RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

September 26, 2024
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
(Hybrid Meeting)

Zoom and

Windsor Town Council Chambers
9291 Old Redwood Highway, Windsor, CA 95492

MINUTES

Directors and Alternates Present

Marjorie Morgenstern	City of Cloverdale
Ben Ford, Vice-Chair	City of Cotati
Ron Edwards	City of Healdsburg
Sandra Maurer	City of Sebastopol
Mari Rodin	City of Ukiah
Maureen Mulheren, Chair	County of Mendocino
Adriane Garayalde	Sonoma County
Sam Salmon	Town of Windsor

Directors present represented eight of the ten RRWA member agencies and constitutes a quorum.

Additional Attendees

Bobby Spagnola – City of Cloverdale
Josie Slovut – Mendocino County
Elizabeth Cargay – Town of Windsor
Lisa Bernard – RWQCB
Matt St. John – RWQCB
Chris Delany – Sonoma Water/Guest Presenter
Jay Jasper – Public
Elizabeth Salomone – Mendocino County RRFC&WCID
Brenda Adelman – Public
Bob Anderson – Public
Sabrina Marson – RRWA Staff
Vanessa Apodaca – RRWA Staff
Andy Rodgers – RRWA Executive Director

A. Call to Order and Introductions - Meeting called to order by Chair Mulheren at 9:05 am. Roll call was taken.

B. Approval of the Agenda - Agenda was approved with no revisions.

C. Guest Presentations:

a. Overview of Russian River Watershed Pilot Project, Chris Delaney, Principal Engineer, Resource Planning Section, Sonoma Water

Chris discussed a pilot project funded by DWR, with a total allocation of 10 million dollars for five projects, each receiving 2 million dollars. The project, led by public agencies, aims to develop a watershed resilience planning process consisting of five steps. The project is one of five pilot projects across the state. An overview of the planning process for a watershed resilience plan was provided, including the need to develop a watershed network, establish project boundaries, and track performance of the projects. The project area is preliminary and needs to be finalized with the help of the watershed network and the steering committee. The plan also includes exploring hazards and their influence on the Russian River Watershed and surrounding areas, with a focus on climate related hazards and their potential impact on water resources. The participants agreed to use the latest climate projections, specifically the CMIP6 model, for their hazard assessments.

Chris focused on assessing hazards and vulnerabilities in the water sector, particularly in the context of climate change. He discussed evaluating hazards against various water sectors, including water supply, flood management, water quality, ecosystems, recreation, and hydropower. He also discussed the creation of a water budget for the watershed, which Sonoma Water has already begun. The discussion included vulnerability assessment, which will be conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively as part of the project, and the potential for various adaptation strategies to address water supply issues, with a focus on prioritizing high-risk areas and evaluating the effectiveness of different strategies.

Chris discussed project implementation and monitoring, despite not having budget or time. They plan to develop an implementation plan, identify specific actions, responsible parties, and high-level implementation costs. The project timeline was outlined, with the agreement with DWR finalized in July and the bulk of the work expected to occur from fall/winter 2024 to 2025. The aim is to complete the climate vulnerability analysis, adaptation strategies, performance metrics, and implementation by early 2026. The next steps include contracting with a consultant team, developing a watershed network, and conducting a climate hazard assessment.

The full presentation is in PDF format and can be found at https://rrwatershed.org/event/board-of-directors-meeting-30

Matt St. John from the Regional Water Board expressed interest in supporting Sonoma Water's watershed resilience planning and aligning it with the Russian River Regional Monitoring Program's metrics.

D. Approval of Standing Items

a. Minutes: May 23 Board of Directors Meeting – Vice-Chair Ford moved to approve. Director Salmon seconded. Roll call vote was taken—None opposed. Minutes approved.

E. Board of Directors Business

a. 2024/2025 Work Plan update
    i. Key Regional Projects
        1. Streets to Creeks-Handouts were provided: 2023/2024 Annual Report and 2023/2024 Fiscal Report
        2. Russian River-Friendly Landscaping Workshop-Handouts were provided: outreach materials
        3. Pilot program: "Watershed Networks"
        4. Prop 4 update

5. Operators' Forum
6. Public Outreach and Engagement
    a) Fiesta de Independencia—September 15, 2024
    b) National Pollution Prevention—September 16-23
    c) Creek Week—September 22-29
    d) Video Contest Theme Selection
    e) National Prescription Drug Take Back Day - October 26, 2024

ii. Strategic Plan
iii. Potential Board field trip
iv. 2025-26 Work Plan development

Andy (RRWA) discussed updates on the Streets to Creeks annual and fiscal reports, highlighted the value of the Russian River friendly landscaping campaign and a new partnership with the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA). This CLCA partnership was pursued to re-engage with commercial landscape contractors; they will help inform the development of a 'conversation series' to examine the business case for environmentally friendly landscaping. Andy also discussed the importance of composting and waste management, and the renewed interest in RRFL signage—the group discussed small donation for sign that could benefit CLCA.

Andy discussed the upcoming Proposition 4 on the November ballot, which includes a significant development for stormwater in California. Andy expressed support for the proposition and highlighted the importance of the stormwater component. They also discussed the possibility of Sonoma County receiving bond money and the benefits of a regional collaboration. Andy noted that a regional collaboration for funds would be more competitive. A FAQ sheet will be prepared by CASQA, and RRWA staff will share with members for review and use as talking points when it becomes ready.

The Wastewater Operators' Forum was discussed, with plans for the next one in October, hosted by Sonoma Water. There was big interest at the last Forum to discuss upcoming regulations and new technologies. Vanessa (RRWA) also mentioned the recent Fiesta de Independencia and National Pollution Prevention Week and Creek Week.

RRWA Staff discussed various updates and initiatives. The Board requested outreach materials regarding the high school video contest to assist with teacher and school distributions. Andy discussed the safe medicine and sharps disposal program, with a focus on the upcoming take-back event on October 27th and the potential for other agencies to participate in the program. Andy provided an update on the strategic planning process, with a request for proposals for a facilitator to be prepared. Targeting December 19 Board meeting for RFP approval. The Chair and Vice Chair expressed interest in participating in a Strategic Plan Committee. The Chair recommended that anyone else interested, reach out to RRWA Staff.

Andy discussed the potential for a board field trip, with a decision to postpone it until mid-late winter or early spring. Lastly, RRWA Staff discussed the work plan development for 2025-2026, with a timeline for development and adoption. Vanessa reminded the Board that about $123,000 was credited back to various member agencies.

F. Regional Advocacy and Initiatives updates

a. RRWA/RWQCB biannual Meeting – January 2025
b. Support/Comment letters
    i. 2024 07 09 Draft Municipal Stormwater Cost Policy
    ii. 2024 08 15 Grant Proposal—Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group
c. Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP)
d. Russian River Confluence
e. North Coast Resources Partnership

RRWA's presentation to the Regional Water Board is tentatively December 6. RWQCB is interested in joining a Potter Valley tour with RRWA.

Andy mentioned the R3MP program is progressing, developed by the San Francisco Estuary Institute to provide opportunities for the Russian River watershed. Adriane (Sonoma County) reported the Russian River Confluence received a $25,000 grant to help hire a coordinator and applied for Bureau of Reclamation funding. There are new staff working with Conservation Works that will be assisting with Russian River confluence.

G. Items of Interest

a. Environmental Article inquiries
    i. La Voz Bilingual Newspaper
    ii. Cloverdale Connect
b. Summary of Board of Directors Action Items

Andy confirmed RRWA is no longer producing monthly environmental articles, instead focusing on the Streets to Creeks program, but receiving inquiries from publications.

During the meeting improvements in the RRWA's website's design and functionality were noted by staff. The team discussed the need for content editing and link fixing, acknowledging that this would be a significant undertaking.

H. Public Comment—None

I. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 10:15 am

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RRWA Calendar Summary:
Unless otherwise noted meetings are held at Windsor Town Council Chambers, 9291 Old Redwood Highway, Windsor, California 95492

Upcoming TWG Meetings (Virtual meetings only) 10:30 am – 12:30 pm	**Upcoming Board of Directors meetings 9:00 am – 11:00 am**
October 8, 2024 January 14, 2025 April 8, 2025	December 19, 2024 February 27, 2025 May 22, 2025
Important Dates	
September 22-29 — Creek Week Feb 8, 2025 — 16th Annual Lake Sonoma Steelhead Festival April 24, 2025 — Tentative Data for Video Contest Awards Ceremony	