

Friday, August 16, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.  
Governing Board Meeting  
Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority  
Mokelumne Watershed Headquarters, Valley Springs, CA 95252

**Summary Minutes**

**ROLL CALL**

Directors Terry Woodrow, Chair, Ed Gonzalez, Richard Farrington, Jack Garamendi, William Patterson, and Brian Oneto were present at roll call. Richard Blood arrived at 10:07 and Scott Ratterman arrived at 10:19. Also present were Executive Officer (EO) Richard Sykes, Administrative Officer (AO) Rob Alcott, Authority Secretary Lorna Barfield, Authority Treasurer David Glasser and 12 visitors (in person and via Zoom).

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**AUTHORITY BUSINESS**

**1. Regular Meeting Minutes of April 26, 2024.**

**Motion 18-24** to approve the meeting minutes of April 26, 2024, with modification to include the word ‘seconded’ in motion number 13-24, was made by Director Garamendi, seconded by Director Farrington, and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

**2. Treasurer’s Report – Second Quarter FY 2024**

**Motion 19-24** to accept the Treasurer’s Report for filing was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Gonzales, and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

\*Director Blood and Director Ratterman joined the meeting changing the voice vote to 8.

**3. Arbor and Birch Project Contract Awards**

Arbor and Birch are the second and third FPP – Phase 1 fuel reduction projects to be carried out by UMRWA. The 3,133-acre Arbor Project and the 1,604-acre Birch Project lie entirely within the Eldorado National Forest. For both projects, live and dead brush, dead trees, and live coniferous trees generally less than 10" diameter breast height will be treated mechanically and with hand treatments to reduce fuel loading which is contributing to increased wildfire severity and intensity.

Two Requests for Proposals were issued, one for Arbor with 3 Bid Items, and the other for Birch with 2 Bid Items. The Board was presented with the Selection Committee scores summarizing the nine responsive Arbor proposals and the eight responsive Birch proposals. Staff recommended the Board award four contracts, two for Arbor (Bid Item 1, and combined Bid Items 2 and 3), and two for Birch (Bid Items 1 and 2). The recommended General Services Agreements were included in the Supplemental August 16, 2024, Agenda Materials Packet.

**Motion 20-24** to approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign General Service Agreements with the treatment contractor firms: (1) 2C Land and Timber, for the Arbor Project (RFP 24-03, Bid Item 1, 883 acres) for a total not to exceed \$1,344,078, (2) GTS Forestry, for the Arbor Project (RFP 24-03, Bid Items 2 & 3, 2,250 acres) for a total not to

exceed \$3,542,699, (3) Redding Tree Growers, for the Birch Project (RFP 24-04, Bid Item 1, 1,118 acres) for a total not to exceed \$940,959, and (4) GTS Forestry, for the Birch Project (RFP 24-04, Bid Item 2, 486 acres) for a total not to exceed \$718,551 was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Garamendi, and carried by voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

#### **4. Forest Projects Plan - Phase 1 (FPP-1) Implementation Project**

Executive Officer Richard Sykes provided the Board with the Forest Projects Plan - Phase 1 (FPP-1) Implementation Report. This report presented a summary of activities, a year 1 review and discussed potential options to fund continuing progress on Phase 1 treatment projects, including the possibility of using excess grant funding from the Arbor and Birch awards to treat additional FPP-1 acres, or perhaps apply those dollars to the Mokelumne Amador Calaveras Forest Health and Resilience Project (formerly FPP Phase 2).

The EO also discussed an amendment to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) \$6.8M grant application. UMRWA staff were informed that state budget limitations would impair WCB grant funding programs and advised the Authority to submit a revised application for reduced funding. UMRWA's grant proposal was amended to request \$4M for a smaller Cedar Project which will be considered by the WCB Board in November 2024.

This FPP-1 report presented an implementation table displaying the three active treatment projects, key project characteristics being implemented and the three FPP-1 projects next in line. The report concluded with a table titled 'UMRWA Forest Project Grants' which summarized awarded forest project grants and pending applications.

#### **5. Forest Health Program Funding Approaches**

The costs to achieve the primary goals of the Forest Health Program are in the range of \$150M. This does not include the cost of prescribed fire, mechanical treatment or other work for long-term maintenance of this landscape. UMRWA has been very fortunate to receive substantial grants for the implementation of Phase 1, however, long-term stable funding is needed for UMRWA's Forest Health Program.

The Board discussed the need for additional funding to continue UMRWA's project treatment goals of 4,000 acres per year. In addition to securing more federal funding and perhaps expanding funds available through the Blue Forest, Forest Resilience Bond, several types of watershed protection fees were discussed. Executive Officer Richard Sykes shared that Proposition 4, if passed, could also be a new source of state funding for these programs.

Director Farrington requested that a proposal for a Watershed Protection Fee to Mokelumne water use customers to safeguard drinking water quality be considered on a future agenda. Director Farrington suggested creating a capital fund and \$0.20 per month per customer would be reasonable fee which would not pose a significant financial burden on water users and yet collect an amount that would meaningfully contribute to forest health funding. The EO stated that he would work with member agency staff to get input and return with a proposal.

#### **6. MAC Forest Health and Resilience (formerly FPP-2) Plan Report**

Over the past two years, significant progress has been made toward completing the FPP – Phase 2 Plan and associated NEPA/CEQA process. The EO summarized several key program elements, including a request by USFS officials in Washington D.C. to rename

the FPP-2 planning effort to the Mokelumne Amador Calaveras (MAC) Forest Health and Resilience Project. In addition to UMRWA contributions, the Authority has been successful in securing more than \$1.2M in grants to fund staff and costs for developing the plan. The current schedule anticipates plan completion in the first half of 2026.

The EO shared that the MAC Forest Health and Resilience Project Notice of Intent (NOI) is currently under review in Washington D.C and is expected to be published in the Federal Register on September 6. A more thorough presentation on the plan development will be presented at the next Board meeting on October 4, 2024.

#### **7. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget**

**Motion 21-24** to approve the FY 2025 UMRWA budget and authorize staff to transmit invoices to Member Agencies requesting payment of FY 2025 assessments by October 31, 2024, was made by Director Gonzales, seconded by Director Blood and carried by voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

#### **8. Consulting Agreements for UMRWA Support Personnel**

The recommended two-year agreements with Richard Sykes and Rob Alcott provide for the continuation of Executive Officer and Administrative Officer services for the two-year period coinciding with the Authority's next two fiscal years beginning October 1, 2024. The two agreements were provided to the Board for review and approval. Also provided to the Board was the recommended consulting services agreement with Landmark Environmental Inc. (LEI) to continue LEI's professional and administrative support to UMRWA's forestry program for another two years.

**Motion 22-24** to (1) Approve an agreement with Richard Sykes to serve as the Authority's Executive Officer for the period October 1, 2024 through October 31, 2026; and authorize the Board Chair to sign the agreement, (2) Approve an agreement with Rob Alcott to serve as Authority Administrative Officer for the period October 1, 2024 through October 31, 2026; and authorize the Executive Officer to sign the agreement, (3) Approve the consulting services agreement with Landmark Environmental Inc. to provide support services for the period October 1, 2024 through October 31, 2026 and authorize the Executive Officer to sign the agreement was made by Director Oneto, seconded by Director Blood and carried by voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

#### **9. Status of SWRCB Voluntary Agreements to Implement the Bay Delta Plan**

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is considering voluntary agreements to update the Bay-Delta Plan to improve conditions for native fish and other beneficial uses of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, their tributaries, and the Delta. Michael Tognolini, EBMUD's Director of Water and Natural Resources attended the meeting and presented the Board with an update that included the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program.

#### **10. Biennial Review Conflict of Interest Code**

The biennial review of UMRWA's adopted Conflict-of-Interest Code indicates no amendment is necessary.

**Motion 23-24** to Authorize the Authority Secretary to file the Biennial Notice with the Fair Political Practices Commission indicating no amendment to the UMRWA Conflict-of-Interest Code is required, was made by Director Garamendi, seconded by Director Farrington and carried by voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

**11. Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA) – Possible UMRWA Membership**

Justin Caporusso, MCWRA’s Executive Officer, presented the potential benefits of membership to UMRWA at the board meeting. Director Farrington showed support for a membership with MCWRA and recommended action. Director Gonzales would like more information and Director Patterson would like to discuss this with the EBMUD Board. The EO will evaluate benefits and costs, consult with member agencies, and provide a recommendation regarding membership for Board discussion and consideration at the next UMRWA meeting.

**12. Legislative Issues Update**

The Executive Officer provided information regarding state bills of interest. Having the most important impact to UMRWA, if passed, is *SB 867 (on the ballot in November as Proposition 4) (Allen): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024*. This bill authorizes \$3.8B for drought, flood and water resilience programs, and \$1.5B for forest resilience and wildfire risk prevention programs.

Several other bills having potential to support UMRWA’s Forest Health Program if passed were discussed but the EO did not feel any letters of support would be influential at this time. The EO noted that MCWRA has endorsed several of the bills that were presented.

**Board Member Comments:**

Director Blood requested an update at the October 4 meeting on the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program voluntary agreement after the State Water Board draft program is released in September.

**Executive Officer Comments:**

The EO reminded the Board that the October 4 meeting will be held the morning of the Pardee BBQ and thanked staff for their work and support on the RFPs and board meeting facilitation.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Director Woodrow adjourned the meeting at 12:41 p.m. The next regular meeting will be held on October 4, 2024, at the Pardee Lodge, Pardee Center.

**SUBMITTED BY:**



Lorna Barfield, Authority Secretary



Terry Woodrow, Chair of the Board  
APPROVED: October 4, 2024