

**Tuolumne-Stanislaus Integrated Regional Water Management
Authority Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
February 19, 2020**



HOMEWORK:

1. Review materials sent in advance of the meeting and bring copies with you to the meeting.

****FINALIZED MATERIALS WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE****

<http://tstan-irwma.org/>

SUMMARY

1. Opening Remarks:

Ms. Carolyn Lott opened the WAC meeting. Introductions were made.

2. Public Comment:

The public comment period was opened by Ms. Lott and no comments were heard. Ms. Lott closed the public comment period.

3. Meeting Summary:

WAC Agreement: Members accepted the distributed meeting summary as the summary of record for February 19, 2020.

4. Presentation on the Connection of Biomass to Healthy Watersheds:

Mr. Steve Wilensky presented on the Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS). He provided his contact information: 209-419-1919 stevedwilensky@gmail.com

Mr. Wilensky spoke regarding the challenges of rural Communities. He said originally Calaveras County was home to 22 mills. Logging was a basic component of the economy. Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) began in 2003. The region had high unemployment, high meth production and juvenile crime.

As background, the Mokelumne River supplies water to 1.4M people. There was a need to look at the condition of the living environment. Forest projects were litigated, logging had almost stopped, and therefore nothing was happening on the forest.

The Me-Wuk Tribal Council said most of their members were unemployed and had health problems. Loggers said they were basically cutting firewood. Environmental groups were complaining about the decline of environmental health. Groups were blaming one another.

Story of CHIPS: The first mission of CHIPS was “Doing good with wood.” Later this turned into more complex statements. The triple bottom line approach was utilized – which is balance among environmental stewardship and benefit, renewed economy, and local community benefit. The originators began a non-profit through a grant from the National Forest Foundation. They purchased equipment and trained people to do work on the forest.

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They started with a premise that everything in the watershed needs to be important in order to do work without litigation. They also had a real need to break out of the silos within which they were operating. There is an issue with the condition of septic, as well as, contamination through drug production, and general deterioration of the condition of forests within the watershed.

For the Tribe, they need to get people working and they need transportation to get to work. Housing is an issue as many do not have permanent housing. Work ethic issues are also a challenge.

Mr. Wilensky said they received \$4M of grants to do forest restoration. They have MSAs across the landscape. They have brought the Stafford Act out of retirement which enables Native Americans to be employed when they are qualified to do so. They also have a grant for Tribal outreach work.

He continued, in the Sierra, if there is mission larger than us, there must be a mechanism to rebuild the economy and communities and keep young people here. Ultimately, this affects the watershed. There was little research that showed a real connection between the forest health and the health of the watershed. EBMUD received \$1.2M to develop the assessment tool that looked at the effect of an activity on the health of the Mokelumne River.

CHIPS and SNC formed the ACCG collaborative. The water interests are still skeptical of how forest health affects water quality. Mokelumne Avoided Cost Analysis (MACA) was commissioned. This looks at what the benefits are of taking certain proactive actions as compared to the cost of not doing anything and facing declining forest health and wildfire. Currently, there are water interests, Native American interests and forest interests working together. CHIPS is the fiscal agent and has 65 people working for them full-time, many of whom are Native Americans working on what was sacred land. They are working in both forests and in Yosemite National Park. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is being utilized through Native American work on the landscape.

There is literally \$200M per year going into the Sierras. There are now millions of tons of biomass being produced annually. The question is, how do you use this material and make sure it is not increasing the hazard of wildfire? Mr. Wilensky said if we don't figure out what to do with all this biomass, a worse situation is being created as there is nothing to do with it but to burn it.

Biochar, pellets for pellet stoves, biodiesel, posts and poles, and graphene are just some of the products of biomass utilization. R & D is busy looking into the uses for biomass. Businesses must develop products utilizing biomass while the economy is good. Grants and federal and state budgets can only be used for so long. Biomass production and utilization must become self-sustaining.

Q & A: A member asked how you change the subsidies from solar and wind to biomass. Mr. Wilensky said the SNC has been instrumental in helping with financing. Sierra Business Council has provided technical assistance and some research. Urban legislators have not gotten interested in utilizing biomass. Why not make an argument at the state level that if you are putting billions of dollars in fire prevention, how are you going to sustain this level of investment? Why not put some of the money into something that employs young people and is self-sustaining? He continued, only 3% of the CA population lives in the Sierras. It takes about \$20-24M to start a community-based biomass facility.

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A member asked what Senator McClintock has done to help. Mr. Wilensky said the senator's role has been as an advocate for maintaining the mills, fire prevention, and some restoration. He has not been an advocate for utilization of biomass. He is supporting a part of the whole.

5. Standing Items:

Prop One Submission – Ms. Mattos said the application for implementation is in and DWR asked for some clarifying information which has been submitted. DWR should be deciding in the coming weeks.

DAC Technical Assistance Grant – Ms. Mattos has been working with the MAC on the workplan for the disadvantaged community outreach survey through ATCAA. SI is estimating \$80,000 for this joint project. The WAC will work on draft survey questions during their next meeting.

It was announced all board members and board alternates need to turn in a FORM 700 with a wet signature.

Ms. Lott noted the YSS charter includes the triple bottom line Mr. Wilensky referred to in his presentation.

Ms. Lott gave a report on Members in Good Standing indicating all members are in good standing.

6. SI Draft Assessment Report:

Ms. Mattos reported the section of the report that contains the morning community workshop piece includes all the WAC recommended changes. In Chapter 5.0 of the utility section of the report, the introduction has been expanded. Some statistics have been added. The Pinecrest infrastructure section had been withdrawn. The Pinecone treatment plant should be Pinecrest. In the section that says Power Outage, SI reverted to only citing TUD. TUD can pump water with utilization of generators. SI added a Chapter 7 which are SI's recommendations based on the assessment.

Agreement: The WAC agreed Ms. Mattos should send back the report with the still unincorporated changes.

7. TUD Project Presentation Sierra Pines:

This was continued at the request of T.U.D.

8. SPIT Phase Two Proposal:

Ms. Mattos said this could include finishing modeling and ground truthing. It would include LIDAR data. The cost for this piece is \$9,750. The initial analysis with the addition of the development of zone concept would cost \$9,125. Adding a case study in Groveland, for example, with a stormwater project identification zone would be \$7,000. A hydrological analysis for the identified zone would cost \$8,250. A quantification of opportunity with drone flights would be \$13,500. The feasibility assessment would cost \$8,250 and integration in the stormwater watershed management would be \$7,000.

Mr. Trott and Ms. Dore Bietz said they believe the product so far is useful, but it can be made easier to use. The WAC members suggested using Twain Harte as the case study.

Agreement: Ms. Mattos will investigate funding from SNC and others.

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9. Discussion Regarding Moving JPA Meetings to A.M.:

Agreement: The WAC agreed to accommodating morning JPA meetings in the morning by shortening the WAC meeting for JPA months. This will be on the next board agenda.

10. Other Water News:

TUD finished their project with help from the Me-Wuk Band Fuels Crew and are submitting the final report to SNC.

Mr. Ringen went to Sacramento for a workshop by DWR on water use. He said they mapped all of CA and mapped irrigatable and non-irrigatable land. It will be up to the water purveyors to come up with water usage in these areas.

Ms. Bietz said the Tribe is hosting an October 24th workshop on DWR's Project Wet.

11. Wrap-Up and Adjournment:

Ms. Secada volunteered for March.

Next WAC and JPA Meetings:

The next WAC meeting is March 18, 2020. The next JPA meeting is March 18, 2020.

Submitted by:

Ms. Carolyn Lott

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Watershed Advisory Committee Members

Astrid Torres	Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency	Present
Joe Bors	ATCAA/Alternate	
	Calaveras County Water District	
Joel Metzger	CCWD/Alternate	
Tom Parrington	Central Sierra Audubon	Present
Tom Harrington	CSA/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	
	CSERC/Alternate	
Melissa Eads	City of Angels Camp	
Chris O'Flinn	CAC/Alternate	
Colette Such	City of Sonora	Present
	CC/Alternate	
Spencer Edwards	Groveland Community Services	
Pete Kampa	GCSD/Alternate	
Luis Melchor	GCSD/Alternate	
Rebecca Miller-Cripps	Jamestown Sanitary District	Present
Patti Ingalls	JSD/Alternate	
Cindy Secada	Murphys Sanitary District	Present

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Joseph Fontana	MSD/Alternate	
Brian Langley	MSD/Alternate	
Brian Barclay	Pinecrest Permittees Assoc.	Present
Tim Fisher	PPA/Alternate	
Dore Bietz	TB of Me-Wuk Indians	Present
Doug Roberson	TBMW/Alternate	
Vicki Stone	TBMW/Alternate	
Natalie Rizzi	Tuolumne County	Present
Denise Zitnik	TC/Alternate	
Kirk Ford	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Kevin Rice	Tuolumne Group Sierra Club	
	TGSC/Alternate	
Patrick Koepele	Tuolumne River Trust	
Seth Connolly	TRT/Alternate	Present
Lisa Westbrook	Tuolumne Utilities District	Present
Makayla Dillon	TUD/Alternate	
Ed Pattison	TUD/Alternate	
Tom Trott	Twain Harte Community Services District	Present
Robb Perry	THCSD/Alternate	
	U.S. Forest Service – Stanislaus National Forest	
Lucas Wilkinson	USFS/Alternate	
	USFS/Alternate	
Lori Karnes	Utica Water & Power Authority	Present
Raychel Nash	UWPA/Alternate	

IRWMA Staff

Name	Organization	Attendance
Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
Lindsay Mattos	TCRCD	Present

Other Interested Parties Present

Name	Organization
Steve Wilensky	CHIPS