

RWA Watersheds (American, Cosumnes, and Bear Rivers) Resilience Pilot Study Watershed Network Meeting #3

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Project name: RWA Watersheds Resilience Pilot Study
Project no: W8Y34200

2295 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 100
 Sacramento, CA 95833-2937
 United States
 T +1.916.920.0300

Attendees

Project Team

Name	Organization or Role
Ryan Ojakian	Regional Water Authority (RWA)
Jim Peifer	RWA
Trevor Joseph	RWA
Ibrahim Khadam	Khadam Consulting
Devyani Kar	Jacobs
Sirisha Nemani	Jacobs
Armin Munevar	Jacobs
Vijay Kesavan	Jacobs
Tapash Das	Jacobs
CJ Porter	Jacobs
Shannon Litchfield	Jacobs

Watershed Network

Name	Organization or Role
Ashley Casey	Water Forum
Austin Miller	Sacramento County
Brian Deason	El Dorado Irrigation District
Brian Sanders	City of Sacramento
Christine Kohn	Water Forum
Denny Grossman	Conservation biologist/ecologist
Jon Money	El Dorado Irrigation District
Malissa Tayaba	Shingle Springs Rancheria Band of Miwok Indians
Paul Penn	El Dorado Irrigation District
Ted Frink	Valley Foothills Watershed Collaborative

Meeting Notes

Introductions – *Jim Peifer, RWA*

Why a Pilot?

Jim Peifer

We want to address the impacts of climate change; improve equity and equitable outcomes; improve regional connection with the State; and increase collaboration throughout the region.

Feedback from May 9, 2025, Watershed Network Meeting

Ryan Ojakian

Feedback we received at the last meeting includes focusing on high risks, tailoring assessments to unique conditions of each watershed, broadening the risk lens, integrating biodiversity, and prioritizing the filling critical information gaps. Additional feedback included development of specific and measurable metrics; continuing community engagement; confirming that frontline communities and Tribes are fully included; and working towards implementation via adaptation strategies.

Pilot Roadmap and Project Schedule

Jim Peifer

We encourage everyone to continue supporting the development of this network by inviting others and encouraging participation. We are working towards a draft plan in late February 2026 and a final plan by April 2026.

Watershed Conditions and Climate Hazards

Vijay Kesavan

We are looking at various hazards across the nine sectors as well as across the four planning areas. Each system component was evaluated based on sensitivity and adaptive capacity.

Drivers for Vulnerabilities

Ryan Ojakian

The Upper Watershed key vulnerabilities include the following:

- Forest health
- Snowpack loss
- Community and economic resilience
- Infrastructure exposure challenges

The Caldor Fire is an example of an infrastructure exposure challenge.

The Lower Watershed key vulnerabilities include the following:

- Forest health
- Snowpack loss
- Folsom Reservoir constraints
- Flood management
- Ecosystems

In the Lower Cosumnes, vulnerabilities include the following:

- Minimal flood protection
- Floodplain management
- Limited resources for groundwater management.

We want to highlight our focus on Adaptation Strategy Development and Evaluation that works for everyone across numerous vulnerabilities.

Climate Change Scenarios and Quantitative Assessment Approach

Tapash Das

We have developed three scenarios for the mid-future and late future, which include the Central Tendency, Hot-Dry, and Warm-Wet scenarios. Our approach begins with the development of future climate scenarios and simulation of changes in systems under different climate scenarios. This is followed by quantifying the magnitude of vulnerabilities and assessing performance of adaptations.

Ted Frink

I think it might be beneficial to hear in greater detail about the climate and analysis work that has been done.

Discussion

Vijay Kesavan

I have shared the Vulnerability Assessment spreadsheet and explained how composite scores are created for different systems within each planning area.

Ryan Ojakian

In this analysis we are trying to focus on the composite score that combines sensitivity, adaptive capacity, vulnerability, and scale of effects. The planning area can be sorted to filter by watershed area.

Denny Grossman

I am curious about the subcomponents of the system components to see how these were evaluated. Is there another level of detail that you are looking at with more detail?

Ibrahim Khadam

The level of detail that we can get into with this project is limited, but we did evaluate each of the components across different climate metrics.

Minutes

Denny Grossman

My understanding is that we are identifying the greatest threats; however, it may not be possible to address some of these threats. Is part of the process going to be identifying where we can implement strategies for adaptation?

Ryan Ojakian

We have not yet started on adaptation strategies, but this is our next step and we will be working towards these strategies by January 2026.

Devyani Kar

The next step after that will be the implementation plan, which will look into how we can work towards implementing adaptation strategies.

Ted Frink

What information and scale of effort were used to arrive at these ratings, and how was the climate change analysis included in this? What kind of input did we receive from others?

Ibrahim Khadam

We are limited in time for the level of detail that we can achieve and are using prior studies and information as much as possible. We are also looking at this with respect to climate hazards (including rising temperatures and extreme heat, extreme precipitation and flooding, and other hazards).

Austin Miller

I appreciate the refinement to the spreadsheet that has been done in the past month, including agriculture becoming its own sector. I think the incorporation of the Bear and Cosumnes is beneficial and builds off of other plans such as Sacramento County's drought plan and the Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

Denny Grossman

My comments are not meant to be critical. At the end of the project, I think we will need a list of actions and determination of how specific these actions will need to be to mediate the effects of climate change.

Ted Frink

I agree with Denny's comments, and thank you for including us as part of the team.

Vijay Kesavan

We want this to be a partnership in the ways that we evaluate how Tribal Nations are being affected by climate change.

Malissa Tayaba (via chat)

Hi guys, Malissa Tayaba, Shingle Springs Rancheria Band of Miwok Indians. I do not have any questions at this time. Can you send any information to me at matayaba@ssband.org

Minutes

Yes we can set up a meeting. I came on very late, I wasn't able to hear the whole meeting, I apologize, Yes absolutely tribal beneficial uses. I have my tule boat race on the American River next year July.

This river is very important to us for many reasons.