulnerability/Risk (V/R) Assessment

Stakeholder Group	CAP Phase
National Oceanography and Atmospheric Administration	V/R Assessment
Scripps Institution of Oceanography	V/R Assessment
Sonoma Water Technical Experts	Scoping, V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
Sonoma Water “All Hands”	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
County Climate Action Ad Hoc Committee	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
Permit Sonoma	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
Office of Recovery and Resiliency (CAO’s office)	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
Ag + Open Space	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
WAC/TAC	V/R Assessment; Adaptation Strategy Development, Plan Preparation
UC Cooperative Extension	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
County General Services Energy & Sustainability Division	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
Department of Water Resources	V/R Assessment; Adaptation Strategy Development
Office of Policy and Research	V/R Assessment; Adaptation Strategy Development
TAC Ad Hoc	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
TAC	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
WAC/TAC	V/R Assessment, Adaptation Strategy Development
Public Health	To be determined
Regional Parks	To be determined
TPW	To be determined
Department of Emergency Management	To be determined
Non-governmental organizations	To be determined
Resource Conservation Districts	To be determined
General Public	To be determined