RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING
April 8, 2025 at 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

(Hybrid Meeting)

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

MEETING SUMMARY

1. **Greetings and Introductions**

Bobby Spagnola – City of Cloverdale
Aaron Nunez – City of Santa Rosa
Josie Slovut – County of Mendocino
Elissa Overton– City of Sebastopol
Anna Perez – Town of Windsor
Cynthia de la Fuente – Sonoma Water
Alisa Keenan – County of Sonoma
Andrew Stricklin – City of Ukiah
Vanessa Apodaca – RRWA
Sabrina Marson – RRWA
Jaden Husser – RRWA
Andy Rodgers – RRWA

- Review Agenda - Meeting called to order at 10:36 am. Andy Rodgers (RRWA) lead introductions for both in-person and online participants.

2. **Technical Working Group Business** – The group reviewed the proposed technical working group schedule for the next fiscal year, which includes two hybrid meetings out of four. Alisa (County of Sonoma) mentioned the October 14th co-permittees meeting location still to be determined between Windsor and Healdsburg, but hopes the TWG meeting can take place at which ever location is chosen.
    - A- Executive Director Services
        - Board Summary from February 27
            - 25/26 Work Plan Adopted *(included in the TWG meeting packet as a handout)*
        - BOD Field Trip
        - FY 25/26 TWG Schedule:
            - August 12
            - October 14 (hybrid)
            - January 13
            - April 14 (hybrid)
        - Co-Permittee updates— Alisa (Chair of the recent Co-Permittee meeting) discussed the Trash Pilot Outreach Program, featuring environmental graphics, digital marketing, and cleanup events around Earth Day. Installations began April 1 in several jurisdictions, with additional trash cans and agency staff wearing campaign pins to boost visibility. The campaign runs through June (July for the county) and includes trash assessments (visual surveys of street litter) to evaluate baseline conditions and track changes. Early digital engagement is strong, with high website traffic and QR code usage. Vanessa suggested presenting the program to the Board of Directors in September.
        - Strategic Plan update—Vanessa (RRWA) discussed the strategic plan's progress and next steps. The strategic plan subcommittee reviewed the top three proposals and decided to move forward with Stephen Groner Associates (SGA). The contract will run through the next fiscal year, with the process

expected to be completed by October. RRWA will update Directors and schedule a kickoff meeting with SGA and the subcommittee. A copy of the scope of work will be forwarded to the TWG.

- Procurement Procedure— The team discussed the procurement process and the need for a standardized advertising period for future RFPs. Vanessa provided a recap of the process, which followed previous RRWA RFP processes. The group agreed to review and provide input on the draft RFP process, including a longer advertising period *(Draft process included in the TWG meeting packet as a handout)*

- B- General Benefit Projects
  - B.1 Outreach Strategies
    - Video Contest update— Vanessa announced the upcoming awards ceremony for the video contest on May 10, which will be held at the 3rd annual Northern California Public Media Food and Wine Awards. The event will feature the winning video. The contest received 26 video entries, and 54 students participated from 6 different high schools. The winning students and schools will receive cash prizes. Jaden shared the experience of judging the videos, which were about careers in water, and mentioned that the top 3 videos will be polished and sent to the Technical Working Group for sharing.
    - Lake Sonoma Steelhead Festival—February 8, 2025—RRWA staff participated in the Steelhead Festival at the Hatchery, which drew about 8,000 attendees. Sustainable landscaping was the most popular topic, with high engagement around OWOW and RRFL flyers. Giveaways included: RRWA flyers, junior member guides (including in Spanish), straws, pencils, seed packets and drought buckets. Kids loved the Streets to Creeks guides and interactive games like Plinko (“salmon run”), which proved to be a successful activity. The event fostered meaningful conversations with families and showcased strong community interest. Suzanne Bontempo (OWOW) and Elizabeth Cargay also participated in tabling. OWOW participation was not an extra charge. Windsor is interested in having Suzanne participate in their April 27 Earth Day event; RRWA will connect them.
    - Fiesta de Independencia—Level of sponsorship—RRWA is confirmed for the September 2025 event at the current $1,000 sponsorship level, but that tier may be phased out in future cycles. A handout outlines new options ranging from $3,000 to $25,000, with expanded year-round benefits. No decision is needed now, but the topic will be revisited in upcoming TWG meetings to consider adjustments for the next work plan.
    - Russian River Friendly Landscaping— A new RRFL sign was installed at Kaiser near the RRWA office on Mercury Way, with another application pending in Healdsburg. Landscaper workshops were budgeted but shifted toward a biennial event based on community feedback. RRWA staff is planning for a symposium in late January or early February 2026. The subcommittee is now considering participating in the upcoming Fire & Earthquake Safety Expo to share firescaping and landscape management materials, and is seeking input from the group on interest and ideas.
    - Safe Medicine & Sharps Disposal

- ✓ April 26—28th National Prescription Drug Take Back Day
  Law Enforcement Agencies Only
  i. Sebastopol
  ii. Windsor
  iii. Rohnert Park
  iv. Cotati
  v. Santa Rosa
  vi. Cloverdale
  vii. Fort Bragg

  Agencies that wish to host a collection site, please call DEA contact, Reba Brooksher at (571) 387-3609

  Safe Medicine Disposal Questions?

  Sonoma County: Lisa Steinman, Department of Health Services is assisting the coordination of sites Lisa.Steinman@sonoma-county.org (707) 565-6562

  Mendocino County: There is no local coordinator.

  Contact Lisa Steinman to add Law Enforcement Agencies to her resource email

- Website and Watershed Map—The watershed map saw 11.4K views since August 27 (40/day), with a brief metrics outage now resolved. Website updates are planned, including a new "Resources" tab to better organize non-project content. Most users find the site via organic (51%) or direct (38%) search.
- Social media— RRWA staff reviewed social media performance. RRWA staff highlighted strong engagement and growth: Facebook reached 11.3K people with 920 interactions and 54 new followers; Instagram reached 2.6K with 436 interactions and 110 new followers. Top-performing posts featured local flora and fauna, timely updates (like storm warnings and sandbag locations), and community-focused content. A new "Species Spotlight" series was launched. Staff emphasized the importance of balancing creativity with budget constraints and noted occasional post boosting. There was interest in aligning social media growth strategies with the strategic plan to expand reach and visibility and increasing outreach around trash. Vanessa commented that RRWA social media outreach speaks to the permit requirements, including educating about the species in the watershed.
- Car wash flyer—Vanessa (RRWA) presented a new car wash outreach flyer created for member agencies, available in English and Spanish with a QR code linking to Streets to Creeks information. (*included in the TWG meeting packet as a handout*)

- B.2 Russian River Friendly Landscaping Workshop— RRWA cross promotion: Suzanne Bontempo of Our Water Our World (OWOW) presented March 18 at the CLCA dinner meeting. (RRWA tabled at the CLCA events on March 18, and will table on April 22 and possibly at their Annual Achievement Awards on June 20.)

- B.3 Regulatory Forum and Advocacy
  - Support/Comment letters— Vanessa mentioned a letter of support request from the town of Windsor and the availability of advocacy for Prop 4 guidelines. (*included in the TWG meeting packet as a handout)*
  - RRWA/RWQCB Quarterly Meeting—February 20
    Vanessa reported on the recent meeting with Valerie Quinto, covering topics such as state budget impacts on staffing, the Laguna Restoration Plan, trash implementation comment periods, and updates on various permits and TMDLs. No new Laguna Restoration Plan requirements are anticipated for FY 25–26 unless permits renew; trash comment period may be extended; a general NPDES permit is advancing for small wastewater facilities; cost reporting pilot ended with new rules due in January; pathogen TMDL draft expected in April; nutrient TMDL timeline delayed by staffing changes.
- B.4 Regional Stormwater Program Support
  - OWOW subscription fee—Vanessa provided an update on the administration subscription fee and mentioned the coordination with Suzanne for the Good Bugs presentations.
  - Placemats—RRWA staff added new locations for distributing bilingual placemats, bringing the total to 72 locations. Vanessa mentioned a request for an updated version of the placemats and the possibility of budgeting for an update in the next fiscal year. The idea of having reference to the Creek Protector booklets was also discussed.

- C- Special Benefit Projects
  - C.4 Sonoma State University WATERS project update— The Project has taken a significant pivot following a February workshop with watershed partners, including RWQCB, RRWA member agencies, educators, and others. Sonoma State is now focusing on an urban creek living classroom model and is seeking input from RRWA agencies to tailor the program to local needs. The homelessness–water quality nexus work continues to gain traction and will be presented at a statewide conference. To help shape the curriculum, RRWA is looking to form a small subcommittee—ideally with co-permittee representation—for 2–3 meetings during Sonoma State's summer session (late June–early August). Please reach out to RRWA staff if you or someone from your agency is interested in participating.
  - C.1 - C.10 budgets—Vanessa commented that it's too early to be giving any real meaningful rollback data but she did provide a current standing of each budget.

The full presentation is in PDF format and can be found at
https://rrwatershed.org/event/technical-working-group-meeting-58/

3. **Items of Interest**
   - Sabrina discussed the upcoming Earth Day events and the need for updates on the living document. (*included in the TWG meeting packet as a handout)*
   - Vanessa outlined the action items, including updating the distribution list, advertising Earth Day events, sending out SGA's corrected proposal, updating procurement procedures, and coordinating with the strategic plan consultant.

4. **Public Comment**
    - None

5. **Adjourn 12:30pm**

RRWA Calendar Summary:
Unless otherwise noted, RRWA Board of Director meetings are held at Windsor Town Council Chambers, 9291 Old Redwood Highway, Windsor, California 95492, and Technical Working Group meetings will be virtual or hybrid.

Upcoming TWG Meetings 10:30 am – 12:30 pm	**Upcoming Board of Directors meetings 9:00 am – 11:00 am**
	May 21, 2025 (tentative)
Important Dates	
April 22, 2025 — Earth Day	
April 26, 2025 — 28th National Prescription Drug Take Back Day	
May 10, 2025 — High School Video Contest Awards Ceremony (6-9 pm at the 3rd Annual NorCal Public Media Food & Wine Awards)	