

*Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control
& Water Conservation Improvement District*

General Manager's Report for April 2024
Presented at Regular Meeting of Monday, May 13, 2024

Priority 1: Security ~ Ensure reliable, resilient, and available sources of water.

(1: Improved river & reservoir operations. 2: Fair & reliable inter-basin. 3: Expanded water sources. 4: Increased storage capacity)

1-Eel River Operations: PG&E submitted the 2024 Flow Variance Request to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and public comment were received within the FERC comment period. No orders have been issued yet.

1-Russian River & Reservoir Operations: Sonoma Water Agency has filed petitions for temporary urgency changes for water right Permits on the Russian River. To view the Notice and project information, please visit <https://www.sonomawater.org/tucp>

4-Coyote Valley Dam: Progress has been reported on the lawsuit against Army Corp of Engineers, asserting the Coyote Valley Dam's flood control operations violate the Endangered Species Act. This article provides an update:

- <https://mavensnotebook.com/2024/04/19/courthouse-news-biologist-squares-off-again-with-army-corps-of-engineers-over-endangered-salmon-protections/>
- https://www.courthousenews.com/northern-california-dam-flood-control-operations-found-to-harm-endangered-salmon/?mc_cid=3ccf659bda&mc_eid=6e43d11ea4
- <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/russian-river-protected-salmon-dam-releases/>

Priority 2: Collaboration ~ Work with partners to achieve aligned goals for a common benefit.

(1: Trusted relationships with community partners for regional water security. 2: Improved diversity, equity, and inclusion in the stewardship of water resources. 3: Expanded relationships with non-traditional partners and stakeholders in pursuit of enhanced Environmental Stewardship.)

1-Ukiah Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA): The GSA has been working on the Rate & Fee Study decision process. A series of Ad Hoc Committee meetings were held with the consultant GSA staff to reduce the proposed budget and refine the project implementation schedule. The General Manager appointed to the GSA left the firm and another GM was appointed. The GSA Board met to receive a detailed report from the Rate & Fee study consultant and gave directions. However, it has been decided to bring another option to the Board and a special meeting was scheduled for Monday, May 20th. Details can be found on the GSA website & Board/TAC meeting recordings available on YouTube.

1-North Coast Resource Partnership: The quarterly meeting was held in Weaverville and included project presentations, partnership discussions, and a Tribal Sovereignty training.

Priority 3: Advocacy ~ Influence outreach, education, funding, regulation, and legislation in support of equitable water resource stewardship.

(1: Improved public awareness and understanding of the importance of water issues. 2: State and Federal governmental policy and funding support for the region.)

2-State Water Resources Control Board Telemetry Pilot: An information meeting is scheduled on zoom for Monday May 13, 2024 and a presentation will be given at the next (and final) Russian River Water Forum meeting on Wednesday May 15, 2024.

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2-Association of CA Water Agencies (ACWA): The Region 1 Board met prior to the statewide ACWA Board. The State Legislative Committee met to discuss and set positions on developing bills. The Spring Conference was held in Sacramento with a variety of interesting topics. In his keynote speech, CA Secretary of Natural Resources, Wade Crofoot, brought Governor Newsom as a surprise guest. Both spoke of the need for continued efforts, funding, and bold moves to keep ahead of the impacts of weather whiplash. Region 1 presented a panel discussion on the North Coast Resource Partnership, focusing on the unique implementation of the Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP) through inclusion of over 30 Tribes. GM Salomone was a panelist in a session titled "Fiscal Sustainability in Times of Uncertainty" representing the rural water supplier and agricultural perspective. Earlier in the month, the ACWA SGMA Implementation Sub Committee met with DWR representatives on 'what's next' at the Sustainable GW Management Office (SGMO) in supporting GSA's implementing Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

Priority 4: Use ~ Ensure effective and beneficial use of water as a public resource.

(1: Maximum beneficial use of water under District water right license. 2: Strategic use of water by customers.)

1-Change Petition: A pre-petition proposal was submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board, as requested. In early May, a response was received, and staff will work with legal counsel to finalize the change petition for submission.

Priority 5: Administration ~ Foster sustainable leadership and management of agency resources.

(1: Capable and high quality executive leadership. 2: Engaged, diverse, and knowledgeable Board leadership. 3: Effective systems and human resources to execute the strategic plan. 4: Sound and sustainable management of District finances.)

1-Executive Leadership: GM attended the following meetings/webinars: (1) CA Water Data Consortium's Data for Lunch series on a groundwater accounting platform. (2) Untapped Potential of Stormwater Runoff webinar (3) ACWA Annual State Legislative Symposium (4) "Office Hours with Ann Hayden: Multi-benefit Land Repurposing Program." (5) Climate Resilience Through Regeneration - Recharge for Farms, Nature, and People. (6) North Coast Resource Partnership Quarterly meeting (7) UPWARD Advisory Group meeting (8) DWR presentation on the CA Water Plan Update.

3-Metering: The Resource Conservation District notified the District of reduced capacity for the contract and efforts began to transition the meter & data management program back in-house. Addition meters and data logging accessories are underway.

4-Insurance: As a follow up to Trustee questions in April on the Audit, the \$2.5 million liability coverage is the minimum package available and the billion dollar limit is for the pool, not for our individual district. The only property/vehicle coverage we have is for meters and the car.

Community Meetings

Inland Water & Power Commission Special Meeting (3/18/24): The Commission held a closed session in preparation for the following day's Eel Russian Project Authority meeting which was anticipated to include decision on the Eel River infrastructure.

Eel Russian Project Authority (ERPA) (3/19/24): Updates were given on the PG&E/ERPA meetings, including PG&E's recent clarification on decommission and how it relates to ERPA's efforts to continue the diversion. An update was provided on grant funding efforts and an extensive presentation given on the two Eel River diversion designs, reviews, and the technical group's recommendation for the pump back station over the roughen channel. The Board approved staff recommendation. The materials and recording will be posted on the ERPA website. <https://www.eelrussianauthority.org/events>

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Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) (4/1/24): The City of Ukiah made a presentation on the newly formed Ukiah Valley Water Authority (<https://cityofukiah.com/uvwa/>).

First Ukiah Valley Water Agency JPA (4/3/24): Adam Gaska from Redwood Valley Water District was elected Chair, Jerry Cardoza from Millview the Vice Chair, Sean White is acting as Secretary. No Treasurer was appointed at this time. Appointing alternates were also tabled. Other basic business was handled. Sean updated on the SAFER funding and potential consultant to assist.

Upper Russian River Water Agency (URRWA) (4/3/24): *Member operation updates -Millview will repair and renovate a booster station at Deerwood. Federal update to the lead and copper rule now requires Districts to inventory and report on all connections from the meter to the house or business, identifying the material of the piping: PVC, copper, galvanized, PEC or anything else including lead. Nothing beyond the inventorying is required. *An update on the Ukiah Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency was provided, noting the previously staff-proposed budget is being reduced [after feedback from the Technical Advisory Committee and a subcommittee.] It was announced the current GM is leaving and being replaced by another consultant within the same firm and that there is some talk of creating a treasurer position for the GSA Board. *The Ukiah Valley Water Authority had its first meeting. It addressed organizational housekeeping and will meet the first Tuesday of every month at 5pm at Ukiah Valley Conference Center. Now the SAFER grant monies can be accessed if successful in the application. The organization who handled the recycled water grants for the City will work on this now. They will come to develop a design plan to submit with the grant application. This will begin next month. *The Eel Russian Project Authority met and selected the pumping station option vs roughened channel to propose to PG&E for inclusion in the decommissioning plan.

City of Ukiah (4/3/24): Nothing water related to note.

Willow Water District (4/8/24): The Board held a long closed session. Update on service contracts: Millview is working on tanks and new pumping station. The Ukiah Valley Water Authority had its first meeting.

Mendocino County Inland Water & Power Commission (IWPC) (4/11/24): PG&E is cooperating with the Eel Russian Project Authority (ERPA). Next ERPA meeting in June.

Hopland PUD (4/11/24): No one from the District attended.

Redwood Valley Water District (4/18/24): Trustee will provide report during meeting.

Millview Water District (4/16/24): Staff reported the Vineyard Crossings subdivision developer needs water to be able to do the project. It is expected the UVWA JPA may resolve that issue, though too early to know for certain. Staff reported on operations: one tank is refurbished, the other is in progress, Redwood Valley treatment plant is operational and running. Bid was accepted from Performance Pumps for 33K to replace plumbing and both pumps in the Deerwood Bunker Booster Pump Station. This will clear out 40 years of problems and improve efficiency and performance. Ukiah Valley Water Authority and Eel Russian Project Authority updates were given. Legal Counsel Report: Expectation that the Waltufel water right could be exhumed and have new life breathed into it.

Willow Water District (4/30/24): Willow held a special meeting.

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