

Upper American River Watershed Planning Group Draft Charter

Version: August 9, 2022

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The purpose of the Upper American River Watershed Planning Group (Watershed Group) is to provide feedback on the direction and content of the Upper American River Watershed Plan (Plan) for El Dorado County's West Slope.

The goals of the Watershed Group are to:

1. Provide information to populate the Plan.
2. Provide clear, constructive, and relevant feedback to further the development of the Plan.
3. Foster collaboration amongst agencies to address watershed level challenges of the region.

BACKGROUND

The Upper American River Watershed begins at the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in El Dorado County. Municipal, industrial, and agricultural water users in the greater Sacramento region and throughout California rely on the Upper American River Watershed for water supplies and hydroelectricity, as well as abundant wilderness and recreation opportunities. The snowpack and cold-water resources in the upper watershed are critical for river temperature management in the lower American River for endangered fishery species.

Variables such as population growth, climate change, and reduced snowpack threaten the watershed's capacity to provide reliable water supply with pristine water quality to support human consumption and environmental needs. Recent devastating wildfires with increasing frequency and severity, exposed the weaknesses of current passive forest management and overall headwater management that are critical to public safety and climate resiliency. These compounded and interconnected issues in the Upper American River Watershed cannot be effectively addressed without a watershed approach that ties land use, resource management, and economic development for sustainable outcomes.

In order to address this identified need, the Upper American River Watershed Program, led by the El Dorado Water Agency (Agency), formed the Watershed Group with the goal of addressing critical issues in the West Slope. Prior to the establishment of this group, none of the various entities that look at portions of the watershed or specific issues took a comprehensive look at this geographic scope. The establishment of the watershed planning group brings together a diverse group of stakeholders, including local land use authorities, water purveyors, resource conservation districts, non-governmental organizations, Tribal Governments, and Federal agencies.

This effort supports the Agency's vision established by the 2019 Water Resources Development and Management Plan, which identified that a collaborative and focused group covering all watershed-related topics in the West Slope foothill was needed. The WRDMP supports the prudent management of water resources critical to achieving the County General Plan objectives of maintaining economic prosperity, environmental protection, and the desired rural-agricultural way of life.

MEMBERSHIP

The Watershed Group includes participation from a broad-based and diverse group of stakeholders in the Upper American River Watershed:

Core Group

County Representatives

1. El Dorado County Water Agency
 - a. Representative(s): General Manager

2. County of El Dorado Representatives:
 - a. Director, Agriculture Department
 - b. Director, Planning and Building Department
 - c. Director, Environmental Management Department

Resource & Stewardship

3. U.S. Forest Service
 - a. Representative(s): District Ranger
4. American River Conservancy
 - a. Representative(s): Executive Director
5. El Dorado and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts
 - a. Representative(s): District Manager

Utilities

6. El Dorado Irrigation District
 - a. Representative(s): General Manager
7. Sacramento Municipal Utility District
 - a. Representative(s): Originator, Energy Trading & Contracts

Tribal

8. Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
 - a. Representative(s): Tribal Administrator

Advisory Members (as designated by individual agencies)

9. City of Placerville
10. Placer County Water Agency
11. Regional Water Authority
12. University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources
13. Georgetown Divide Public Utility District
14. El Dorado County Farm Bureau
15. Sierra Nevada Conservancy
16. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILTIES

Members:

Core Group members agree to:

- Provide feedback on the direction and content of the Upper American River Watershed Plan.
- Attend meetings or arrange for another representative of the organization to attend
- Fully participate in meetings and articulate the views of their organization and constituents.

Advisory Group members agree to:

- Provide feedback on the direction and content of the Upper American River Watershed Plan as needed.
- Participate in meetings as needed to articulate the views of their organization and constituents.

Agency

The Agency agrees to:

- Ensure the mission, goals, objectives, and vision of the Watershed Group and the resulting watershed plan. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Leading the development of the Upper American River Watershed Plan
- Provide technical support through Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.

ATTENDANCE AND MEETING SCHEDULE

It is anticipated that the Watershed Group will meet a total of 7-9 times over a period of 12 months. Attendance at every meeting is expected, and Watershed Group members should anticipate giving an average of 3-4 hours per month to attend meetings and review meeting materials. The group is anticipated to convene in mid-2022 and the watershed plan is anticipated to be developed by 2024.

The Agency was awarded a U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Grant in 2021 to form the Watershed Group for the Upper American River and start watershed planning and action/project development. The group agrees to support priority actions as laid out by the grant (e.g., 270-day sufficiency report, end of period or performance date).

The following figure is the proposed schedule for the completion of the Upper American River Watershed Plan. The orange text denotes planned board briefings. The green text denotes WaterSMART grant deadlines or milestones



Figure 1. Watershed Planning Effort Schedule

GROUND RULES

- Use common conversational courtesy.
- All ideas and points of view have value.
- Members will encourage innovation by listening to all ideas.
- Meetings will begin and end on time.
- Electronics courtesy.
- All members take responsibility for success of the meeting.
- Meeting agenda will be sent in advance to members.
- Members will use a “parking lot” for ideas that come up, but are outside the scope of the meeting focus where they were raised.
- Be respectful and supportive of our goals, find ways to move the conversation forward instead of halting it (use more “ands” and less “buts”).
- Be present and minimize distractions.
- You are free to disagree with any point made. However, be specific about what the problem is and offer positive alternatives.
- When you have the floor, provide thoughtful comments, be relevant, and then yield the floor to others. Do not interrupt.