

Regional Water Authority Public Relations Watershed Network Event Summary

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Summary: Watershed Network Nimbus Basin Tour and Lunch

Friday, November 14, 2025, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Watershed Network Nimbus Basin Tour and Lunch brought together a broad cross-section of registrants—from public agencies and water providers to nonprofits, consultants, educators, and community members—to explore how the Sacramento region is working to build watershed resilience. The event was hosted by the Regional Water Authority, Jacobs, Khadam Consulting, and Valley Vision and was part of the California Department of Water Resources-funded Watershed Resilience Pilot Program. The event offered a first-hand look at on-the-ground habitat enhancement work and an opportunity for participants to share perspectives on how local communities are experiencing and could adapt to climate change.

A total of 104 people registered. Many were first-time participants in the Pilot. Of registrants, 64 expressed interest in joining the Watershed Network, signaling strong momentum for continued engagement.

Salmon Talk at the Nimbus Basin: Experiencing Resilience in Action

The day began at the Nimbus Basin, where participants learned about the Water Forum's 2022 salmon habitat enhancement project. Standing alongside enhanced side channels and gravel beds, guests heard how habitat enhancements support fall-run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout while also strengthening overall river ecosystem health. This tangible example set the stage for conversations later in the afternoon about the connection between ecological restoration, water management, and regional resilience.

Lunch and Interactive Exhibits

Following the tour, participants convened at the Old Spaghetti Factory in Rancho Cordova for a hosted lunch and a series of interactive engagements.

A central feature of the lunch program was a set of four interactive exhibits designed to translate the Watershed Resilience Pilot's technical work into approachable, hands-on activities. The exhibit area was intentionally designed to feel active and immersive. Participants moved freely between the four stations, often forming small circles of conversation as they compared notes, shared concerns, or elaborated on their sticker choices. The large climate impacts and adaptation strategy panels—each spanning 36 inches by 60 inches—were especially impactful, drawing attention as landmark visuals within the room.

By blending clear visuals with simple, meaningful actions—placing dots, adding sticky notes, ranking strategies, or signing up—the exhibits created an environment where participants were not just observers but contributors. These interactions generated the qualitative insights the Pilot was hoping to surface: personal water-related concerns, climate priorities, local knowledge, and ideas for future investment.

- **Exhibit 1: Climate Change Impacts:** This large-format display—standing 5 feet tall—illustrated how climate change is already affecting the American, Bear, and Cosumnes River watersheds. The exhibit highlighted higher bills and affordability; flooding; poor air quality from wildfires; poor drinking water quality; high insurance costs; limited access to recreational activities; negative impacts on the environment; hotter days; disappearing snowpack; and other impacts. Participants were asked to place colored dots to indicate their level of concern. This simple action encouraged reflection on personal experience (e.g., rising water bills, extreme heat, wildfire smoke, or flooding) and allowed the project team to see patterns emerging in real time.
- **Exhibit 2: Climate Solutions and Adaptation Strategies:** Another large vertical display emphasized potential adaptation strategies across the megashed. It introduced categories such as forest management, water efficiency, habitat enhancement, community resilience, flood improvements, natural storage, and community resilience. Participants were invited to rank strategies by placing stickers next to the actions they viewed as most promising. This tactile exercise helped the team gather insights into community priorities, while also prompting small-group discussion at the exhibit.
- **Exhibit 3: Megashed Success Stories:** This exhibit showcased climate adaptation work already happening across the American, Bear, and Cosumnes watersheds. Using a watershed-scale map and brief project descriptions, it highlighted efforts such as meadow restoration, groundwater recharge, and habitat improvements (like the Nimbus Basin project). Designed as an informational display, it helped participants see how much is already underway and provided context for discussions at the other stations.
- **Exhibit 4: Join the Watershed Network and Submit Project Ideas:** This station focused on helping participants contribute project ideas for the Watershed Resilience Plan. The Jacobs team walked attendees through the interactive project submission tool. Participants could scan a QR code to submit ideas on their phones or take a flyer to contribute later. A companion poster displayed the Pilot Project Development Roadmap.

Attendance Summary

A total of 104 people registered to attend the event, including 11 members of the project team. After 6 guest cancellations before the event, 87 guests were expected. On the day of the tour and lunch, 80 people attended, including the team, resulting in 69 guest attendees. This reflects a guest no-show rate of about 21%.

Media Coverage Summary

The event generated four television news mentions, reaching a combined audience of 47,638 viewers. All coverage focused on the tour at Nimbus Basin; the salmon run; and the connection between climate change, habitat enhancement, and regional water resilience.

Key Themes in Coverage

- The stories highlighted that the Regional Water Authority hosted a tour at the Nimbus Basin to observe the annual salmon run.
- Reporters emphasized the opening of the Nimbus Hatchery fish ladder and the beginning of the spawning season.
- Coverage connected the event to broader climate resilience efforts, framing habitat restoration as part of how the State is helping salmon populations adapt to changing conditions.
- Multiple segments teased the story as an example of what climate-related changes mean for water resilience in the Sacramento region.

Coverage Details

- **ABC10 (KXTV)** aired three mentions across its morning and late newscasts on November 14 to 15, 2025. These segments positioned the tour as a timely, visually engaging story connected to both ecosystem health and climate change.
- **CBS13 (KQVR)** aired a segment during its 5 p.m. newscast on November 14, 2025, highlighting RWA's work on the Water Bank to store more water underground during wet months as a proactive climate adaptation strategy.

Media Value

- **Calculated ad value:** \$1,550
- **Publicity value:** \$4,650
- **Total clips:** 4
- **Audience reached:** 47,638

The coverage helped elevate the Watershed Resilience Pilot to a broad regional audience, reinforcing its relevance to both ecological and water supply challenges—and positioning RWA as a visible leader in climate adaptation work.

Attendance and Audience Details

People who registered represented a broad mix of organizations—from city and county governments to state and federal resource agencies, major water suppliers in the region, and several nonprofits focused on community resilience, habitat, and climate impacts. The list also included consultants, academic researchers, and regional organizations, illustrating the range of professional perspectives drawn to watershed-scale planning. Registrants also expressed significant interest in staying involved. In total, 64 people asked to join the Watershed Network or requested more information.

Organizations Represented Among Registrants (Grouped by Type)

Government and Public Agencies

- City of Elk Grove
- Yolo County
- City of Sacramento
- Sacramento County (multiple departments)
- California Department of Water Resources
- Sacramento Area Council of Governments
- City of Folsom
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- City of West Sacramento

Water Agencies and Utilities

- Sacramento Suburban Water District
- Carmichael Water District
- El Dorado Water Agency
- Placer County Water Agency

- Nevada Irrigation District
- Citrus Heights Water District
- San Juan Water District
- Sacramento County Water Agency
- City of Roseville Environmental Utilities
- Rancho Murieta Community Services District

Nonprofits and Community-Based Organizations

- Color the Block
- Sacramento Tree Foundation
- Tree Davis
- Environmental Council of Sacramento
- The Nature Conservancy
- Friends of the River
- American River Parkway Foundation

Consulting and Private Sector

- Jacobs
- West Yost
- Stantec
- Environmental Science Associates
- Ascent Environmental
- Dudek
- GEI Consultants

Education and Academic

- University of California at Davis (multiple programs and research groups)

Other

- Valley Vision
- American River Flood Control District
- Reclamation Districts (various)

Watershed Network Interest (Registrants)

Responses to: *"Are you interested in joining the Watershed Network (free)?"*

- "Sign me up!" — 46 registrants
- "I'd like more information" — 18 registrants
- Total indicating interest in some form: 64 registrants

Mentimeter Summary

During the lunch portion of the event, participants were invited to share their perspectives through a Mentimeter survey, available both online and in a printed format. The survey gathered qualitative insights on climate concerns, trusted information sources, preferred types of support, and priorities for climate adaptation across the American, Bear, and Cosumnes River watersheds.

Overall, participants showed clear and consistent priorities:

- **Water quality, extreme heat, and wildfire impacts** are the most pressing concerns.
- The most promising solutions combine **collaboration, forest management, community resilience, and habitat enhancement**.
- Participants trust **state/local agencies and community organizations** far more than social media for water information.
- There is **strong demand for education, transparency, and opportunities to participate** in resilience planning.
- The network is generating **substantial ideas** for environmental restoration, water supply reliability, and community engagement.

Results for Each Question

1. Personal Climate Concerns (Page 1)

Participants ranked six everyday climate-related concerns from most to least concerning. The strongest concerns centered around water quality and extreme heat:

1. Safety or taste of drinking water – highest concern
2. Extreme heat impacts on health and well-being
3. Affordability of insurance for flood or fire risk
4. High water bills
5. Flooding in homes or neighborhoods during heavy rains
6. Limited access to recreational activities – lowest concern

Key takeaway: Water quality and extreme heat continue to be dominant concerns for residents.

2. Environmental Impacts of Most Concern (Page 2)

Participants ranked major environmental climate impacts:

1. Wildfires affecting air quality, water quality, and ecosystems – top concern
2. More intense floods and droughts
3. Harder conditions for fish, wildlife, and endangered species
4. Reduced ability to store water for future use
5. Greater challenges for rural communities dependent on natural resources

Key takeaway: Fire impacts and extreme hydrology are top environmental threats in the eyes of participants.

3. Most Promising Water Actions (Page 3)

Participants ranked 10 water-related strategies from most to least promising:

1. Stewardship and Collaboration – highest ranked
2. Forestry Management
3. Community Resilience
4. Habitat Enhancement
5. Water Efficiency and Conservation
6. Enhanced Natural Storage

7. Flood Improvements
8. River Flows
9. Upstream Storage Enhancements
10. Water Source Diversification – lowest ranked

Key takeaway: Social and ecological strategies (stewardship, collaboration, forestry, and habitat) are viewed as more effective than traditional infrastructure-heavy approaches.

4. Trusted Sources of Water Information (Page 4)

Participants selected their most trusted source:

- 22 – State or local agencies (highest trust)
- 18 – Community organizations
- 11 – Water providers
- 10 – Cities or counties
- 9 – Schools or colleges
- 6 – News
- 4 – Neighbors/community
- 1 – Social media (lowest trust)

Key takeaway: Government agencies and community organizations are the strongest trusted messengers; social media is *not* a trusted source.

5. Types of Support Most Useful to Participants (Page 5)

Participants selected their top supports:

- 31 – Educational resources about water and the environment
- 26 – Improvements to local water infrastructure
- 23 – Updates on water quality and supply
- 23 – Opportunities to share ideas and feedback

Key takeaway: People want both information and a role in shaping solutions.

6. Additional Supports Suggested (Pages 6 to 8)

Open-ended comments from participants highlighted themes:

- Volunteer event calendars (with tracking)
- More community forums
- Region-specific PSAs instead of statewide messaging
- Stronger inclusion of environmental and wildlife groups
- Workforce development in forest health
- Clear contact pathways for drinking water information
- Project funding opportunities
- More educational tours and a desire for virtual tours
- Greater access to water quality information
- More projects in the upper watershed

Key takeaway: Education, transparency, and opportunities for hands-on involvement are major community asks.

7. Project Ideas Shared by Participants (Pages 9 to 12)

Ideas from participants ranged from local actions to policy-level changes:

Ecological and habitat actions

- Forest management, wetlands restoration, and habitat restoration
- Native plant gardens
- Removing or modifying dams, where feasible, to restore fisheries
- Wildfire mitigation partnerships
- Temperature control devices at Folsom Dam
- Floodplain and levee setback projects

Water management and supply ideas

- Greater use of reclaimed water
- Expand groundwater recharge (including flood-MAR)
- Increase nonpotable water use in development

Community and youth engagement

- Youth programs and internships
- Opportunities for students to participate in restoration
- More assertive public education around ornamental lawns

Collaboration and governance

- Partnering with Tribal leaders
- Stronger State and local collaboration
- Local restoration project funding

Key takeaway: Participants want integrated actions that blend ecological restoration with community engagement and modern water management.

8. Additional Feedback (Pages 13 to 14)

Themes raised by participants included the following:

- Appreciation for the tour and presentations
- Interest in more mingling time and more events in different watershed locations
- Requests for continuing education on watershed systems
- Desire for ongoing communication channels (e.g., a Slack group)
- Comments urging conservation, habitat protection, and reduction of lawn water use
- Recognition that different counties (e.g., El Dorado) have unique watershed perspectives

Key takeaway: Participants valued the event and want structured, ongoing opportunities to stay involved, learn more, and collaborate across the region.

Nimbus Basin Salmon Talk



Interactive Lunch

