

Upper American River Watershed Planning Group Meeting #8 DRAFT Meeting Summary

October 27, 2023, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Meeting Objectives:

- Establish shared understanding for the final revision of the Programmatic Watershed Plan (PWP) and schedule for finalization.
- Provide an example of an agency-specific implementation considerations and process for approval.
- Solicit input on future engagement for continued plan refinements and implementation.

Attendees: See attachment on last page for list of meeting participants.

Action Items:

#	Item	Owner	Timeframe
1	Send out meeting slides, summary	Stantec	By November 3 rd , 2023
2	Review the draft PWP and provide feedback	ALL	By October 27 th , 2023
3	Technical team incorporate comments and send out final PWP.	Stantec	By November 3 rd , 2023

Presentation Materials: See attached PowerPoint slide deck.

Meeting Summary:

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

- Meeting objectives and agenda were reviewed.

2. Programmatic Watershed Plan

a. PWP Summary of Revisions

- A summary of revisions to the draft PWP was presented.
- It was noted that the PWP is a living document that will be updated and refined through collaboration among the Upper American River Watershed Group.
 - Clarifying explanation on the role of “Principal Implementing Agency” in Chapter 4 (RMS) was provided. Since the plan is still developing, specific roles are not assigned. It was noted that if an agency is listed, it does not commit any listed agency to lead or implement a project, nor does it commit any agency’s staff or funding. The roles of each principal implementing agency may vary from project to project (e.g., lead, facilitate or support) for a given management action depending on its authority, policy, available resources, and other considerations.

b. Agency-Specific Implementation Considerations

- A separate document, prepared as a result of PWP, to support the El Dorado Water Agency’s (EDWA) implementation and to communicate with their Board for policy adoption, was presented.

- The document explains why and how EDWA led this effort, the outcomes and expected roles during implementation, and policy and guidance for EDWA's continued involvement and near-term focus.
- Participants may use this as an example to prepare their implementation plans and policy adoption.

c. PWP Schedule

- An overview of schedule for next steps for PWP implementation was provided in addition to watershed-related activities EDWA is concurrently performing that may be informative to attendees.

d. Participant Feedback

- It was noted that the schematic of hydropower projects and electric substations in the watershed (Page 16 of the Draft PWP) should be updated. Three projects on the south fork American River are owned and operated by Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). There is no utility line on the south fork that is owned and operated by PG&E.
- The participants asked about the project list revisions following Meeting #7. It was noted that the list of prioritized projects was expanded to also include institutional projects and to incorporate the additional projects submitted by for consideration. In the current version, all project categories, except the conceptual projects, are assigned a priority group A, B, or C based on the evaluation results.
- Regarding the map on Page 35 of the Draft PWP, US Forest Services (USFS) noted that Mosquito Fire occurred after the area was flown. They suggested adding a note indicating the date(s) that the area was flown.
- Minor suggestions to edit the text were provided. **Action item:** Technical team will incorporate the suggested edits.
- Participants noted that the projects identification, evaluation, and prioritization approach has been successful, even though many project details were not available.

3. Next Steps

- The continued engagement of the Upper American River Watershed Group to support PWP implementation was discussed. The following comments were provided:
 - USFS confirmed that they will use the PWP to help with funding coordination on some of their activities. They suggested that having a consolidated map to show the projects boundaries would be helpful for coordination purposes with adjacent projects. Placer County Water Agency noted that they have GIS data that they can provide to contribute to this effort.
 - EDWA stated that they are willing to continue serving as the convener for this group at this time.
 - Periodic group meetings and supplemental communication should occur since the draft PWP frequently references impacts due to climate change. As an example, USFS is currently working on various guidance documents related to climate change. There will be many ideas and projects in the climate change arena that need to be discussed and incorporated into the PWP updates in future.

- Participants noted the importance of reducing redundancy and enhancing efficiency in coordination. Currently, there are a number of project tracking databases, and participants need to ensure cross coordination.
- USFS noted the importance of workforce development and that they would like to participate in future related conversations, particularly those related to workforce hiring and retention. They also expressed support for the Upper American River Watershed Group's efforts in this area.
- To improve project formulation consistent with the PWP to provide long-term watershed-wide benefits, EDWA proposed a workshop to review the list of the projects in depth and develop appropriate performance measures to evaluate PWP implementation success. Participants supported this proposal.
 - One suggestion was to use EDWA's biannual Plenary for Water to coordinate on the PWP. Outside the Plenary for Water, additional coordination may be required to keep PWP implementation moving.
 - Participants agreed that a workshop in spring or summer would be helpful to continue the coordination regarding funding opportunities and discussing the assistance programs.
- EDWA mentioned they will start their Water Resources Development and Management Plan 5-year update in 2024 with the intention to incorporate appropriate components from the PWP and develop performance measures to evaluate the RMS. As such, EDWA is evaluating possible combined purposes.
- Participants expressed interest in having an ecosystem goods and services (EGS) subgroup once EDWA's EGS studies are further developed. Currently, EDWA is working to develop an EGS Valuation Report for the upper American River watershed which includes an economic assessment for outdoor recreation, a discussion paper on wildfire economic impacts based on EGS, and a discussion paper focused on EGS valuation of water.
- EDWA invited all to their Board of Directors workshop on November 8, 2023 at 10AM. The meeting will have both in-person and virtual attendance options.
- For future coordination, participants agreed that engagement is higher during in-person meetings.
- EDWA suggested that for future coordination participants share updates and flag important matters via email to EDWA. Assigning a key staff member to share the participants' updates with the group and coordinate would also help better organizing the effort.

Meeting Participants

Meeting Participant	Agency (in alphabetical order by agency)
Group Members	
Elena DeLacy	American River Conservancy
Lewis Moeller	California Department of Water Resources
Jeffrey Warren	County of El Dorado, Environmental Management
Karen Garner	County of El Dorado, Planning and Building
Kevin Bell	County of Placer
Kyle Ericson	El Dorado Water Agency
Rebecca Guo	El Dorado Water Agency
Alexis Elliott	Georgetown Divide Public Utility District
Laura Rodarte	Placer County Water Agency
Michelle Banonis	Regional Water Authority
Darold Perry	Sacramento Municipal Utility District
James Sarmento	Shingle Springs Bank of Miwok Indians
Kim Morales	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Michelle Wolfgang	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Nicholas Holomuzki	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Brad Hubbard	U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation
Technical Support	
Bridget Childs	Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
Maliheh Karamigolbaghi	Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
Kari Shively	Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
Yung-Hsin Sun	Sunzi Consulting LLC