



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2025-26



A YEAR IN REVIEW

A snapshot of this year's progress, impact, and partnerships shaping our water future.



LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND GENERAL MANAGER

Water does not recognize jurisdictional boundaries, and neither do the challenges we face in securing a reliable water future for El Dorado County. As our region navigates the impacts of weather whiplash, high wildfire risks, aging infrastructure, evolving regulations, and growing community needs, our work has never been more important.

Over the past year, El Dorado Water Agency initiated two regional Water Blueprints, one focused on the West Slope and another on the Tahoe Basin, to provide a strategic framework and implementation roadmap for addressing our county's most pressing water resource challenges and opportunities. These Blueprints bring together local expertise to develop clearly defined, regionally-supported actions with clear implementation roles and commitments. They will help ensure that regional efforts are informed by a shared vision and grounded in the unique needs of our communities.

We also made large strides in our watershed management. As convenor of Headwaters Connect, we worked with 20 local, federal, and state agencies and organizations to amplify our local voice. We led a successful rebranding of the group to increase recognition, launched a website to increase public awareness and engagement, and were recognized as one of 14 Investment-Ready Landscapes by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Together with our partners, we are building a resilient water future that protects our natural resources, supports our communities, and strengthens the economy for generations to come.



**PICTURED: BOARD CHAIR LORI PARLIN (LEFT)
AND GENERAL MANAGER REBECCA GUO (RIGHT)**



MISSION

Ensuring that El Dorado County has adequate and affordable water, through collaboration, to support economic prosperity, watershed health, and the rural agriculture way of life for today and in the future.

VISION

Be the leader to develop a countywide resilient and affordable water future that is plentiful for our needs, consistent with the County General Plan, and based on principles of integrated water resources management and collaborative implementation.

CORE VALUES

SERVE COUNTYWIDE

Be the steward of headwater resources for countywide needs, our preferred rural-agricultural way of life, and its statewide significance

FISCALLY FORWARD

Assert responsible, forward-thinking financial management to support the EDWA's mission and implementation

PROACTIVE AND INNOVATIVE

Elevate countywide water resources development and management with proactivity and innovation

FOCUSED AND ADAPTIVE

Stay focused on the EDWA's goals and objectives with agility and flexibility for adapting changes

COLLABORATE FOR SUCCESS

Commit to the shared responsibility to cooperate and collaborate with our partners for better outcomes

Meet Our Team

OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Our Board of Directors is composed of five appointed members who bring expertise in water resources, land use, budgeting and finance, long-range planning, and emergency preparedness to help guide EDWA in fulfilling its mission and vision.



George Turnboo
El Dorado County
Supervisor

Nick Haven
South Tahoe Public
Utility District, Tahoe
Basin Representative

Brian Veerkamp
El Dorado County
Supervisor

Lori Parlin
Board Chair,
El Dorado County
Supervisor

Pat Dwyer
El Dorado Irrigation
District, West Slope
Representative

STAFF



Rebecca Guo
General Manager



Hannah Romero
Water Resources
Principal



Jake Sahl
Water Resources
Principal



Tami Scowcroft
Business Services
Officer



Jessica Deml
Administrative
Assistant

OUR FIVE PROGRAMS

Overview

EDWA's actions and direction are based on the Water Resources Development and Management Plan (WRDMP), a long-term policy document outlining resource management strategies to proactively address changing water resources needs, regulatory requirements, and climate variability. Our work is focused on five programs to ensure the county is prepared for an uncertain water future.

01 Governance + Partnership



02 Water Security



03 Watershed Management



04 Assistance + Innovation



05 Communication + Advocacy



NEW INITIATIVES

In the Fiscal Year 2025-26, we launched several new strategic initiatives designed to achieve the objectives in our Strategic Plan. These initiatives span our five programs and will be fully implemented in the coming years. Check out more information about these initiatives on the following pages.



Groundwater Management in Tahoe Valley S. Subbasin9



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Raw Water Draft Points Study15



Headwaters 101 at State Capitol19

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

Our Strategic Plan outlines goals and prioritized objectives for actions through 2030. The following shows forward momentum on our five implementation programs (IPs) in the 2025-26 fiscal year. Below indicates milestones achieved and progress made on realizing outcomes for key Agency initiatives, all of which are ongoing and span multiple years.

Governance and Partnership

IP1a Formalized Agreements



IP1b Expanded Partnerships



IP1c In-County Coordination



IP1d General Plan Alignment



Water Security

IP2a Water Rights



IP2b Blueprint West Slope



IP2c Blueprint Tahoe



IP2d Drought Preparedness



IP2e Regional Benefit Integration



Watershed Management

IP3a Headwaters Connect



IP3b Tahoe Watershed Support



IP3c Data, Tools, & Information



IP3d Downstream Benefit Sharing



IP3e Working Landscapes



Assistance and Innovation

IP4a Public Education & Awareness



IP4b EDWA Grant Program



IP4c Alternative Funding Pursuit



IP4d Funding Mechanism Exploration



Communication and Advocacy

IP5a Policy Advocacy



IP5b Regional Interest Messaging



IP5c Countywide Plenary for Water



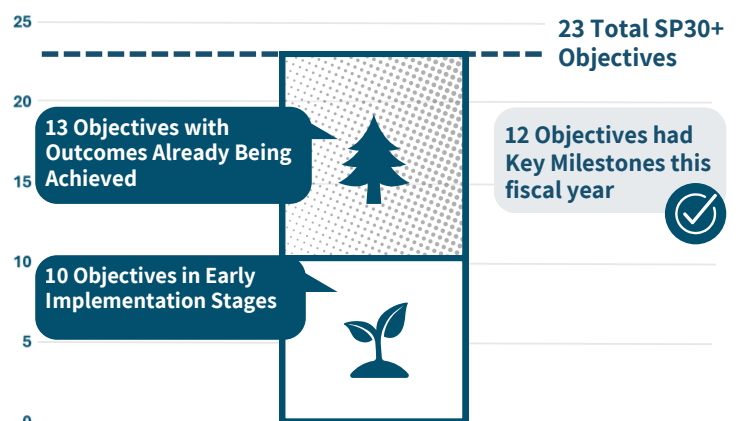
IP5d Public Outreach



IP5e Agricultural Economic Strategy



Quick Stats

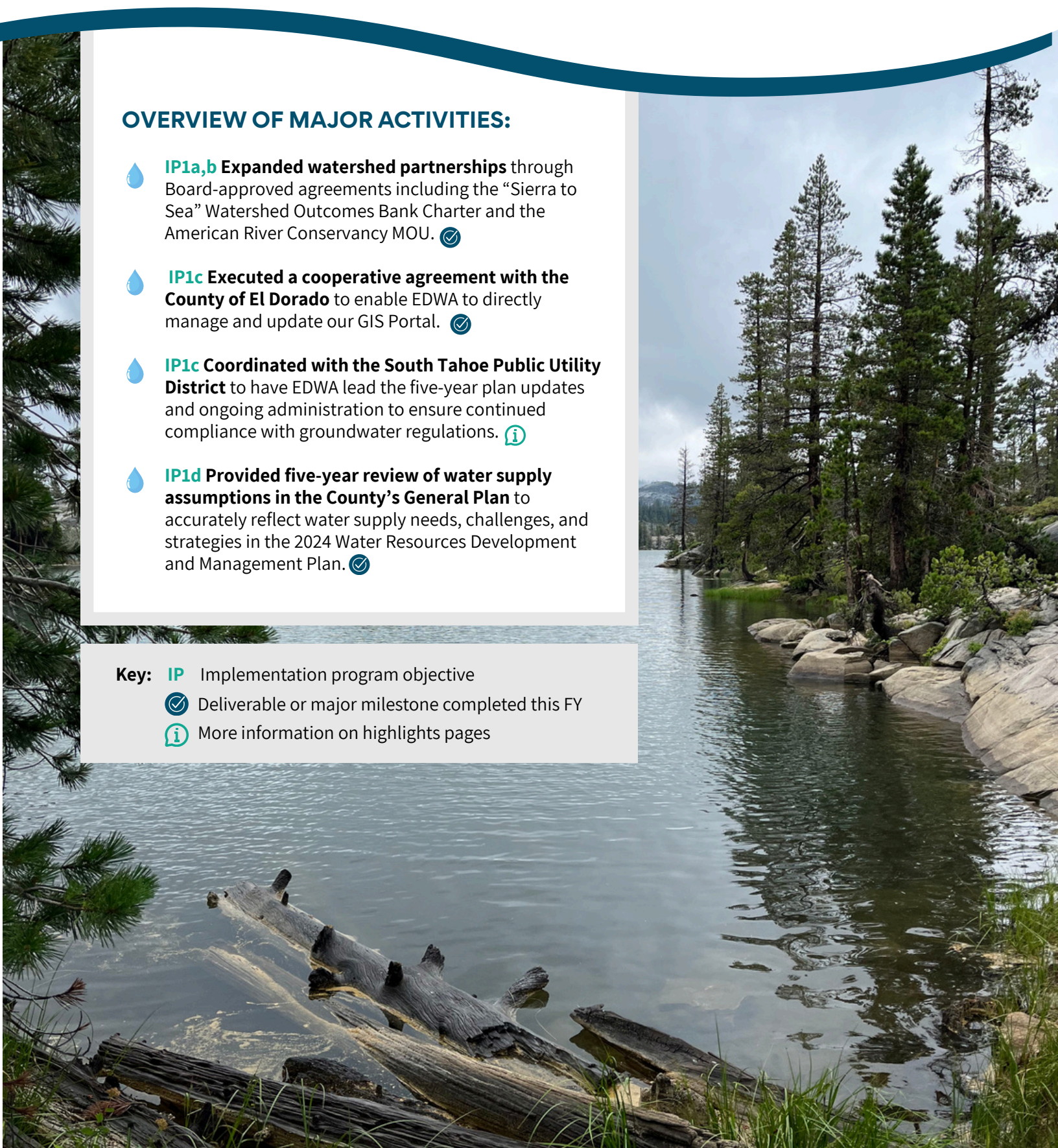


GOVERNANCE + PARTNERSHIP

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES:

- 💧 **IP1a,b Expanded watershed partnerships** through Board-approved agreements including the “Sierra to Sea” Watershed Outcomes Bank Charter and the American River Conservancy MOU. ✔️
- 💧 **IP1c Executed a cooperative agreement with the County of El Dorado** to enable EDWA to directly manage and update our GIS Portal. ✔️
- 💧 **IP1c Coordinated with the South Tahoe Public Utility District** to have EDWA lead the five-year plan updates and ongoing administration to ensure continued compliance with groundwater regulations. ⓘ
- 💧 **IP1d Provided five-year review of water supply assumptions in the County’s General Plan** to accurately reflect water supply needs, challenges, and strategies in the 2024 Water Resources Development and Management Plan. ✔️

Key: **IP** Implementation program objective
✔️ Deliverable or major milestone completed this FY
ⓘ More information on highlights pages



SUSTAINABLY MANAGING GROUNDWATER IN SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

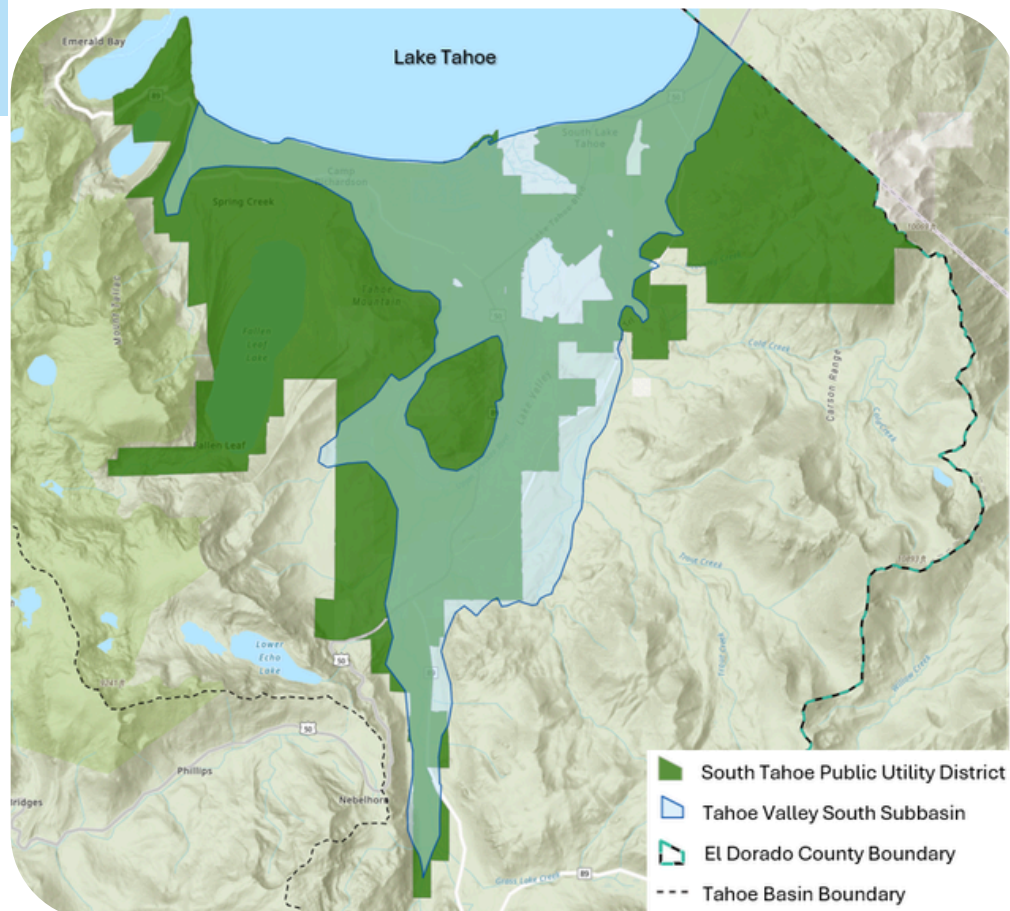


South Tahoe Public Utility District (STPUD) has historically served as the lead **Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)** with EDWA acting as a co-GSA by supporting areas outside STPUD's boundaries.

Starting in 2026, we stepped into the **lead GSA role** to reduce the administrative burden on STPUD staff. We now have responsibility for the ongoing administration and the five-year Periodic Evaluation process, with the first report due in December 2026.

California enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in 2014 to improve the management of groundwater supplies over the long-term, emphasizing that groundwater is best suited to be managed at the local level. There is only one groundwater basin in El Dorado County subject to SGMA – the Tahoe Valley South Subbasin.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)



WATER SECURITY

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES:

-  **IP2a Securing additional water supplies to meet future needs** in the West Slope by furthering the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the El Dorado Water Reliability Project.
-  **IP2a Validated local agricultural water demands** through completion of our study which informs future planned agricultural water needs.
-  **IP2b,c Launched Regional Water Blueprint Initiative** to develop two long-term roadmaps for water supply, water quality, stormwater, groundwater management, and infrastructure planning across the West Slope and Tahoe Basin. 
-  **IP2e Executed MOU with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for Alder Creek Reservoir and Water Conservation Project appraisal study** to confirm federal interest and identify potential benefits and operations of a high-elevation, off-stream storage project designed to offset unreliable and highly variable snowpack. 
-  **IP2a,d Developing roadmap for water supply conveyance plan** to meet projected water demands in the southern portion of El Dorado County.
-  **IP2d Supporting small water systems and domestic well owners** through implementation of the 2025 County Drought and Water Shortage Resilience Plan (CDRP).

Key:  Implementation program objective

 Deliverable or major milestone completed this FY

 More information on highlights pages

BUILDING REGIONAL ROADMAPS FOR OUR WATER FUTURE

In SP30+, we recognized the need for regional initiatives in the Tahoe Basin and West Slope to guide long-term water security investments. With a 20- to 30-year planning horizon, the Blueprints will articulate shared stakeholder commitments and translate them into actionable roadmaps that support meaningful, sustained implementation.



BlueprintTahoe
El Dorado Water Security Initiative

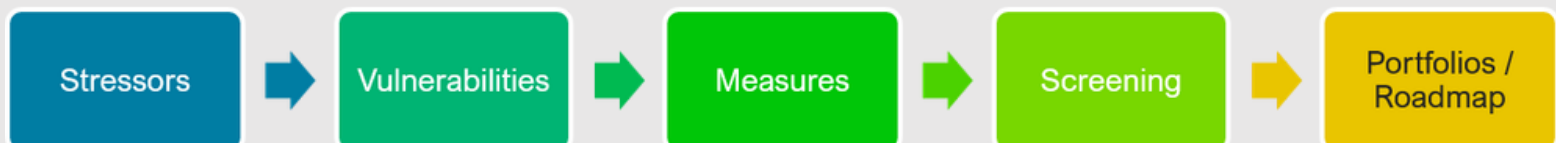
BlueprintWestSlope
El Dorado Water Security Initiative

SP30+ defines the vision, WRDMP24 shapes the strategic program direction, and the Blueprints translate those strategies into specific, coordinated actions.



Collaborative Process for Blueprint Development

The Blueprint development process assesses external stressors and regional vulnerabilities to identify where communities, infrastructure, and resources are most at risk. Through a series of collaborative workshops, we will then identify and evaluate potential measures for effectiveness, feasibility, and regional priority. This process culminates in implementation-ready portfolios that clearly guide long-term water security actions.



WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES:

-  **IP3a Facilitated development of a collective identity for the watershed group** including rebranding to Headwaters Connect to better leverage advocacy, outreach, and coordinated initiatives. This included supporting efforts to position Headwaters Connect as an Investment Ready Landscape in the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's 2026 assessment.  
-  **IP3a Secured federal environmental approval and initiated on-the-ground activities** in partnership with RCD for post-Caldor watershed restoration project on U.S. Forest Service lands. 
-  **IP3b Coordinated with Tahoe Basin water purveyors** on advocacy efforts watershed management and water for fire suppression.
-  **IP3c Assisted El Dorado Resource Conservation District on the Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant-funded initiative** to develop a project pipeline incorporating community protection from wildfire, forest health, and water resilience efforts across the West Slope.
-  **IP3c Quantified statewide water supply benefits** in the upper American and Cosumnes River watersheds. 
-  **IP3d Informed regional climate adaptation strategies** in the Regional Water Authority's Watersheds Resilience Plan.
-  **IP3e Modified working lands boundary** help expedite U.S. Bureau of Reclamation environmental review of project in Auburn State Recreation Area to reestablish cattle grazing and reduce fire threats.

Key:  Implementation program objective

 Deliverable or major milestone completed this FY

 More information on highlights pages

A NEW WAVE OF MOMENTUM FOR WATERSHED COLLABORATION

New Collective Identity

In September 2025, the group formerly known as the Upper American Watershed Group set out to redefine its shared identity. EDWA led the collaborative effort that culminated in the new brand of Headwaters Connect, which launched a new [website](#) and blog in February 2026.



Investment-Ready Landscape

In early 2026, Headwaters Connect was named one of 14 [Investment-Ready Landscapes](#) by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, highlighting its readiness to lead and implement large-scale watershed improvements.

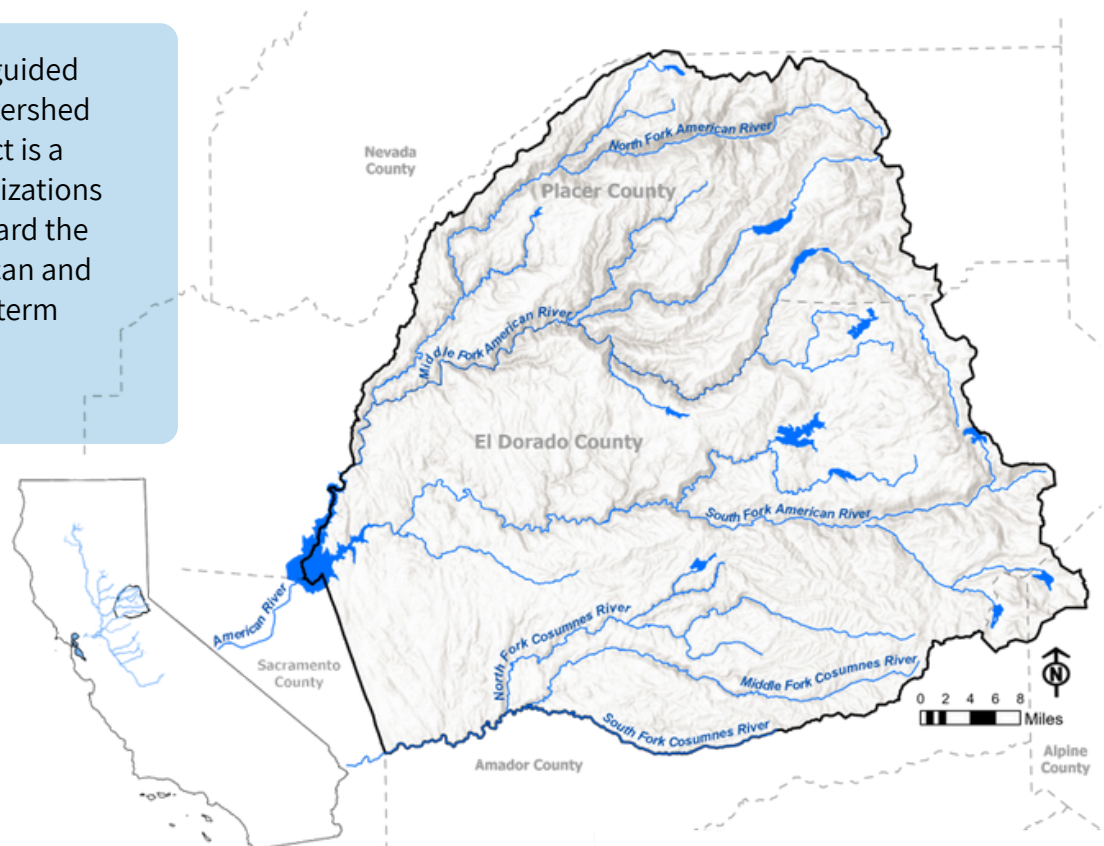
On-the-Ground Watershed Management

Headwaters Connect is advancing landscape-scale restoration by strengthening its project portfolio, collaborating on multi-jurisdictional efforts, and securing funding to accelerate implementation. An active example is the EDWA, El Dorado RCD, and USFS partnership implementing the USBR-funded post-Caldor Fire watershed restoration for the Grizzly Flats community water supply. EDWA secured a \$1.875M USBR grant for this project.



Convened by EDWA and guided by the Programmatic Watershed Plan, Headwaters Connect is a diverse group of 20 organizations working together to steward the headwaters of the American and Cosumnes River for long-term watershed health and community resilience.

Scan to learn more:



ASSISTANCE + INNOVATION

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES:

-  **IP4a Updated the Irrigation Management Services program which supports local farmers** in improving water use efficiency and crop health. 
-  **IP4a,c Coordinated with partners in the American River Water Instrumentation Network Initiative** and developed reports to plan for long-term operation of two snowpack stations to improve monitoring and drought, water supply, flood, and wildfire preparedness. 
-  **IP4b Provided supplemental grant funding** of up to \$20,000 each to El Dorado Irrigation District, Georgetown Divide Public Utility District, South Tahoe Public Utility District, and Tahoe City Public Utility District for development of their Urban Water Management Plans. 
-  **IP4c Helping support projects that secure our county's water infrastructure** through continued administration of American Rescue Plan Act funding. 
-  **IP4c Helping to advance wildfire response capabilities** across El Dorado County by identifying and mapping raw water sources that can be used for fire suppression. 
-  **IP4d Ongoing work exploring long-term funding mechanisms** to further our initiatives.

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IMPROVING WATER ACCESS FOR WILDFIRE RESPONSE



Leading Countywide Raw Water Draft Points Study



What are Draft Points?

Locations such as ponds, streams, and lakes, where firefighters can draft water during an emergency.



Project Partners

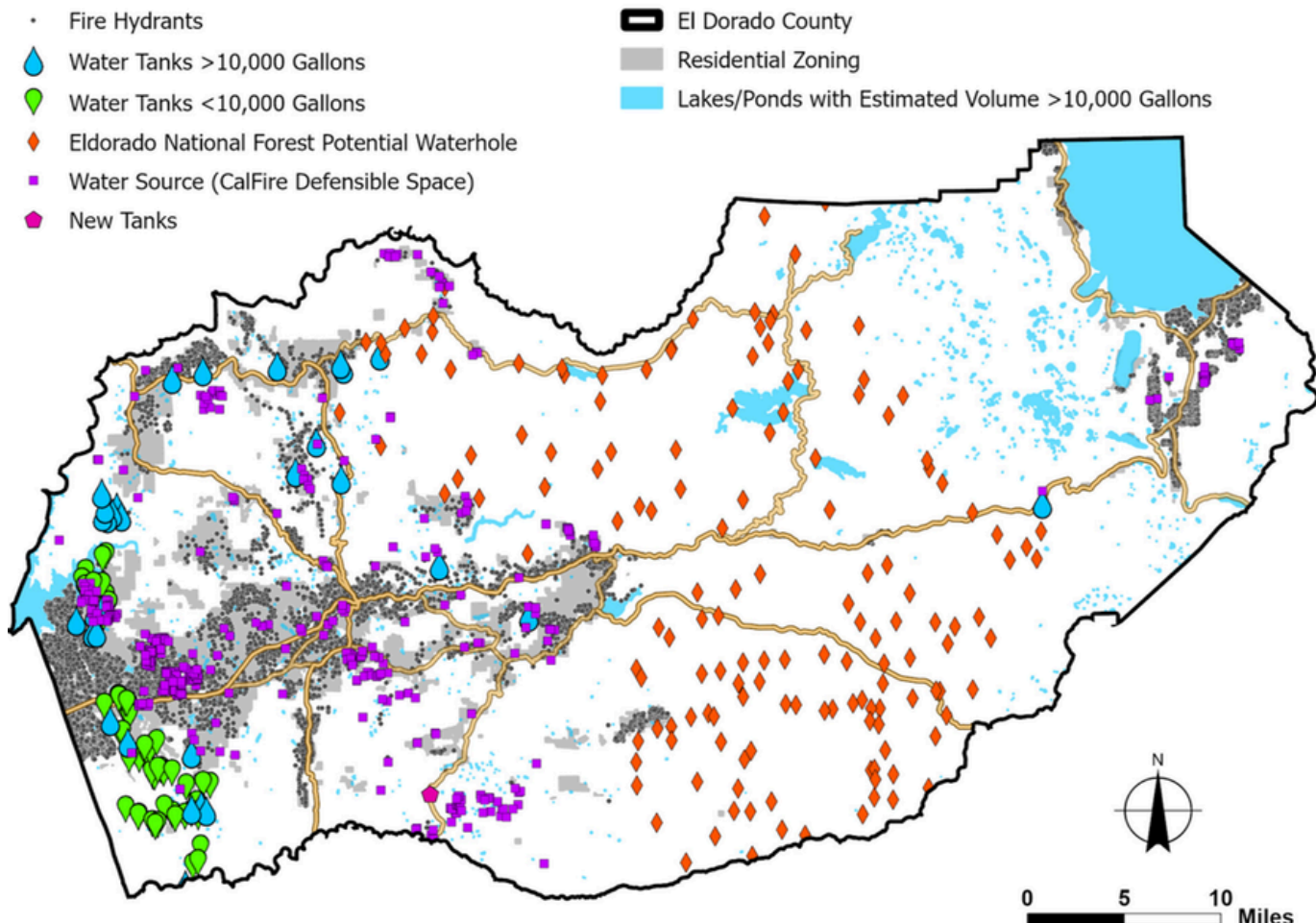
- CAL FIRE
- U.S. Forest Service
- Office of Wildfire Preparedness & Resilience
- Local Fire Chiefs
- Water Purveyors



Planning Objectives

- Common database of draft points to disseminate to firefighting agencies
- Evaluation of gaps and potential improvements to pursue for future funding

Existing Identified Water Sources for Fire Suppression



SECURED AND DISTRIBUTED GRANT FUNDING

State and federal funding

Pursuing alternative funding through all viable venues helps us make a bigger impact on the county's water resources reliability. Our ongoing grant funding includes:

American River Hydrologic Observatory (ARHO)

EDWA and its partners completed implementation of a \$300,000 USBR grant from USBR to upgrade two hydrologic monitoring stations, improving real-time watershed observation capabilities.

American River Water Instrumentation Network (ARWIN)

EDWA and ARWIN partners shifted from watershed-scale planning to preparation for project-level implementation funded by \$875,000 in congressionally directed funding administered through the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Post-Caldor Fire Watershed Restoration

EDWA and the El Dorado RCD are implementing a \$1,875,000 grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to advance post-Caldor Fire watershed restoration to protect the sole water source for the Grizzly Flats community. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) approval was secured at the end of 2025 and on-the-ground work began in spring 2026.

EDWA grants distributed to local agencies

We partner with local agencies to incentivize projects to improve our water resources management.

\$28,770

awarded to American River Conservancy for a grazing project designed to increase wildfire resilience and water infrastructure protection.

\$43,500

awarded to South Tahoe Public Utility District to update and develop plans to harden and reduce fire impacts to their water facilities.

\$37,500

awarded to Tahoe City Public Utility District to provide reliable backup power for Glenridge Water System and ensure reliable water delivery for drinking, sanitation, and fire suppression.



ADMINISTERED FEDERAL FUNDING TO LOCAL AGENCIES

Administering American Rescue Plan Act grants

At the County's request, we continued to oversee and administer American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for water resources-related projects, resulting in valuable investments to our water infrastructure.

\$5,445,000 Total Funding Allocation

\$5,439,414 Used

\$5,586
Remaining

Projects completed

EL DORADO IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Sly Park Intertie Improvement

\$750,000 total grant

Outingdale Dam Rehabilitation

\$325,118 total grant

SOUTH TAHOE PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

Fire Hydrant Installation Project

\$114,882 total grant

Apache Avenue Waterline Improvements Project

\$442,438 total grant

GRIZZLY FLATS COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

Clearwell and Water Treatment Plant Improvement

\$2,530,000 total grant

Reservoir Lining Rehabilitation

\$155,500 total grant

TAHOE CITY PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

Rubicon Tank 1 Water Feed Line Replacement

\$75,000 total grant

Rubicon Wells 2 & 3 Backup Power

\$200,000 total grant

Lower Meeks Bay Pressure Reducing Station

\$200,000 total grant

West Lake Tahoe Regional Water Treatment Plant

\$500,000 total grant

GEORGETOWN DIVIDE PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

Water System Conditions Assessment and Water System Reliability Study Update

\$50,000 total grant

Projects in progress (as of June 30, 2026)

EL DORADO COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION

Stormwater Conveyance Channel Rehabilitation Project

Remaining \$5,586 of \$102,062 total grant

COMMUNICATION + ADVOCACY

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES:

-  **IP5a Hosted inaugural Headwaters 101 event** at State Capital in partnership with the Public Policy Institute of California, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and Pacific Forest Trust to increase understanding of how headwaters impact all Californians.  
-  **IP5a,b,d Representing El Dorado County in statewide water issues** by serving on the Association of California Water Agency Region 3 Board and in ACWA's Vision for Our Water Future initiative.
-  **IP5c,e Convened over 45 thought leaders** at our two Countywide Plenaries for Water focused on managing water in the West Slope and Tahoe Basin. 
-  **IP5d Encouraging students to be water stewards** through our annual art contest and partnering with El Dorado Irrigation District to teach students about the interconnection between water and agriculture at Farm Day. 
-  **IP5d Raising awareness** through press releases and articles, social media, and our regular NEWStream publication. 
-  **IP5e Leading the discussion on local water resource challenges and the vital role we play as stewards of the state's headwaters** through presentations at conferences and local organization venues.
-  **IP5d Promoting public information sharing, transparency, and dialogue** through a variety of resources including our GIS Portal, photos, videos, and factsheets.

Key: **IP** Implementation program objective
 Deliverable or major milestone completed this FY
 More information on highlights pages

HEADWATERS 101: HOW OUR HEADWATERS IMPACT ALL CALIFORNIANS

Headwaters are critical for water supply, water quality, and flood protection statewide, and its management is underpinned by the State legislature who plays a fundamental role in setting the legal, regulatory, and financial framework.

That's why on March 6, 2026, we provided our inaugural briefing to key legislative staff at the state Capitol. The conversation made clear just how far-reaching those decisions are, touching not only the health of the landscape but the people, farms, businesses, and communities that depend on it throughout the state.



Speaker highlights



Kyle Greenspan, Research Associate at the Public Policy Institute of CA Water Policy Center, noted the Sierra-Cascades and North Coast mountains, which supply about two-thirds of the state's surface water, have been hit hard by recent wildfires. He pointed to vegetation thinning, prescribed fire, home hardening, and defensible space as key tools for reducing wildfire severity.



Rebecca Guo, General Manager El Dorado Water Agency, described the wide range of benefits healthy headwaters provide from food and energy to flood control and recreation. She shared that these benefits drop more than tenfold after high-severity wildfires and said putting a dollar figure on our natural resources is critical to understanding the magnitude of our headwater's value.



Brittany Covich, Policy & Outreach Division Chief Sierra Nevada Conservancy, noted that while northern headwaters supply much of the state's water only about 2% of California's population live in that region and steward that acreage. She talked about the importance of building regional capacity and partnerships to accelerate the pace and scale of forest restoration.



Paul Mason Vice President, Policy & Incentives at Pacific Forest Trust, said California needs more acres burning, just at lower intensity and severity, and stressed the need to collaborate on landscape-scale projects. He framed it as a long-term commitment and an investment that we have to make as the cost of doing nothing is just too high.

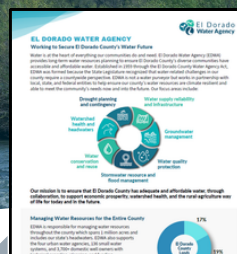
RESOURCES

Factsheets

We develop factsheets and other educational resources to help stakeholders better understand the county's water needs and support advocacy for funding and support that benefit communities across the county.



A New View of Water Value



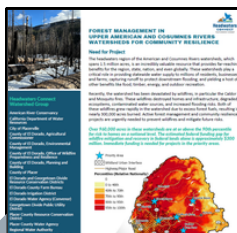
Working to Secure El Dorado County's Water Future



Alder Creek Reservoir and Conservation Project



American River Water Instrumentation Network



Forest Management in Watersheds for Community Resilience



Affordable Soil Moisture Monitoring

In the News

We serve as a thought leader in the media providing subject-area expertise and sharing information with the public on regional water resources issues.



- [El Dorado Water Agency brings together water experts in Tahoe to discuss issues](#)
- [Water agency plenary examines growth, water challenges](#)
- [El Dorado Water Agency grant funds to help support urban water supply.](#)

NEWStream

Our newsletter provides regular updates on water resources news, events, and reports to help stakeholders stay informed.



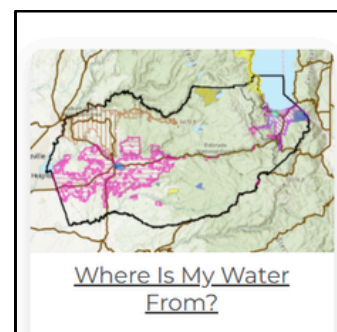
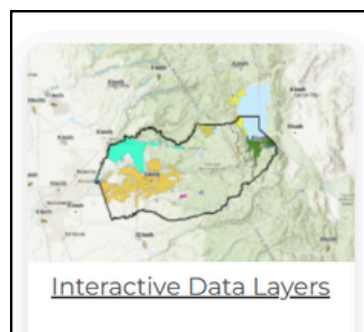
Social media

Social media is a key tool for EDWA to connect with the community, share timely updates, and promote events and resources. Follow us on LinkedIn, X, and Facebook!



GIS Online Mapping and Data Portal

To improve data sharing and transparency, we host a GIS Portal to streamline access and dissemination of data for the public and our collaborative partners. In addition, we continuously leverage our data portal to support consistent and transparent data sharing.



About the El Dorado Water Agency

El Dorado Water Agency was created in 1959 by California State Legislature under the El Dorado County Water Agency Act for leading water resources development and management in El Dorado County. The county covers 1,075,076 acres of Sierra Nevada foothills with nearly 200,000 residents living throughout its predominately rural agricultural setting and with abundant natural amenities. For more information, visit: edwateragency.org

Acknowledgments

EDWA would like to thank CAL FIRE, Yung-Hsin Sun with Sunzi Consulting, and Samuel Price of Dynamic Geospatial Solutions for contributing some of the photographs for this report.

