Friday, April 24, 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, Brian Oneto, Joey Smith and Garrett Hesser (for Richard Blood who was also present but not in a voting position), were present at roll call. Also present were Executive Officer (EO) Richard Sykes, Authority Council Greg Gillott, Authority Treasurer David Glasser, Authority Secretary Lorna Barfield, MAC Project Manager Megan Layhee and 15 other visitors in person and attending via Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

AUTHORITY BUSINESS

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of January 23, 2026

Motion 05-26 to approve the meeting minutes of January 23, 2026, was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Smith, and carried by a voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

2. Treasurer's Report – 1st Quarter FY 2026

Motion 06-26 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 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

3. Phase 1 - Forest Projects Plan Implementation Report

Executive Officer Richard Sykes presented the Phase 1 Implementation Report which included three general services agreements for the Dogwood North and Central projects, a general services agreement with the Buena Vista Rancheria, and two Blue Forest grants and services agreements recommended for Board approval. The EO described UMRWA's efforts to obtain bids from local contractors but noted that none of the three the recommended general services awards to commercial contractors are for local firms. The EO also shared that the Amador Water Agency (AWA) recently approved a $10,000 contribution to the Mokelumne Forest Resilience Bond (FRB), subject to a full match by East Bay Municipal Utility District and that UMRWA staff participated in the CA Wildfire Task Force's March regional meeting in Jamestown by presenting and hosting a tour. The report concluded with an update on the progress being made to fully implement the FPP – Phase 1 program, including an outlook on funding and Table 1 – FPP Phase I Projects Contracted to Date.

During discussions of the general services agreements presented for award, Director Oneto requested that he receive all communications that the EO had with Blue Forest in development of the two Grant and Services agreements. The EO reviewed efforts since 2022 to maximize opportunities and encourage local contractor participation in UMRWA's forest health work. Director Farrington asked about the higher Buena Vista

Rancheria contract rate and the EO explained tribal government-to-government contracts are exempt from bidding and are encouraged by the State.

The EO noted that Agenda Item 7 will consider changes to UMRWA's Procurement Policy to increase the local contractor preference, but he recommended that the Board approve the recommended contracts which were solicited, reviewed and scored based on the existing Procurement Policy. Authority Counsel stated that not awarding contracts based on the Procurement Policy in place during the time of bid solicitation could lead to a protest or challenge a board decision. The Board agreed to move forward with current recommended contracts and revisit the procurement policy as part of Agenda Item 7 later in the meeting.

Public comment: John Heisnbuttle objected to awarding contracts to non-local firms, noting that two local bidders were below the estimated cost for this work. He also noted the information provided in the meeting agenda package that less than $1M of $25M in in forest health grant funds went to local contractors. He argued UMRWA should prioritize local economic benefits per the UMRWA's Joint Powers Agreement.

Director Farrington noted Amador Water Agency's $10k contribution (matched by EBMUD) and urged others to participate before the June 30 deadline. Directors Davidson, Oneto, and Hesser will brief their boards.

**Copies of the General Services Agreements with Thompson Land Management, VM West, GTS Forestry, Buena Vista Rancheria and Grants and Services Agreements with Blue Forest Conservation were included in the Supplemental Materials Packet.*

1) **Motion 07-26** to (1) approve and authorize the Executive Officer (EO) to sign a General Services Agreement in the amount of $1,615,565 with Thompson Land Management (TLM) to perform the Dogwood North fuels treatment projects (bid items 1 and 2), (2) approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign a General Services Agreement in the amount of $581,427 with VM West to perform the Dogwood Central fuels treatment project (bid item 3), (3) approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign a General Services Agreement with GTS Forestry in the amount of $367,225 to perform the Dogwood Central fuels treatment project (bid item 4), (4) approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign a General Services Agreement with the Buena Vista Rancheria (BVR) in the amount of $400,000 to perform fuels reduction treatments to approximately 175 acres in the Birch BVR-1 Project, and authorize the EO to issue a change order to BVR for an additional amount up to 30% of the agreement amount to treat additional project acres (5) approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign two Grant and Services Agreements with Blue Forest Conservation in the amounts of $1,143,708 for completed Arbor, Birch and Hwy 88 East Project treatments, and $2,007,840 for to-be-completed Dogwood Project treatments was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Farrington, and carried by voice vote: Yea 7 – Nay 1 (Oneto) – Abstain 0.

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

UMRWA Project Manager/MAC (Megan Layhee) 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 increase to the Consulting Services Agreement for avian surveys in the Eldorado and Stanislaus National Forests.

MAC Forest Project Status:

The USFS is taking the lead in responding to public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and completing the Final EIS. Eldorado NF and Stanislaus NF project decisions are expected to be signed in April or May 2026 and once signed, UMRWA will begin CEQA compliance, anticipated to be completed by Summer 2026. The UMRWA MAC Implementation Work Plan (a 10-year plan identifying and sequencing priority treatment areas and future maintenance, including FPP-1 areas) is anticipated to be developed by Fall 2026.

The ENF and SNF each requested that UMRWA initiate required avian surveys which must precede any thinning and fuels treatment work authorized under the MAC EIS. UMRWA staff conducted a Request for Qualifications process and established a ranked list of best qualified consulting firms. The EO signed an agreement with Summit West Environmental to initiate the surveys and the Board's approval of the additional $597,447 was requested to compensate SWCA for completion of the avian survey tasks. Funding for this work is fully provided by the USFS through existing UMRWA Stewardship Agreements.

Several board members expressed concern that the required two years of avian surveys will delay MAC project implementation and increase costs. The EO noted that these are required but there is an option for one-year surveys that could be considered by the two forests. The Board discussed potential advocacy efforts regarding the survey requirements, including agency members sending letters to Congress and adding this topic to future meetings with congressional representatives.

**A copy of the Summit West Environmental agreement was included in the Supplemental Materials Packet.*

Motion 08-26 to (1) approve a $597,447 increase to the March 12, 2026 Summit West Environmental, Inc. Consulting Services Agreement for avian surveys in the Eldorado and Stanislaus National Forests and (2) approve the ranked list of best qualified avian survey consulting firms was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Farrington, and carried by a voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

5. Amador Aspen Restoration Project Approval

The EO shared that UMRWA has been overseeing the planning, design, and permitting of the Amador Aspen Restoration Project, which will restore five clusters of aspen stands, totaling up to 604 acres. The Aspen Restoration Project is categorically exempt from CEQA because it involves minor fuel reduction and vegetation management activities, including prescribed fire applications, with no expansion of use and no removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

Motion 09-26 to (1) approve the Amador Aspen Restoration Project and (2) confirm staff's determination that the Aspen Restoration Project is exempt from CEQA and authorize staff to file a Notice of Exemption with the CA Office of Planning and Research and Amador County, El Dorado County and Calaveras County Clerks, and (3) authorize staff to pursue grants for implementation treatments was made by Director Davidson, by Director Hesser, and carried by voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

6. Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

The EO shared the proposed FY 2027 budget information with notable new items, including Authority-funded treatments, reflecting the increased capacity required by UMRWA's forest health program. The total member-supported portion of the proposed budget was $370,810, an $8,500 increase over the current fiscal year budget. Also presented were the in-kind Member contributions and a $158,500 allocation of projected FY 2026 indirect revenues. Program work activities planned for FY 2027, and the changes in recommended funding over the current budget amounts were summarized.

Director Farrington proposed that the board create an Ad Hoc Committee to work with staff on MAC implementation funding. After discussion, the board agreed that Directors Oneto and Farrington would receive regular updates on the MAC implementation plan progress including the funding strategy.

Motion 10-26 to endorse the proposed FY 2027 UMRWA budget and authorize staff to transmit the proposed budget to Member Agencies for review and comment was made by Director Oneto, seconded by Director Andhal, and carried by a voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

7. Procurement Policy Amendment

The EO presented the Board with a recommendation to amend the UMRWA's Procurement Policy and Procedure, authorizing a two-step contracting process and to consider increasing the preference applied to the scoring evaluation for Local Service Providers from 5% to 8%.

The Board discussed the possibilities of local and small business preferences and alternative approaches. UMRWA's procurement policies are based on the laws of its member agencies, which currently offer limited flexibility for small and local business categories. Authority Counsel shared the complexity of this matter and recommended leaving it within the proposed percentage increase. The EO reviewed the history of actions taken to try to support local businesses and reaffirmed that UMRWA staff share the goal of the Board to support local contractors and are working to find new ways to accommodate.

Public Comment: John Heisnbuttle recommended UMRWA look hard at its procurement policies and stated this is more complicated than the percentage rate.

Motion 11-26 to (1) approve the amended Procurement Policy and Procedure (Policy 4) to authorize the practice of a two-step contracting process and to change the five percent local preference percentage to eight percent with a maximum benefit cap of $250,000, and (2) continue working on the procurement policy with the intention of supporting local contractors was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Smith, and carried by a voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

8. Substitute Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Project

The Authority was notified in December 2025 that the Calaveras Public Utility District could not complete the Jeff Davis Water Treatment Plant Backwash Recycle Project with the grant funding available. CPUD has proposed a replacement project, the Rich Gulch Waterline Replacement Project, which will replace a failing segment of the primary potable water transmission line located in the Rich Gulch area. CPUD Director Hesser provided a brief summary of CPUD's projects and encouraged adoption of the resolution.

Motion 12-26 to adopt Resolution No. 2026-01 requesting the substitution of the Rich Gulch Waterline Replacement Project for funding under the CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) IRWM grant agreement number 4600014982 and authorize the Executive Officer, or designee, to execute the DWR grant agreement amendment, and perform any and all work required to fulfill the grant requirements was made by Director Farrinton, seconded by Director Oneto, and carried by voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

9. Audited Financials – FY 2025 and FY 2024

East Bay Municipal Utility District, whose Controller serves as the Authority's Treasurer, maintains the Authority's financial records. The Authority's financial records for the years ending September 30, 2025 and 2024 have been audited by the independent accounting firm Lance, Soll & Lunghard, LLP. This year's audit was presented in the document titled Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority Basic Financial Statements - Fiscal Years Ending September 30, 2025 and 2024.

Authority Controller David Glasser shared that an RFP has been processed, and a new auditor will be used for the next audit session.

**A copy of the Basic Financial Statements report was included in the Supplemental Materials Packet.*

Motion 13-26 to accept the Financial Statements for the years ending September 30, 2025, and 2024 as submitted was made by Director Garamendi, seconded by Director Hesser and carried by a voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

Legislative Issues Update

The EO's report included brief summaries of three bills including AB 35, Alvarez, which provides an administrative fix to allow Proposition 4 (2024) grant programs to fully proceed, and HR 582 and SB 3609 with are identical House of Representatives and Senate bills titled the *Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act.*

Board Member Comments:

Director Andahl thanked staff for the CA Wildfire Task Force field tour on March 20.

Executive Officer (EO) Comments:

The EO announced that Megan Layhee will assume the role of Administrative Officer in FY27, with Rob Alcott transitioning to a Planning Manager position. He reminded the Board of the upcoming Amador County Community Wildfire Protection Plan tour at the end of the month and reported that Cal Fire is conducting an audit of the Dogwood project, with staff beginning support work in May. Cal Fire also plans to produce promotional videos showcasing the forest health program along the Highway 88 corridor.

ADJOURNMENT: Director Woodrow adjourned the meeting at 12:14 a.m. The next regular meeting will be held on July 24, 2026, at McLean Hall, Pardee Center, Valley Springs.

SUBMITTED BY:

Lorna Barfield, Authority Secretary

Terry Woodrow, Chair of the Board
APPROVED: July 24, 2026