

Friday, January 23, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.  
Governing Board Meeting  
Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority  
Pardee Center, Valley Springs, CA 95252

**Summary Minutes**

**ROLL CALL**

Directors Terry Woodrow, Chair, Jeff Davidson, Vice Chair, Richard Farrington, Autumn Andahl, Marina Brand, and Richard Blood, were present at roll call. Director Smith arrived during agenda item 5. Also present were Executive Officer (EO) Richard Sykes, Authority Council Greg Gillott, Authority Treasurer David Glasser, Authority Secretary Lorna Barfield, and 18 visitors in person and attending via Zoom.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**AUTHORITY BUSINESS**

**1. Regular Meeting Minutes of October 3, 2025**

**Motion 01-26** to approve the meeting minutes of October 3, 2025, was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Farrington, and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

**2. Treasurer’s Report - 4th Quarter FY 2025 and Budget Reserve Policy**

The Board was presented with the Treasurer’s Report for the 4th Quarter of fiscal year 2025, which ended September 30, 2025, and a recommended change to the UMRWA Budget Reserve Policy to improve reserve fund administration. Given UMRWA’s Reserve fund balance of \$1.3M, and the diminished risk for unforeseen cash flow contingencies, it was recommended that the Budget Reserve Policy be simplified to provide a minimum reserve amount of \$500,000 and to engage the Board during the annual budget process regarding the appropriate use of any surplus funds.

**Motion 02-26** to accept the Treasurer’s Report for filing and approve the revised Budget Reserve Policy to address recent changes in annual indirect fee revenues was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Farrington, and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

**3. Phase 1 - Forest Projects Plan Implementation Report**

Executive Officer Richard Sykes shared the Phase 1 Implementation Report which included two general services agreements recommended for Board approval. The Thompson Land Management agreement will execute prescribed treatments in the 614-acre Cedar North Project, and a GTS Forestry agreement will accomplish fuels treatments to the 744-acre Cedar South Project. Both projects are fully funded by Cal Fire grant agreement #3.

The EO also presented two consulting services agreements for Board approval including an agreement with Pyramid Botanical Consultants for botanical services required for seven prioritized treatment projects and an agreement with Stewardship West to

participate in managing the Dogwood project contractor. Both agreements will be paid by grants awarded to UMRWA.

Also presented was a brief update on the progress being made to fully implement the Phase 1 - Forest Projects Plan (FPP-1) program, including recent developments to enhance the financial potential of the Mokelumne FRB (Forest Resilience Bond). Director Farrington discussed the benefits and outcomes of the FPP-1 program. He noted Amador Water Agency's \$10,000 contribution to the FRB, and the matched funding opportunity provided by EBMUD. He suggested that other member agencies consider contributions to FRB to take advantage of that match.

The Executive Officer shared photos of the recent Beaver Fire, which reached the Arbor Project area. In areas where mastication had been completed, the fire either extinguished on its own or required minimal effort to control, highlighting the significant impact of the fuels reduction work.

The Board emphasized the importance of highlighting UMRWA's project successes and encouraged staff to communicate achievements with the public. The discussion included strategies such as using photos, press releases, and newspaper articles. The Executive Officer noted that a few press releases are issued annually. Craig Baracco from Foothill Conservancy offered to feature UMRWA in their newsletters and Director Blood inquired about improving the UMRWA website and mailing lists to enhance communication.

*\*Copies of the general services agreements with Thompson Land Management, GTS Forestry, Pyramid Botanical Consultants and Stewardship West were included in the Supplemental Materials Packet.*

**Motion 03-26** to (1) approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign a General Services Agreement in the amount of \$1,394,073 with Thompson Land Management to perform the Cedar North fuels treatment project (2) approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign a General Services Agreement in the amount of \$1,346,510 with GTS Forestry to perform the Cedar South fuels treatment project (3) approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign a Consulting Services Agreement with Pyramid Botanical Consultants, Inc. in the amount of \$179,157 for botanical surveys of the Dogwood (Central, South, North, and West), Amador Aspen Restoration, Grove and Hemlock Projects and (4) approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign a Consulting Services Agreement in the amount of \$242,108 with Stewardship West for Dogwood Project Implementation Support was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Blood, and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

#### **4. Phase 2 - MAC Forest Health and Resilience Project Report**

The EO provided the Board with a summary of the Mokelumne Amador Calaveras Forest Health and Resilience Project (MAC Project) status and presented the basis for the recommended Seventh Amendment to the Stantec agreement.

##### MAC Forest Project Status:

The MAC project is nearing completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The project spans approximately 250,000 acres across Stanislaus and Eldorado National Forest lands and includes proposed actions, including approximately 67,000

acres of forest thinning, 50,000 acres of fuels reduction, and 22,000 acres of fuel breaks and prescribed fire.

The DEIS is expected to be finalized by February 2026, followed by a streamlined 14-day public review period. Forest Service decisions are anticipated in spring 2026. UMRWA will also begin pre-implementation bird surveys in 2026–2027 to enable thinning work starting in 2028.

#### Stantec – Seventh Amendment:

The Stantec contract has been funded through several grants and amended as needed to complete the environmental documentation when funding is available. An additional \$150,000 is needed to finish up the Draft EIS and support preparation of the Final EIS once the public comments are received. This funding is available and identified in the Cal Fire #3 Grant Agreement. The contract termination date will also be extended from March 31, 2026, to December 31, 2026.

*\*A copy of the recommended Seventh Amendment to the Stantec agreement was included in the Agenda Packet.*

Director Farrington inquired about the two-year bird survey requirement. The EO shared that timber harvesting cannot proceed until the surveys are completed. The Forest Service currently lacks the resources to conduct this work and has requested UMRWA's support. An RFQ has been issued to solicit firms for the surveys. The Executive Officer informed the Board that he may need to execute a contract within his delegated authority before the April Board meeting.

Katherine Evatt encouraged UMRWA member agencies to engage with congressional representatives and senators to advocate for increased Forest Service funding, noting that a lack of funding has delayed forest management work for decades.

**Motion 04-26** to approve the Seventh Amendment to the Consulting Services Agreement with Stantec to increase the maximum cost ceiling by \$150,000 and extend the term from March 31, 2026, until December 31, 2026, and authorize the Executive Officer to sign was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Farrington, and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

## **5. Report on Mokelumne Pumped Storage Project**

The EO presented the Board with an update on the Mokelumne Pumped Storage Project being developed by GreenGenStorage LLC. The project aims to provide 400 MW of renewable electric energy through pumped storage hydroelectric generation, utilizing tunnels between Lower Bear River Reservoir and Salt Springs Reservoir. Water will be pumped during periods of excess grid power and released to generate electricity during high-demand periods.

The project is currently in the permitting phase with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the State Water Resources Control Board with an estimated cost of \$1.8 billion. Key benefits include significant renewable energy capacity, hundreds of construction jobs, up to 40 permanent jobs, and tax revenue for Amador and Calaveras Counties.

*\*Director Smith joined the meeting at 10:39.*

Director Farrington asked about mitigation measures the company is proposing to reduce fire threat during construction, as the Power Fire was started by contractors in this same area, and asked if UMRWA can propose mitigation measures.

Craig Baracco, Executive Director of Foothill Conservancy, emphasized the immense scale of the proposed project, noting it would double the capacity of all existing Mokelumne River hydropower combined. He explained that the current road infrastructure cannot support the volume of material and equipment required, and existing power transmission lines would need replacement with high-capacity transmission lines. Craig recommended that UMRWA submit written comments to FERC addressing concerns about one-way traffic restrictions and fire mitigation, warning that the project would have severe impacts on recreation.

Katherine Evatt added that there are no water rights to support the proposed transfer and highlighted significant long-term impacts, including campground closures, restricted emergency access, extended construction timelines, and major infrastructure work in the Wild and Scenic Mokelumne watershed. She also noted potential harm to archaeological sites, trail closures, and changes to reservoir elevations, urging UMRWA to approach the project with caution.

Michelle Workman shared that East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) may submit a future comment letter to FERC and will review the matter internally. The Executive Officer will draft a paragraph regarding concerns over fire risk and response, ingress/egress during construction in case of fire, and arch sites and share with EBMUD (and copy the UMRWA board) for possible inclusion with their comments. The EO will continue to update the board on the project.

Directors Farrington and Andahl mentioned attending a field trip with Senator Alvarado-Gil, who invited the submission of comments on the project. The Board also discussed contacting Valerie Spake, the Senator's District Representative, for further engagement. The EO noted he has been in touch with Valerie Spake and will continue to engage with her regarding this topic in the future.

There was no recommended action at this time.

## **6. Legislative Issues Update**

The EO had no items to report.

Director Farrington requested the Executive Officer review these items and suggested UMRWA potentially support:

AB 35, as amended, Alvarez. Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024: Administrative Procedure Act: exemption: program guidelines and selection criteria.

Senate Bill 3609, Padilla, and H.R. 582, Huffman, Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act

## **Board Member Comments:**

None

**Executive Officer (EO) Comments:**

The EO reminded Board Members of the upcoming Form 700 filing requirements.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Director Woodrow adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m. The next regular meeting will be held on April 24, 2026, at McLean Hall, Pardee Center, Valley Springs.

**SUBMITTED BY:**



\_\_\_\_\_  
Lorna Barfield, Authority Secretary



\_\_\_\_\_  
Terry Woodrow, Chair of the Board  
APPROVED: April 24, 2026