

Scope of Work

Water Resource Management in Mendocino County: Situation Analysis for the Mendocino County Water Agency

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Background

A diverse group of agencies and districts have jurisdiction and responsibility for managing water resources in Mendocino County. This diversity is part and parcel of the evolution in management objectives for water resources in the County that include: provision of drinking water, protection of property against flooding, and conservation of aquatic habitat and threatened wildlife. County communities and watersheds outside of the Russian River face similar and different water resource objectives. Salmonid species in the Garcia, Navarro, and Noyo River are also threatened. Domestic water supplies are limited by system capacity and the lack of subsurface water to buffer periods of surface and groundwater shortages.

Proper water resource management requires an understanding of the objective for which the resources are being managed. Managing water resources to meet current and future domestic and agricultural use is one management objective. In the Ukiah Valley for example, water for domestic and agricultural use is determined to be fully allocated by the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights. This determination is confounded by conjunctive use of subsurface and deep groundwater to augment surface water diversion. Managing in stream flows and water quality that provide for threatened and endangered Coho salmon and steelhead trout habitat is an alternative water resource objective. This conservation objective is not mutually exclusive from water provision objectives, it will however require an understanding of the water needs by life stage for these fish.

The County of Mendocino has played a minor role in past efforts to meet these demands through the Mendocino County Water Agency (MCWA). Formed in 1949 by the State legislature, MCWA had the authority to control flood and storm water and take any lawful action necessary to provide sufficient water for present and future beneficial uses of the entire county. In 1998, MCWA joined the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission (IWP), vesting in them the exclusive right of first refusal for such projects and actions. Currently, the County is presented with the unique opportunity to evaluate that past role and set direction for the future. What are the water resource management expectations of the County by residents in the Russian River and west county watersheds? Should the County and MCWA focus solely on the service of providing water for domestic, agricultural, and commercial purposes or do issues of in stream habitat and water quality appropriately fall within its purview and responsibilities? What should the agency's role be in the development, management, and financing of new and additional water resources? Is there a role that the agency should play in support of either some or all of the other water agencies in the County? What are the benefits to being an agency with independent authority and what are alternative structures of governance?

County staff have initiated this evaluation and solicited answers to these questions by collecting public opinion, exploring water resource issues, and making structure and staffing proposals for the MCWA. Regretfully, these efforts have been stalled by failed recruitment of a permanent MCWA general manager. In May of this year, the County hired Jim Stretch to a one year contract as Interim Manager of the MCWA.

Building on these efforts, we will conduct a situation analysis for the County's role in water resource planning, management, and development. The goal of this project is to facilitate water resource management in Mendocino County. We will achieve that goal by:

- Identifying the gaps between water resource objectives and organizational opportunities with the institutional capacity in the County to meet those them;
- Generating alternative functional approaches to address those identified gaps; and
- Proposing steps to implement these alternatives.

Project Components

Districts that provide water to County users are numerous and decentralized. This decentralization has many advantages and disadvantages. As the complexity of water resource management objectives increases this decentralization of districts may or may not be an effective way to meet them. Efforts to explore and recommend agency and district structure for water resource development and management include the Ukiah Valley-Wide Task Force, Inland Water and Power Commission, and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Conservation Improvement District. We will work with these organizations, west county water districts, and the other state and federal agencies, with water resource management mandates in the County, to explore alternatives and options for MCWA and the County to administer water resource management.

Strategic planning is an important process for any organization to be effective, efficient, and successful. Steps involved in strategic planning include mission determination, situation analysis, and implementation. Determining mission is a decision that will rest with the County. We will conduct a situation analysis as Phase I of a two-phase effort. In Phase I, we will outline the water resource management objectives and approaches for organizational structures to address those objectives. Phase II involves action planning and implementation for selected MCWA roles that can be carried out by MCWA staff with the results from Phase I.

We plan for Phase I to be an open and collaborative process between the MCWA, the numerous water districts within the county, state and federal agency representatives, the Local Agency Formation Commission of Mendocino County, and County of Mendocino residents. To achieve this transparency and collaboration, we will conduct this project through a series of incremental workshops and reports held throughout the project duration. We will conduct workshops to collect valuable stakeholder input and provide project updates. We will also submit draft reports at the completion of each component to solicit stakeholders' comments on findings and results.

There are many examples of organizational structure and approaches to water resource management that can inform the County and MCWA regarding options for their own form and function. These examples include other California counties and water districts, as well as approaches throughout the country. We will conduct this situation analysis through an IF:THEN

approach to generate alternative organizational structures and approaches, as well as their implications that the County will use in determining its water resource management role. The end result is a summary of well thought scenarios for MCWA organizational structure and capacity to address water resource management in Mendocino County. This phase consists of four components: A) Historical and Current Situation Summary; B) Development of Alternative Roles and Approaches; C) Identification and Assessment of Role Implications and Consequences; and D) Synthesis of Approaches.

Phase I – Situational Analysis

- A. Historical and Current Situation Summary – The past and present role of the MCWA needs to be summarized as a starting point for Phase I. We will work closely with the MCWA Interim Manager to generate this summary, using existing reports and studies instead of conducting primary research. Included in this summary will be descriptions of water quantity and quality management objectives in Mendocino County. These objectives will then be compared with MCWA’s current role and institutional capacity and the organizational and financial capacity needed to meet them. Through this comparison, we will identify issues and sources of disparity between water resource management objectives and MCWA response capacities. Deliverables for this component include one workshop with the Board of Supervisors to provide a project update, and component draft report (Table 1).
- B. Development of Alternative Roles and Approaches – We will generate a list of alternative roles and approaches to address the identified sources of disparity and issues. These approaches are the IF components of the IF:THEN scenarios. An example would be that MCWA provides water districts with leadership and assistance to meet their water development and supply requirements. Deliverables for this component include three public workshops and one Board of Supervisors workshop to identify and refine alternatives, one workshop with the Board of Supervisors to provide a project update, and component draft report (Table 1).
- C. Identification and Assessment of Implications and Consequences – The next step in the development of the IF:THEN scenarios is the identification and assessment of implications and consequences for each alternative role developed in Component B. These implications and consequences are the THEN components of the scenarios. With the example of MCWA providing leadership and assistance to water districts, implications could include the hiring or training of staff that are knowledgeable in environmental laws and regulations or that can facilitate multiple stakeholder processes around controversial water resource management decisions. Deliverables for this component include three public workshops and one Board of Supervisor workshop to identify and assess implications and consequences, one Board of Supervisor workshop to provide a project update, and component draft report (Table 1).

- D. Synthesis of Approaches – We will complete Phase I and the situation analysis with a synthesis of the approaches identified for MCWA’s water resource management role in the County. This will be done through a final workshop and report with the MCWA Board of Directors and will include directions and suggestions for the conducting of Phase II of this strategic planning process. Deliverables for this component include one Board of Supervisor workshop to present project results and final report (Table 1), including cost estimates of the alternatives and approaches to inform decisions for implementation of Phase II.

Table 1: Project deliverables by component.

| Project Component | Public Workshops | Board of Supervisor Workshops | Reports |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------|
| A | - | 1 – Project update | Draft Report |
| B | 3 – Develop alternatives | 1 – Develop alternatives 1 – Project update | Draft Report |
| C | 3 – Identify implications | 1 – Identify implications 1 – Project update | Draft Report |
| D | - | 1 – Project summary | Final Report |

Phase II – Action Planning and Implementation

This phase should be developed and conducted with results from Phase I. Briefly, Phase II will include selection of desired alternative roles and approaches for MCWA and action planning and implementation of those alternatives. County and MCWA staff will be able to conduct this phase of the strategic planning process using the direction and suggestions presented in Component D of Phase I.

Timeline and Budget

This project timeline and budget are presented in Table 2. We estimate that the project will require 12-months to complete the proposed workshops and reports. This timeline and plan can be modified to fit important dates and milestones for the County in the ensuing year. With that flexibility in mind, the tentative calendar presented in Table 2 represents placeholders for anticipated project meetings, milestones, and submittal of reports.

Requested funds to support these project total \$28,640. These include salary for a half time research assistant for the entire 12 months of the project, as well as travel and workshop support. The University of California Cooperative Extension will provide matching funds from though in-kind contributions totaling \$35,000. We also estimate that approximately 40 % or 12 hours per week of MCWA Interim Manager’s time will be needed to complete this project.

Table 2.

Budget

| Project Components and Tasks | Timeline | | Budget | | | | ***Public Workshops | | Subtotal |
|--|----------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|------------|--------|---------------------|--------------|----------|
| | Duration | Completion Date | *Labor | **Travel Trips | Cost | Number | Cost | | |
| Phase I – Situational Analysis | | | | | | | | | |
| A. Situation Summary | | | | | | | | | |
| A1. Collect existing reports and information | 2 weeks | Month 1 | 400 | 1 | 220 | - | - | 620 | |
| A2. Summarize information | 3 weeks | Month 2 | 1,200 | 1 | 220 | - | - | 1,420 | |
| A3. Submit draft report | 3 weeks | Month 2 | 1,200 | 1 | 220 | - | - | 1,420 | |
| B. Alternative Roles and Approaches | | | | | | | | | |
| B1. Develop draft alternatives | 3 weeks | Month 3 | 1,200 | 1 | 220 | - | - | 1,420 | |
| B2. Focus and refine alternatives | 6 weeks | Month 5 | 2,400 | 4 | 880 | 3 | 1,500 | 4,780 | |
| B3. Finalize alternatives and submit draft report | 4 weeks | Month 5 | 1,600 | 2 | 440 | - | - | 2,040 | |
| C. Implications and Consequences | | | | | | | | | |
| C1. Research implications for each alternative | 24 weeks | Month 10 | 9,600 | 8 | 1,760 | 3 | 1,500 | 12,860 | |
| C2. Finalize implications and submit draft report | 4 weeks | Month 11 | 1,600 | 2 | 440 | - | - | 2,040 | |
| D. Synthesis | 3 weeks | Month 12 | <u>1,200</u> | 2 | <u>440</u> | - | - | <u>2,040</u> | |
| Subtotals | 52 | - | \$20,800 | 19 | \$4,840 | 6 | \$3,000 | \$28,640 | |
| Phase II – Alternative selection and Implementation | | | | | | | | | - |
| (This phase will be developed and implemented with Phase I results.) | | | | | | | | | |

Requested Funding \$28,640

Total Project Expenses \$28,640

Notes

*Labor expenses are calculated at \$400.00 per week that covers the salary of the project research assistant for a 50% work week.

**One trip is estimated to cost \$220.00 and includes \$73.00 mileage (200 miles @\$0.365 mile), \$95.00 per night lodging, and \$52.00 per diem.

***One public workshop is estimated to cost \$500.00 including space rental, printing for notices and handouts, postage, and refreshments.