RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

May 23, 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
Maureen Mulheren, Chair	County of Mendocino
Adriane Garayalde	Sonoma County
Sam Salmon	Town of Windsor

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

Additional Attendees

Amber Fisette – County of Mendocino
Josie Slovut – County of Mendocino
Sean McNeil – City of Santa Rosa
Elizabeth Cargay – Windsor
Sarah Wickersham – Sonoma Water
Charlie Kelly - 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 9:04 am. Roll call was taken.

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

C. Guest Presentations:

a. Water and Energy Education program and High School Video Contest—Sarah Wickersham, Sonoma Water

Sarah presented Sonoma Water's local programs aimed at educating students on environmental conservation and stewardship. These programs, which are free for teachers and students, cover topics from water conservation to renewable energy, using interactive and hands-on methods. Sonoma Water's team delivers in-classroom and field programs for students from kindergarten to high school, with a

focus on promoting environmental stewardship. They also offer teacher workshops, a classroom supplies program, a musical assembly program, and an educational escape room game at the Sonoma Clean Power customer center. Sonoma Water's programs have expanded their partnerships, including with the Russian River Watershed Association, and they are involved in outreach events such as the North Bay Science Discovery Day and the Steelhead Festival. Further, Sonoma Water introduced a small grants initiative to fund student-led projects related to water or climate change at their schools.

Director Morgenstern inquired about Sonoma Water's education programs' coverage of natural habitat information, including tick prevention. Sarah confirmed that such information is included in their programs, especially the 5th grade field trip program, and they also provide safety measures. Sarah further detailed their funding mechanisms through partnerships and announced the 2024 high school video contest, which aimed to educate students about low impact development for the Russian River Watershed. The winners, from Technology High School, San Marin High School, and Ukiah High School, were recognized for their efforts, and plans for next year's contest were discussed.

The Board discussed potential themes for the FY24/25 high school video contest:

Based on feedback from the Target Working Group:

- Top choice: Careers in Water and Watersheds
- Second Choice: Storm Water Pollution Prevention
- Third choice: Food waste and composting

Other themes considered:

- Microplastics
- Importance of biodiversity in ecosystems
- Invasive species in the Russian River
- Watershed
- Air pollution and acidification of freshwater
- Water Conservation

They eventually settled on "careers in water" as the main theme. RRWA will aim to tie in the second popular choice, Food waste and composting, into the theme. The Board members provided their input on the chosen theme, highlighting its relevance and potential for engaging content. The Board also discussed the importance of the Technical Working Groups feedback in shaping the project's direction.

The award ceremony is anticipated to take place in April 2025.

The full presentation is in PDF format and can be found at https://rrwatershed.org/event/board-of-directors-meeting-29/

D. Approval of Standing Items

a. Minutes: February 22 Board of Directors Meeting – Vice-Chair Ford moved to approve. Director Maurer seconded. Roll call vote was taken—None opposed. Minutes approved.

E. Board of Directors Business

a. 2023/2024 Work Plan wrap up
   i. Rollback Projections— Vanessa (RRWA) discussed the rollback projections for the upcoming fiscal year, anticipating a return of about 70k to member agencies. Staff proposed to refund several projects, including stormwater support, lower watershed monitoring, Upper Russian River water management, safe medicine disposal, and bulk purchases.
   ii. Comment/Support Letters— Copies of recent letters were included as packet handouts. RRWA sought approval for a sign-on letter from the California Stormwater Quality Association to advocate for climate bond funding for stormwater projects. The letter was discussed and approved on condition that RRWA would send a final draft to the Chair and Vice Chair for a formal review of the language.
   iii. Public Outreach and Engagement
      1. Streets to Creeks
      2. Earth Day—April 22
   iv. Stormwater Regulatory Compliance
      1. Our Water Our World
      2. Bilingual Educational Placemats
   v. Russian River-Friendly Landscaping
      1. Carbon Gardening
   vi. Safe medicine and sharps disposal
      1. National Prescription Drug Take Back Day—April 27, 2024
   vii. Wastewater Treatment Operators' Forum—May 15

RRWA celebrated the success of recent marketing campaign and various programs including Our Water Our World (OWOW), bilingual educational placemats, and the Russian River-Friendly Landscaping program. The OWOW program hosted successful webinars with high attendance, while the bilingual placemats are being placed in various locations across the watershed. RRWA also announced plans to translate the Carbon Gardening outreach flyer into Spanish. A copy of the English flyer was included as a packet handout. Additionally, staff reported on the success of the DEA-funded program to dispose of unwanted medications, and the establishment of a wastewater operators forum. The operators forum, sponsored primarily by Town of Windsor Sonoma Water, and the City of Santa Rosa, was well received (24 participants and 10 facilities represented). The forum will continue bi-annually. The City of Cloverdale plans to sponsor next fiscal year. The next forum is anticipated to be hosted by Sonoma Water and is open to everyone.

b. 2024/2025 Work Plan Introduction
   i. Key Regional Projects
      1. Streets to Creeks—A copy of the February 22, 2024 guest presentation was provided as a handout.
      2. Russian River-Friendly Landscaping Workshop
      3. Rising WATERS
      4. Operators' Forum
      5. North Bay Watershed Association Conference
   ii. Potential Board field trip in October
   iii. Save the date: Fiesta de Independencia—September 15, 2024
   iv. BOD 2024-25 proposed meeting schedule – Four 2-hour meetings
      1. August 22, 2024
      2. October 24, 2024

3. February 27, 2025
4. May 22, 2025

RRWA reviewed the previous fiscal year's activities and plans for upcoming work plan tasks, with a focus on outreach and documenting metrics. RRWA discussed field trips to various optional locations, including the Healdsburg treatment plant and Potter Valley, to learn about ongoing projects and regional water reuse systems. Other options discussed:

- Don Clausen Fish Hatchery, Lake Sonoma
- Sonoma Water Education Center/ Ranney Collector/ Fish Ladder
- Coyote Valley Fish Facility, Lake Mendocino
- Hopland Research and Extension Center
- Santa Rosa Regional Water Reuse System
- Pepperwood Preserve – Ecology institute

Chair Mulheren suggested a presentation on Potter Valley, rather than a field trip. Director Edwards suggested for those that didn't make it to the previous Potter Valley tour, that materials for a self-guided tour be made available. Director Garayalde will send RRWA staff Potter Valley presentation information from the Water Forum. The Board proposed viewing a large-scale ultraviolet disinfection project at the Santa Rosa Regional Water Reuse System when complete. They also discussed changing the meeting schedule to accommodate a member — no changes were made, and the FY 2024/25 calendar was approved.

F. Regional Advocacy and Initiatives updates

a. Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP)
b. Russian River Confluence
c. North Coast Resources Partnership

The group discussed the Russian River Regional Monitoring Program, emphasizing its independence and future funding plans. Updates on the Russia River Regional Monitoring program include the approval of a 5-year monitoring plan and the inclusion of a tribal representative on the steering committee. They also highlighted the progress of the Confluence, including applying for a number of grants for management, increasing partnerships through special projects, and announced a new wine partnership to raise funds. Additionally, the North Coast Resources Partnership was advocating for funding for regional integrated water management, with a decision expected by June 27th.

G. Items of Interest

a. Summary of Board of Directors Action Items
    - A copy of the Thank you letter to RRWA for supporting the WaterSMART Application for the Town of Windsor was included as a handout in the packet.
    - RRWA will organize a field trip in October, potentially to the Potter Valley project, Santa Rosa's regional water reuse system, or another location of interest to the Board members.
    - Andy will participate in efforts to help secure funding for the Russian River Regional Monitoring program's 5-year plan and long-term sustainability.

H. Public Comment—None

I. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 10:28 am

The full RRWA presentation is in PDF format and can be found at https://rrwatershed.org/event/board-of-directors-meeting-29/

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**
July 9, 2024 October 8, 2024 January 14, 2025 April 8, 2025	August 22, 2024 (Tentative) October 24, 2024 (Tentative) February 27, 2025 (Tentative) May 22, 2025 (Tentative)

Environmental Columns
March – Thank you Andrea Rodriguez, Sonoma Water, for Fix a Leak Week
April — Thank you, County of Sonoma Department of Health Services, Environmental Health and the RRWA Safe Medicine Disposal Subcommittee – Operations Group - Safe Medicine Disposal Stewardship Programs
May — Thank you, Sarah Faraola of West Yost - Russian River-Friendly Landscaping Practices for Watershed Health
June — Thank you, Andy Rodgers, RRWA Executive Director - Thanks for Reading and Walking with Us!
Important Dates