

American River Watershed Tribal and Frontline Communities Meeting Notes

Date: November 13, 2024
Project name: American River Watershed Resilience Pilot Study

2485 Natomas Park Drive
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Attendees

Project Team

Name	Organization/Affiliation
Devyani Kar	Jacobs
Sirisha Nemani	Jacobs
Armin Munevar	Jacobs
Tapash Das	Jacobs
Reed Thayer	Jacobs
Clara Rose	Jacobs
Shannon Litchfield	Jacobs
Grace Kaufman	Valley Vision
Gretchen James	Valley Vision
Trevor Joseph	RWA
Ryan Ojakian	RWA
Jim Peifer	RWA
Ibrahim Khadam	Khadam Consulting

Community Members

Name	Organization/Affiliation
Lexi Boeger	Land use/economic development/agriculture (Placerville, CA)
Jim Haufler	Friends of Auburn Ravine
Anne Sanger	City of Sacramento
Indira Infante	Latino Leadership Council (Placer and Sacramento County)
Tim Giulliani	Connecting Point

Meeting Notes

[Ryan]

Context for the Conversation

- Focus on Adaptation
- Old System New Climate
 - 20th century and mindset
 - Need to adapt with 21st century climate solutions

Our Watershed

- Key features include the following:
 - French Meadows Reservoir and Jenkinson Lake Reservoir
 - Folsom Lake and Rollins Lake
 - Bear, Feather, Sacramento, and American Rivers

Who is the Regional Water Authority (RWA)?

- Joint powers Authority of 22 public water purveyors
- \$180M in grant funding to develop resilience in watershed

RWA's Focus

- Water quality
- Water reliability
- Water affordability

What is the Pilot?

- 2024 Watershed Resilience Pilot Program
 - California Department of Water Resources (DWR) funding \$2M to 5 watersheds

Proposed Watershed for Pilot

- 3,000 square miles in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Yuba, and Yolo counties

Proposed Pilot Project Area

- American, Bear, and Consumnes River hydrologic watersheds

[Armin]

Watershed Resilience Pilot

- DWR has a role in supporting region
- CA Water plan as State's strategic planning
- Focus areas
 - Watersheds
 - Resilience focus (heavy focus on climate)
 - Equity (Focus on communities most impacted by climate change)
- Aiming for you to be part of this watershed network

Major steps for a robust Watershed Resilience Pilot:

1. Set the stage.
2. Explore the hazards.
3. Assess vulnerabilities and risk.
4. Develop adaptation strategies.
5. Implement and monitor the pilot program.

Community Discussion

[Grace]

What are your top concerns as they relate to the impacts of climate change?

[Indira]

I work primarily with vulnerable communities who are affected by climate change.

Is there ever going to be a component discussed about financial assistance to families and unserved communities?

I don't know that there has been inequity in access to water resources for the lowest income individual families who may not always even be able to pay their water bill.

Grace recommends Listos California

Indira emphasizes language access to our Spanish-speaking participants to be informed in their language.

[Tim]

This highlights emergency preparedness and that it has been found that people are not prepared. There is a need to get people ready for the impacts of climate change (physically and financially).

[Lexi]

I am concerned that we work in silos rather than in collaboration or unified policy. How do we make decisions to unify decisions and policies?

[Jim]

Floods – too much water at the wrong time. The storms that come in will be fewer and bigger (and consider the Oroville dam failure).

[Ryan]

Climate Change is Water Change

- Rain events are getting more intense, and the atmosphere is capable of holding more water.

California Legislative Analyst's Office

- The following are impacts of climate change on California:
 - Climate stressors
 - Higher temperatures
 - Changing hydrologic patterns
 - Rising sea levels
 - Hazards
 - Extreme heat events

Impacts to RWA

- Climate change
 - Flood
 - Fire
 - Drought
 - Sea level rise

Impacts from Climate Change and Drought

- Climate change creates a catch 22 for our water supplies.
 - Water must be released from Folsom Reservoir for flood protection.

Changes in Timing of Inflow to Folsom

- Folsom Reservoir was closer than ever imagined to running out of water in 2015 and 2021.

Climate-adaptive Water Management

- 98% of the earth's available fresh water is in groundwater; it is 60 times more plentiful than surface water

[Tapash]

Gap Analysis – Approach

- Reviewed 70 reports and studies that were categorized by sector
- How can these studies support project task?
 - Water budget preparation
- Identifying gaps help to identify where we can improve
- Good foundation of information exists
 - Flood management and water supply are well covered; however, there are gaps in ecosystems, water quality, and recreation.
- Need for vulnerability assessments for Consumnes River watershed and West Sac
- Need updated assessments

Why We Need You for this Effort

- Looking to build broad-based support for solutions to impacts
- Need collaboration to incorporate your thoughts in this process

Solutions Will Require Funding

- Prop 4 climate bond
- Other State and Federal funding
- Ability to be eligible for this funding depends on collaboration

Next Steps

- Watershed resilience vision (Q1 2025)
- Conduct vulnerability and risk assessment

Questions

[Lexi]

What will future communications and engagement look like?

[Ryan]

We will follow up via email and work toward developing a vision statement.

[Indira]

Q – Will we get presentation slides?

A – Yes