



Watershed Group Workshop

Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 11AM - 2PM

Location: El Dorado County Office (330 Fair Lane in Placerville) - Conference Room D

MEETING SUMMARY

Workshop Purpose

Reconvene under the new structure of Headwaters Connect to discuss process and explore opportunities to leverage the watershed group for advocacy, outreach, and coordinated initiatives.

Welcome and Progress on Identified Initiatives

Rebecca Guo, General Manager of the El Dorado Water Agency (EDWA), welcomed participants and convened the workshop. Under the new branding, Rebecca affirmed the purpose of Headwaters Connect to bring together partners to coordinate and collaborate across the headwaters of the American and Cosumnes River watersheds. She reviewed progress toward Headwaters Connect goals and invited members to share updates from their respective organizations.

During introductions, participants highlighted ongoing work across the region's watersheds.

Update on Data Management Initiative

Hannah Romero (EDWA) and Mark Egbert (El Dorado and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts, RCD) provided updates on the data management initiative, currently underway through the RCD-led project pipeline effort, funded through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program. This effort is intended to demonstrate the region's readiness for large landscape block grant funding. Key information shared included:

- By May 2027, the group aims to demonstrate an initial version of the project pipeline with standardized data and clear visibility into partner projects.
- A simple, user-friendly ArcGIS dashboard is being developed to upload, track, and evaluate projects.
- Data standards will be designed using existing frameworks such as CalMAPPER, FACTS, and the California Wildfire Interagency Treatment Tracker.
- SNC has provided flexibility for entities to define their own standards; capturing metrics that matter to Headwaters Connect is a priority.



Headwaters Connect Rebranding and Roll Out

Update on Collective Identity Initiative

Hannah Romero, EDWA, introduced the formal rollout of the Headwaters Connect brand, building on the September 2025 workshop direction to establish a collective identity and online presence for the collaborative. The new name and logo were created in January 2026 and the website was launched in February 2026. Laura Rodarte, Placer County Water Agency, shared insights from her experience participating in the collective identity subgroup, noting that the subgroup processes have been efficient and constructive.

Hannah also shared updates to the Headwaters Connect mission, vision and goals, which will be incorporated into an updated Headwaters Connect charter.

Participants discussed the opportunities created by rebranding such as strengthening regional and statewide recognition, including the January 2026 addition of Headwaters Connect to SNC's list of Investment Ready Landscapes. Clearer messaging under this shared identity will also support collective advocacy for partner projects.

Participants provided the following comments:

- Participants discussed the importance of clarifying roles in the charter and distinguishing Headwaters Connect from other local and regional groups working in forest health, water resources, and land stewardship.
- Partners agreed with the updated goals overall and gave input for refinements to ensure clarity around geographic scale and collaborative intent.

Advocacy and Collaboration Guidelines and Opportunities

The group discussed how Headwaters Connect can support external advocacy and collaborative initiatives under the new brand. Partners considered establishing a standardized approach to issuing letters of support (LOS) for member projects.

Participants provided the following comments:

- A default approach could allow EDWA to issue LOS for projects clearly aligned with Headwaters Connect goals. Partners may also choose to add their own logos individually.
- A checklist could be developed to help ensure project alignment. Suggested items include project location, draft budget, CEQA/NEPA status and lead



agency, maps and treatment summary, timeline, and alignment with Headwaters Connect mission and resource management strategies.

- ENF shared that LOS requests are reviewed by the Forest Leadership Team and can take weeks, as there are strains caused by high request volume. Clear information on implementation expectations is needed before ENF can commit to support.
- Partners noted that many projects are not implementation-ready even after funding is awarded; focusing support on projects that have completed CEQA/NEPA may help mitigate delays.

Building on Headwaters Connect Momentum

The group discussed improvements to the new website and opportunities for expanded collaboration. The website originated from a need for a shared, accessible space for project data, communications, and updates. Partners also explored other ways to support partners' work as well as improved messaging.

Participants provided the following comments:

- Partners noted overlaps with TCSI datasets but shared challenges with TCSI requirements, including burdensome financial disclosures and difficult data entry.
- Partners acknowledged the importance of ensuring that Headwaters Connect does not duplicate existing efforts.
- ENF emphasized the need for help communicating Forest Service project work due to limited internal capacity. Connecting ENF's data (e.g., FACTS) to Headwaters Connect could improve storytelling and visibility.
- Social media may help broaden outreach; tools exist to automate posting across platforms.
- Collaboration with local agencies (e.g., native plant societies, master gardeners) could support outreach.
- Partners emphasized the value of a short, accessible "elevator pitch" explaining Headwaters Connect's purpose.
- A fact sheet could help raise public awareness and communicate the group's role.

Next Steps and Closing



Orit Kalman, Facilitator, thanked participants for their engagement and encouraged them to continue collaborating between now and the next Headwaters Connect workshop. Participants were invited to:

- Identify one example project to add to the website.
- Contribute to the LOS protocol and communications tools.
- Prepare for the July meeting, where partners will work through joint landscape-scale project development.

Participants

Andrew Mishler, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

Autumn Gronborg, American River Conservancy

Hannah Romero, El Dorado Water Agency

Jake Sahl, El Dorado Water Agency

Jennifer House, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

Jon Money, El Dorado Irrigation District

Laura Rodarte, Placer County Water Agency

LeeAnne Mila, County of El Dorado, Agricultural Commissioner

Mark Egbert, El Dorado and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts

Nicholas Schneider, Georgetown Divide Public Utility District

Rebecca Guo, El Dorado Water Agency

Tanya Harlow, County of El Dorado, Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience

Consultants

Orit Kalman, Facilitator

Yung-Hsin Sun, Sunzi Consulting