

DRAFT

**Minutes of the
Feather River Regional Water Management Group
April 23, 2009**

A meeting of the Feather River Regional Water Management Group was held on April 23, 2009, at the Plumas County Public Works Conference Room in Quincy, California. The meeting was attended by:

Roy Carter, General Manager, Greenhorn Creek Community Services District (CSD)
Angie Dillingham, Partnership Coordinator, Plumas National Forest
Carol Dobbas, Executive Director, Upper Feather River Watershed Group
Mark Dotta, Plumas County Planning Commission and Last Chance Creek Water District
Carl Genasci, Chairman, Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District
Holly George, Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor, U.C. Cooperative Extension
Joe Hoffman, Forest Hydrologist, Plumas National Forest
David Keller, Executive Director, Plumas County Community Development Commission
Jonathan Kusel, Executive Director, Sierra Institute for Community and Environment
Mike Kroencke, Plumas County Engineering Department
Jason Moghaddas, Conservation Director, Feather River Land Trust
Brian Morris, General Manager, Plumas County Flood Control & Water Conservation District
Pamela Payen, President, Plumas-Sierra Cattlemen's Association
Bob Perreault, General Manager, Grizzly Ranch CSD and Walker Ranch CSD
Russell Reid, Upper Feather River Watershed Group
Steve Robinson, Executive Director, Mountain Meadows Conservancy
Kelly Weintraub, Watershed Coordinator, Sierra Institute for Community and Environment
Jim Wilcox, Program Manager, Feather River Coordinated Resource Management
Randy Wilson, Planning Director, Plumas County

Brian Morris opened the meeting at 2:00 p.m. and asked whether there was any public comment for items not on the agenda. There was no public comment.

I. Update on status of Prop. 50 Implementation Grant and Plumas Watershed Forum

Brian Morris reported that the Department of Water Resources requested that project schedules be prepared for the Prop. 50 IRWM implementation grant with an assumed start date of July 1. The State sold \$6.85 billion worth of bonds on April 22, and the Department of Finance has issued a "Master Restart List" with approximately 5,000 grant-funded projects that will be resumed, including the Feather River IRWM projects. There are a multitude of other projects in the region that are funded by Prop. 40, Prop. 50, and Prop. 84 that will also be restarted.

The Plumas Watershed Forum issued an RFP to allocate the final \$150,000 from the first phase of funding under the Monterey Settlement. A TAC meeting is scheduled for April 30 to review five proposals related to the following projects:

- Mountain Meadows Watershed Restoration Action Plan
- Spanish Creek in American Valley Restoration Project
- Spanish Creek in Meadow Valley Restoration Project

- Red Clover – Poco Restoration Project
- Irrigated Lands BMP Implementation Project

Subject to recommendations from the TAC, the Plumas Watershed Forum is tentatively scheduled to consider approval of the proposed projects at a meeting on May 5.

The second phase of funding for the Plumas Watershed Forum is dependent upon completion of the Monterey Plus EIR. A draft EIR was released in 2007, and the Department of Water Resources is in the final stages of preparing responses to comments and issuing the final EIR. Additional funding for the Watershed Forum will not resume until any litigation related to the new EIR is resolved, so the future of the program is uncertain.

II. Update on organization of regional water management group and report on April 22 meeting with Sierra County stakeholders

Brian Morris reported that nine local agencies within Plumas County had adopted resolutions stating their approval to enter into the proposed joint powers agreement for the new organization of the regional water management group. There were also seven non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from Lassen, Plumas, and Sierra Counties who had formally expressed their agreement to participate in the JPA governance structure. Other agencies and NGOs had expressed interest in the JPA, but some people had concerns about creating a new, independent agency.

A meeting was held in Sierraville on April 22 with Sierra County stakeholders to review the proposed JPA and discuss options for the new structure of the regional water management group. Participants in the meeting included:

- Tim Beals, Sierra County Planning Director
- Jim Curtis, Sierra County County Counsel
- Anne Eldred, Sierra County Planning Commission
- Robert Eshleman, Sierra County Fire Safe and Watershed Council
- Mike Freschi, Sierra County Fire Safe and Watershed Council
- Carl Genasci, Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District
- Dave Goicoechea, Sierra County Board of Supervisors
- Brian Morris, Plumas County Flood Control & Water Conservation District
- Bill Nunes, Sierra County Board of Supervisors
- John Olofson, Plumas County Planning Commission
- Pamela Payen, Plumas-Sierra Cattlemen's Association / Sierra Co. Economic Development
- Beenie Rose, Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District
- Terry Swofford, Plumas County Board of Supervisors
- Randy Westmoreland, Tahoe National Forest
- Andrew Winberry, Sierra County Planning Department

Everyone agreed on the need and desire to work collaboratively on regional water issues. The main point of discussion was on the trade-offs in reorganizing the regional water management group under a joint powers agreement or under a memorandum of understanding. The strong consensus among the Sierra County stakeholders was that they preferred participating through an MOU rather than joining a JPA.

Two options were then discussed:

- (1) Feather River agencies that want to form a JPA could do so, and then other agencies and NGOs could interface with the JPA through an MOU.
- (2) A single MOU could be used as the overarching structure for the regional water management group without forming a new JPA.

The preference was for Option 2 with the primary reasons being that it would be a more simple and understandable structure and it would be a more effective way of allowing all parties to participate with the same footing.

The governance structure proposed for the JPA was reviewed and there was general agreement that the existing proposal could also serve as the framework for regional decision-making under an MOU.

It was agreed at the Sierraville meeting that after today's Regional Water Management Group meeting, a draft of the governing document would be recirculated for review if everyone agrees that an MOU is the best way to finalize the new governance structure.

A draft MOU was distributed with essentially the same governance structure as the previous joint powers agreement. One addition to the previous proposal was to add one seat on the Steering Committee that would be appointment by members of the Regional Water Management Group who were not otherwise represented on the Steering Committee.

Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Regional Water Management Group that an MOU was the preferred way to proceed so that all stakeholders would be working together under the same umbrella. The draft of the MOU will be recirculated for review and comment, with a goal to obtain approvals by the initial participants and execute the MOU with an effective date of June 1.

III. Discuss Region Acceptance Process and resolution approving submittal to Department of Water Resources

Brian Morris presented a map of the Sacramento Valley IRWM programs and talked about how the regions had evolved over that last five years and the purposes of the Region Acceptance Process under the Prop. 84 phase of the IRWM program.

The materials to be submitted to DWR were circulated for review prior to the meeting, and the only difference in the final draft was to change the description of the reorganization of the Regional Water Management Group from the form of a JPA to an MOU.

Under the existing MOU for the Regional Water Management Group that was executed in 2005, the formal members of the group are Plumas County, the Plumas National Forest, the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District, and the Plumas County Flood Control & Water Conservation District, all of whom were represented at the meeting. Brian Morris stated that the governance was in transition from the 2005 MOU to the new MOU with a more complete structure and stakeholder representation. Since the new MOU was not yet executed, the

assembled stakeholders agreed to proceed on a consensus basis and approved Resolution 09-01 authorizing submission of the RAP materials to DWR. All of the Regional Water Management Group members under the 2005 MOU joined in the consensus.

IV. Present draft of “Who’s Who in the Feather River Watershed”

A draft document entitled “Who’s Who in the Feather River Watershed” was presented for review. The document was put together in response to requests for something that would help explain the roles of different agencies and organizations and how they relate to one another. The document will provide an overview of the agencies and organizations for the benefit of the general public, but it has also proved valuable in helping people in the water and watershed communities become aware of things they may not have been familiar with. The document includes hyperlinks to each entity’s website, allowing a reader to easily pursue more information.

After everyone has had a chance to review the document and provide edits, corrections, or additions, the document will be publicly released and provided to local media. Given the content of the document, it is a “living” document that will change over time as organizations, agency roles, and regional issues evolve.

V. Review possible timetables for Prop. 84 planning and implementation grants

Prop. 84 IRWM funding for planning and implementation grants was included on the April 22 “Master Restart List” from the Department of Finance. Representatives from the Feather River Region (Brian Morris and Leah Wills) have been meeting with members of the other Sacramento Valley IRWM programs for about one year to resolve regional boundary issues and negotiate on the allocation of Prop. 84 funding. The current proposal from the Sacramento Valley coalition allocates \$400,000 in planning funds to the Feather River region and between \$4 million and \$8 million in implementation funds. If the Sacramento Valley programs can agree on the funding allocation and obtain DWR approval, the IRWM funding will be allocated under that agreement rather than through a competitive grant process.

Although Prop. 84 funding is on the restart list, DWR has not yet announced any firm timetable for planning and implementation grants. Planning grants could be available as early as late 2009. Since last September, there has been talk about an “expedited” round of implementation funding for drought projects and other priorities, but it is not clear how that may proceed. Under a normal funding cycle, implementation funds would most likely be available in 2010 and 2011.

VI. Discuss process for update of the Feather River Water Plan

Brian Morris stated that following execution of the MOU for the Regional Water Management Group, the first main task would be to work on the first update of the 2005 IRWM plan. Everyone was asked to review the IRWM Plan and consider what may be missing, outdated, or wrong. The plan is available on the featherriverwater.com website, or hard copies may be requested from the Plumas County Flood Control District.

Timing to complete update will depend on a number of factors, including availability of planning funds, coordination with the ongoing Plumas County General Plan Update and the forthcoming Sierra County General Plan Update, and the need to make sure the plan is eligible for implementation funds under the Prop. 84 standards.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:30. The next meeting date will be scheduled based on the timing for execution of the new Regional Water Management Group MOU, work on the IRWM plan update, and application for planning funds.