

# Russian River Watershed Association Technical Working Group



## General Roles and Responsibilities

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The general purpose of the Technical Working Group (the “TWG”) is to advise the Russian River Watershed Association (the “RRWA”) Board of Directors (the “RRWA Board”) on partnerships across political boundaries that promote the ecological vitality of the Russian River watershed, develop and implement cooperative restoration and protection efforts throughout the watershed, and promote a regional alliance that supplements local government programs in accordance with the RRWA Memorandum of Understanding, as amended from time to time. The core functions of the TWG are to provide member agency perspectives and collaborative participation in the RRWA and apply available expertise and resources to magnify the value and reach of the regional initiatives. The TWG works with the RRWA Executive Director to implement active projects and make recommendations, as needed or requested, that the RRWA Board considers in its decision-making.

The TWG may review or provide recommendations to the RRWA Board on matters that directly relate to specific projects or programs undertaken to achieve clean water, habitat restoration and watershed enhancement. The TWG cannot compel the RRWA Board or the Executive Director to act on its recommendations or feedback as it serves in an advisory capacity. TWG requests for consideration of matters by the RRWA Board may be brought forward by one or more RRWA Board members to the RRWA Board Chair.

The TWG generally conducts the following to support implementation of RRWA tasks:

- Actively participate in regional partnership projects that cross political boundaries and provide benefits to member agencies located in the Russian River watershed;
- Promote awareness, engagement and stewardship of Russian River watershed resources;
- Provide opportunities for other partner agencies to participate in RRWA projects and initiatives, and leverage RRWA’s regional foundation to further projects that enhance clean water, restore habitat and elevate public outreach and engagement;
- Manage programs that reduce waste and other unsustainable footprints;
- Educate on global, regional and local issues that affect Russian River communities;
- Assist and advise on the development of the annual RRWA work plan;
- Develop and maintain appropriate technical and reporting standards, including best management practices, data management and reporting;
- Participate in coordinated monitoring programs;
- Support implementation of watershed-wide coordination activities consistent with RRWA objectives and the adopted work plan;
- Support, and if appropriate, participate in coordinating and partnering on competitive grant funding proposals;
- Participate in community outreach projects and initiatives;

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- Advocate on behalf of the RRWA and member agencies; and
- Advise the Executive Director in response to RRWA Board inquiries and requests.

The TWG provides input as tasks and programs progress and assists with identifying potential cost saving measures for approved projects. The TWG is not involved in RRWA's day-to-day operations, such as personnel staffing or subcontracting, unless requested by the RRWA Board.

All meetings of the TWG are open to the public. The RRWA will announce meetings on its website and through its regular communication channels. TWG meetings are not subject to the Brown Act. However, all TWG meetings provide for public comment in accordance with the Brown Act, including noticing, non-agenda public comment and public comment on individual agenda items. Speakers will generally be limited to two (2) minutes, but time may be adjusted, at the discretion of the chair of the meeting, based upon meeting circumstances. As needed, time limits may be placed on public comments to ensure the TWG is reasonably able to address all agenda items during the course of the meeting. Special and emergency meetings need not provide for non-agenda public comment, but such comment may be allowed in the TWG's discretion.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The role and responsibility of the TWG is to solicit and incorporate community and member agency interests into recommendations on RRWA programs and tasks for the RRWA Board to consider in its decision-making process.

TWG members ("TWG Members") reflect the diverse interests of local public agencies and watershed-wide residents. The criteria for TWG Members are to:

- Serve as a strong and effective advocate for the member agency represented;
- Work collaboratively with each other;
- Commit time needed for ongoing discussions; and
- Collectively reflect upon diversity of interests of local public agencies and residents within the watershed.

As part of membership, TWG Members agree to:

- Arrive at each meeting fully prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda. Preparation may include reviewing meeting summaries, technical information, and draft documents distributed in advance of each meeting.
- Present their agency members' views on the issues being discussed and be willing to engage in respectful and constructive dialogue with other members of the group.

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- Develop a problem-solving approach in which they consider the interests and viewpoints of all group members, in addition to their own.
- Keep their constituencies informed about the deliberations and actively seek their member agency's input.

### Executive Director

The RRWA Executive Director shall be responsible for the following:

- Maintain a current roster of TWG Members.
- Work with RRWA Board to fill TWG vacancies, as needed.
- Prepare agendas, facilitate and document TWG meetings.
- Coordinate subcommittee members and actions.
- Provide notice of all meetings in accordance with the Brown Act.
- Staff all meetings, record minutes and develop and distribute meeting summaries.
- Work with the TWG to develop a draft annual workplan and schedule for TWG meetings.
- Implement the workplan and report on the status of projects being implemented.
- Facilitate the process of incorporating TWG recommendations into RRWA Board packets.
- Managing RRWA support staff.

### Decision-Making

To inform RRWA Board decision-making, the Executive Director will provide written and/or verbal recommendations from TWG meeting summaries that reflect the outcome of TWG recommendations or decisions. The recommendations will attempt to reflect all of the opinions of TWG Members and will identify areas of agreement and disagreement. The RRWA Board will consider TWG recommendations when making decisions; however, the RRWA Board shall be the final arbiter in its sole discretion.

The TWG will strive for consensus (agreement among all TWG Members) in all of its decision-making. Working toward consensus is a fundamental principle. Consensus means that all TWG Members either fully support or can live with a recommendation. In reaching consensus, some TWG Members may strongly endorse a particular proposal while others may accept it as "workable." Others may be only able to "live with it." Still others may choose to "stand aside" by verbally noting a disagreement yet allowing all other members of the group to reach a consensus without them if the recommendation does not affect them or compromise their interests. Any of these actions constitutes consensus.

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Any TWG Member(s) that disagree with a recommendation must provide an alternative that attempts to meet his or her interests while also meeting the interests of other TWG Members. The TWG will strive for consensus but shall not limit itself to strict unanimous consensus if 100% agreement among all participants cannot be reached after all interests and options have been thoroughly identified, explored, and discussed. Making recommendations to the RRWA Board without a consensus shall not be undertaken lightly by TWG. When unable to reach unanimous consensus on advice or recommendations, the Executive Director will outline the areas in which TWG Members do not agree, providing some explanation of both majority and minority viewpoints in his recommendation reports that inform RRWA Board decision-making. When outlining areas in which the TWG Members do not unanimously agree, numbers of votes on any items will also be clearly recorded and presented to the RRWA Board.

In order to hold a meeting and conduct business (e.g. make and advance a recommendation to the RRWA Board), a quorum of the TWG Members must be present. A simple majority of the total number of filled TWG Member seats constitutes a quorum.

From time to time, TWG Members may be unable to attend TWG meetings. In order to continue to run efficient meetings and make recommendations or decisions in a timely manner, each TWG Member may choose to submit a proxy to weigh in on recommendations or decisions that are noticed on the agenda.

### Subcommittees

The TWG can form subcommittees or workgroups as needed to assist with its work advising the RRWA Board. Subcommittee composition should be representative of member agency interests. Subcommittees will develop proposals or recommendations for full TWG consideration.

### Membership

Composition of the TWG is intended to reflect the RRWA member agencies. Established by the RRWA Board, the TWG currently consists of eleven (11) core TWG Members that represent the following member agencies:

- City of Cloverdale
- City of Cotati
- City of Healdsburg
- City of Rohnert Park
- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Sebastopol
- City of Ukiah
- County of Mendocino
- County of Sonoma

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- Sonoma Water
- Town of Windsor

TWG Members may not serve concurrently on the RRWA Board.

TWG Members must work within or represent a member agency with a presence in the Russian River watershed.

### Selection and Appointment Process

RRWA member agencies make appointments to the TWG in accordance with the member terms, conditions, and rules outlined below.

### Term

Once a TWG Member is appointed, the term of being a TWG Member shall not expire automatically and shall continue until the TWG Member resigns or the appointing member agency removes or replaces the TWG Member from his or her appointment to the TWG. If a vacancy occurs for a TWG seat, the appointing member agency shall fill the vacancy.

### Process Agreements and Ground Rules

To conduct a successful collaborative process, the Executive Director and all TWG Members will work together to create a constructive and problem-solving environment. To this end, all TWG Members agree to the following process agreements which the TWG will use, and to the ground rules that will guide individual and group behavior.

### Process Agreements

- **All TWG Members agree to negotiate in good faith.** All participants in TWG meetings agree to participate in decision making, to act in good faith in all aspects of this effort and to communicate their interests during meetings. Good faith also requires that TWG Members not make commitments they do not intend to fulfil, and to act consistently in TWG meetings and other forums where TWG related issues are discussed.
- **All TWG Members agree to address the issues and concerns of TWG participants.** All individuals who join the TWG will do so because they have an interest, via their appointing member agencies, in the issues addressed by the TWG. For the TWG to be successful, all the TWG Members agree to validate the issues and concerns of the other TWG Members and to strive to reach an agreement that takes all the issues into consideration. Disagreements will be viewed as problems to be solved, rather than battles to be won.
- **All TWG Members agree to inform and seek input from their constituents about the outcome of the TWG's facilitated discussions.** To the extent possible, scheduling of TWG meetings shall allow for TWG Members to inform and seek input from their constituents, advisors, and other stakeholders regarding TWG facilitated discussions.

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- **All TWG Members agree that other TWG Members can meet with other organizational or interest group members.** TWG Members may find it helpful to meet with other organizations or interest group members and to consult with constituents outside of TWG meetings so the TWG Member is better able to communicate community concerns on the issues at hand.
- **All TWG Members agree to attend all TWG meetings to the extent possible.** Continuity of the conversations and building trust are critical to the success of the TWG. Members are encouraged to turn off cell phones and focus on the issues being discussed at TWG Meetings. The Executive Director will coordinate TWG meeting schedules.

### Ground Rules

- **Use Common Conversational Courtesy.** Treat each other with mutual respect as you discuss and deliberate issues.
- **All Ideas and Points of View Have Value.** All ideas have value in this setting. We are looking for innovative ideas. The goal is to achieve understanding. Simply listen, you do not have to agree. If you hear something you do not agree with or you think is “silly” or “wrong,” please remember that the purpose of the forum is to share ideas.
- **Be Honest, Fair, and as Candid as Possible.** Put your interests forward, help others understand you and listen actively in order to understand others.
- **Avoid Editorials.** It will be tempting to analyze the motives of others or to offer editorial comments. Please talk about your own ideas and thoughts. Avoid commenting on why you believe another participant thinks something.
- **Honor Time, Be Concise, and Share the Air.** Help ensure an inclusive discussion by being cognizant of time constraints, stating your views clearly and concisely, and sharing the air so that others can participate as well.
- **Think Innovatively and Welcome New Ideas.** Creative thinking and problem solving are essential to success. Think “outside the box” and attempt to think about the problem in a new way.
- **Invite Humor and Good Will.** Don’t hesitate to bring levity and humor to the process when warranted, as this often helps collaborative discussions.
- **Be Comfortable.** Please help yourself to refreshments or take personal breaks. If you have other needs, please inform the Executive Director or assigned meeting facilitator.
- **Be Engaged.** Please turn off (or place on vibrate mode) your cell phones and other mobile devices. If you must take a call or check emails, please take a personal break outside.

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### Amendments

The TWG may recommend changes to the “Roles and Responsibilities” section of this document. Suggested changes may be presented to the RRWA Board by TWG Members or the Executive Director. The TWG shall utilize its decision-making procedures set forth herein to recommend changes. In the absence of a consensus on suggested changes to the “Roles and Responsibilities” section of this document, majority and minority views will be communicated to the RRWA Board, and the RRWA Board will, in its sole discretion, have final decision-making authority on the contents of this document.

Last updated: July 21, 2020

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