

Funding Opportunity No. R23AS00362

DEVELOPING A COLLABORATIVE WATERSHED GROUP–RUSSIAN RIVER  
CONFLUENCE

Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART  
Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Phase I for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024

NOFO No. R23AS00362

PROJECT APPLICANT:

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date: August 27, 2024

Applicant Name: North Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council doing business as Conservation Works

Applicant Address: P.O. Box 6417, Santa Rosa, CA 95406

Conservation Works is a 501(c)3 non-profit based in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California, and will be undertaking Task A: Watershed Group Development to leverage partnerships in order to help build watershed resilience and water sustainability. Conservation Works plans to develop the organizational infrastructure needed to formally establish the Russian River Confluence (RRC) collaborative over the three years of the grant period from approximately August 2025 to August 2028. The RRC currently consists of diverse membership, including public agencies, nonprofits, industry representatives, Tribal partners, small subwatershed groups, and other community organizations. The number of participating stakeholders currently number 28, and additional Tribal partners, underserved community members, and northern watershed representatives will be sought during the project period for greater inclusiveness and equitable representation. The goals over the 3-year planning period are to inform and inspire collective action to address water quality and quantity issues, habitat degradation, and increasing challenges under continued land use change and climate change. The needed RRC infrastructure includes (1) developing its program Charter with mission statement and structure recognizing the role of the multi-stakeholder steering committee in guiding the RRC per the bylaws of Conservation Works; (2) creating a Five-Year Strategic Plan for addressing priorities; (3) developing and deploy a communications and outreach strategy to reach additional Tribal and underserved communities, (4) hosting the first “Annual Convening Conference on the State of the Watershed,” a public convening highlighting watershed resilience work being conducted; (5) creating a Funding Plan for ongoing RRC operations; and (6) facilitating additional information gathering in the watershed to inform decision-making. The RRC’s purpose is to drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed, an area spanning 1,485 square miles from its headwaters in Mendocino County through Sonoma County to the Pacific Ocean in northern California. The watershed provides drinking water to over a half million people, supports hundreds of vineyards, dairies, and other farms, and contains critical habitat for endangered salmonids and other native species. This watershed faces a complex array of large-scale challenges, stemming from a mix of natural and human-induced factors. These challenges intersect in ways that compound the difficulties faced by the watershed. Diverse stakeholder interests arise because the watershed’s ecosystem services and public supply uses are many, and these services and uses often compete, making solutions controversial and equitable resolution difficult to achieve. Watershed collaboration in the decades ahead is more important now than ever before as climate change drivers exacerbate issues and further limit ranges of solutions. By providing coordination, outreach, and education, the RRC can bring together diverse stakeholders and the public to help address obstacles and achieve consensus for watershed restoration activities. The RRC will serve as a hub for collaboration, outreach, information and data-sharing. .

RRC’s planning work is not focused specifically on federal lands or on a federal facility, although the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District manages Lake Sonoma and Warm

Springs Dam within the Russian River Watershed in Sonoma County, California. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates Lake Mendocino within the Russian River watershed in Mendocino County, California. Portions of the Mendocino National Forest drain into the Russian River watershed. The Bureau of Land Management also manages portions of the Russian River Watershed uplands.

## **PROJECT LOCATION**

The Russian River is a southward-flowing river located north of San Francisco Bay with an average annual discharge of 1,600,000 acre feet and draining 1,485 square miles of Sonoma and Mendocino counties in Northern California (Figure 1), entirely on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Pomo, Miwok and Wappo Native American Tribes. The project area includes the entire watershed, from its upland headwaters to its mouth at Jenner, California. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) is 18010110. The Russian River was first known among the Southern Pomo as Ashokawna, “East water place” or “water to the East.” Pomo, Miwok and Wappo Tribes were the first inhabitants of the area living sustainably with the land dating back more than 10,000 years. Later an 1843 Spanish Land Grant referred to it as the Rio Grande before it became the name used today.

Overall, the Russian River watershed is a vibrant ecosystem with a rich array of resources and species that contribute to its ecological health and economic value. Competing interests arise because the watershed is a crucial water supply for wildlife, agriculture, industry, and people along its entire reach. Its ecosystem services and public water supply uses are diverse and many, and these services and uses often intersect, presenting ongoing challenges.

### *Water Use in the Russian River Watershed*

The Russian River watershed is a crucial source of drinking water for a large and diverse population. The river and its tributaries supply water to several counties, municipalities, districts, and individuals, playing a vital role in regional water management and supply. The watershed provides drinking water to over one half million people within parts of Sonoma, Mendocino, and northern Marin Counties. Major cities and towns relying on this water include Ukiah, Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Healdsburg, and Novato among others. Several Russian River water use stakeholders--including agricultural, municipal, and domestic water right holders--have also developed a voluntary Water Sharing Program – a locally driven approach for managing water demand to address water shortages. The goal is for participants to have access to water supply as long as possible in the dry season, avoiding or delaying curtailment by the State Water Resources Control Board.

Fertile soils support agriculture, including vineyards, which are significant to the local economy. The watershed’s water is crucial for irrigation, playing a critical role in agricultural production. The Russian River watershed is renowned for its high-quality wine grapes. The area's climate and soil conditions are ideal for growing various grape varieties, including Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Vineyards are among the largest consumers of water from the Russian River.

The region also supports the cultivation of row crops such as vegetables, fruits, and nuts. These crops require substantial irrigation, particularly during dry periods. Dairy farms and livestock

operations are another significant agricultural use of water. These operations need water for both the animals and the irrigation of feed crops.

There is a growing emphasis on water conservation practices in agriculture to enhance efficiency and reduce water usage. Practices include soil moisture monitoring, improved irrigation techniques, and the use of drought-resistant crop varieties. Periodic droughts can significantly impact water availability for agriculture. During droughts, water allocations are often reduced, affecting crop yields and increasing costs for farmers. Recycled water is a major source of water for agriculture and the production of geothermal electrical power.

### *Natural Resources and Native Species of the Russian River Watershed*

The area supports a range of plant life, including oak woodlands, riparian plants like willows and cottonwoods, and coastal redwoods. Remnant old-growth forests in the Russian River watershed, located in Northern California, are a significant ecological and historical feature of the region. Much of the old-growth forest in the Russian River watershed was heavily logged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Logging operations significantly reduced the extent of these ancient forests, but tracts of old growth and large second growth are found in parks and land conservancy areas. These forests, particularly those dominated by ancient coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) and Douglas firs (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), represent a critical component of the watershed's biodiversity and environmental health.

The Russian River watershed is home to several endangered and threatened species, reflecting both the ecological richness and the pressures facing the region. Among these are the endangered coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), and threatened Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) that rely on the river's clean, cool waters for spawning. The threatened and California endangered California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) can be found in grasslands and low-elevation valleys, using vernal pools and seasonal ponds for breeding. The threatened California Red-legged Frog (*Rana draytonii*) is found in a variety of aquatic habitats including ponds, slow-moving streams, and marshes, which are present in parts of the watershed. These aquatic-tied species are often affected by habitat loss, water quality issues, and other environmental stresses. Recovery plans for these species often require changes in water use strategies and land-use practices and are embroiled in controversy in a watershed with more uses than available water.

The threatened Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) seabird nests in old-growth coastal redwood and Douglas fir forests. The Russian River watershed contains some of these critical nesting habitats. Various other bird species, including the belted kingfisher, great blue heron, and osprey, also inhabit the watershed and fish its waters.

Native mammals include black bears, mountain lions, and various smaller species like river otters and bobcats.

### *Water Storage/Transport Systems and Municipal Uses/Discharges*

Human-caused hydrologic changes affect the Russian River watershed function from its headwaters to its point of entry to the sea.

An inter-basin transfer creates a linkage to another critical watershed, the Eel River which flows northward. Pacific Gas & Electric Company's (PG&E) Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project has diverted water from the Eel River in Mendocino County through a tunnel to hydroelectric generators near the headwaters of the east fork of the Russian River for Potter Valley for over a 100 years. This diverted water resulted in year-round flow in the Russian River for the past century.

PG&E is planning to surrender the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission License for operating the Potter Valley Project and to decommission the project. In the absence of local intervention, this action would eliminate a critical source of water that the Russian River watershed has relied upon for over a century. A coalition of regional agencies, counties, and Tribes is proposing to construct a much lower impact water diversion facility that would divert water that exceeds the fishery needs in the Eel River. The final plan will be controversial on many levels, as much of the Mendocino and Sonoma County agricultural economy and many cities and communities rely on water transferred from the Eel River watershed through the tunnel into Potter Valley.

Two large reservoirs within the watershed also exist: the East Fork of the Russian River above Ukiah is dammed, forming Lake Mendocino, and portions of Dry Creek in Sonoma County are dammed, forming Lake Sonoma. These decades-old structures are managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District.

Water quality and quantity in the Russian River is regulated. Water quality regulation is through permits at the local and state level, and our Collaborative networks with these permitting authorities. Water quantity is regulated through a complex system of water rights authorization at the state level, combined with releases for flood control, minimum instream flow, and water supply from the two large reservoirs (Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma) in the upper and lower portions of the watershed.

The largest metropolitan area within the Russian River watershed is the City of Santa Rosa, and its Laguna Wastewater Treatment Plant treats wastewater from the City and several nearby communities to tertiary standards. The plant occasionally returns some of the wastewater to the river between October 1<sup>st</sup> and May 14<sup>th</sup> by way of the Laguna de Santa Rosa—the largest tributary of the Russian River Watershed and designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention—during seasonal high flows, re-uses the tertiary treated wastewater for irrigation, and predominantly pumps other amounts to the Geysers geothermal area for renewable and carbon-free power generation.

Several other communities within the watershed utilize river water for drinking water, and other municipal, agricultural, and industrial discharges are controlled by permits regulated by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board).

#### *Concurrent Strategy/Planning Activities*

Several of the stakeholders involved with the RRC are partnering on developing other plans and strategies within the Russian River Watershed. The RRC collaborative can be a hub for helping share information on these completed or developing plans and strategies.



government entities, Tribes and community-based organizations. Tribal participation has been intermittent, and additional Tribal involvement is being sought.

Envisioned in 2017, over the past seven years the Russian River Confluence (RRC) has grown from a loose-knit collection of people and organizations concerned about the future and resiliency of the Russian River watershed into a cohesive, diverse, and knowledgeable group with a formal Steering Committee. In the beginning, the RRC ([www.russianriverconfluence.org](http://www.russianriverconfluence.org)) was a concept for bringing together a broad range of stakeholders to leverage the collective capacity of the Russian River Watershed community. A small grant allowed outreach to stakeholders to start discussions in 2019. While the pandemic affected momentum, by 2022 these informal conversations had coalesced with guidance of Sonoma County Supervisors James Gore and Lynda Hopkins into regular meetings and development of a partnership agreement formatted as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for creating an organization with diverse membership, including water agencies, county and state entities, nonprofit organizations, and Tribal partners.

The MOU set out that the RRC would serve as a hub for sharing of projects, initiatives, and scientific studies with the following goals:

1. Improving the overall watershed health and climate change resilience with a focus on water quality, water quantity, and beneficial water uses.
2. Fostering coordination and collaboration among Russian River watershed agencies, Tribes and organizations towards a shared vision and implementation priorities while also strengthening the collective impact to watershed health and climate resilience.
3. Increasing funding for watershed health and climate resilience through advocacy, education, engagement, grants, donors, and sponsorships.

However, the MOU did not identify the type of organizational structure for the RRC. Rather, the MOU identified an approach for developing the RRC: “This MOU is the initial organizing document of the signatory partners. The signatory partners will work together towards determining whether the organization should further incorporate as a non-profit, joint powers authority, or other association as part of its work product” and further identified a Steering Committee to lead the discussions. The RRC subsequently became a unique collaborative program of the non-profit organization known as Conservation Works by vote of its Steering Committee in July 2024 to work specifically to establish shared priorities and foster collaborations across broad stakeholder groups for greater impact on watershed restoration and protection in the basin.

The RRC has yet to complete significant watershed restoration planning and our Collaborative requires more substantial support to fully develop our capacity. The Steering Committee provided directives to work specifically to: (1) establish infrastructure of the collaborative, (2) set priorities, and (3) complete outreach with additional representatives, particularly those coming from the upper watershed portion of Mendocino County, Tribes, and other community-based organizations including small sub-watershed protection groups.

Currently, the RRC is strengthening partnerships with other organizations and groups whose focus will support the RRC collaborative activities. Existing connections with the RRWA and Resource



Conservation Districts have been expanded, along with opportunities for partnering with the R3MP. In addition, with the assistance of California Climate Action Corps Fellows hosted at Conservation Works, the RRC is developing a comprehensive list of ongoing watershed plans and restoration projects—small and large—currently underway within the watershed. Sharing of this information publicly among individuals and organizations interested in Russian River watershed issues is a key role for the RRC.

## **ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANT**

The RRC is a unique program of the North Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council, which is doing business as Conservation Works. Our organization is an eligible applicant as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization which is based in Sonoma County within the Russian River Watershed. The area serviced by Conservation Works includes all portions of the Russian River watershed from headwaters to the Pacific Ocean as well as other areas within Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake Counties in northern California. Our mission is to support resource protection and community sustainability. Conservation Works' bylaws currently allow it to establish a special committee which may be delegated all the authority of the Board "so that it may act with the authority of the Board to the extent and with the scope provided by the Board...and the Board...may rely on it in discharging their fiduciary duties." The RRC will develop a Charter for the operations of the RRC collaborative that complies with the Bylaws, allows the collaborative to grow, and permits the Steering Committee to directly guide, fund, and implement all RRC collaborative programs; Conservation Works will amend its Bylaws to recognize this special committee and its delegated authority.

For five years, Conservation Works has served as the Fiscal Sponsor for the Russian River Confluence. As Fiscal Sponsor, Conservation Works accepted donations and grants on behalf of the RRC and disbursed funds in accordance with the terms of the donation and/or grant under the initial guidance of the Russian River Watershed Association and later under guidance by the Steering Committee. These disbursements were used for outreach expenses and included launching the RRC's *Respect Russian River* [Respect Russian River — Russian River Confluence](#) campaign that was developed in 2023 and commenced in early 2024.

The RRC is guided by a Steering Committee composed of state and local government entities, Tribal representatives, and community based organizations. In the spring and summer of 2024, the Steering Committee of the loosely organized RRC considered the next steps to be taken to formalize the structure of the RRC. The Steering Committee considered the options of filing to become a new non-profit organization or becoming a special Collaborative Program under the existing non-profit Conservation Works. Because of Conservation Works' history of serving as fiscal sponsor for the RRC and also for hosting California Climate Action Corps Fellows dedicated to the RRC, the Steering Committee voted on July 24, 2024 to become an innovative Collaborative Program of Conservation Works (Collaborative). The next step is to develop a Charter for this Collaborative group that allows the Steering Committee to continue to guide, direct, fund and implement the Collaborative work to achieve its goals. This Charter would subsequently be recognized and implemented through an amendment to Conservation Works' bylaws.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Russian River watershed in California is a critical water source for agriculture, municipal use, and recreational activities. This watershed faces a complex array of large-scale challenges, stemming from a mix of natural and human-induced factors. These challenges intersect in ways that compound the difficulties faced by the watershed. Some of these intersections include community growth, climate-induced disasters, and land use impacts from legacy and new human activities.

Population and community growth expand the urban areas, increasing impervious surfaces leading to greater runoff. Not only does flooding increase, but more pollutants enter the river system. When increased impermeable surfaces are combined with altered precipitation patterns from climate change, variability in rainfall more often can cause periods of intense flooding followed by droughts. Further, development and land use changes have led to the loss of riparian (riverbank) habitats, which are crucial for maintaining water quality and providing wildlife habitat.

Healthy forests play an important role in water regulation and soil stabilization. Increased warming is enhancing wildfires in watershed forests and thereby affecting water flows with forest cover reduced or eliminated while at the same time affecting water quality through increased post-fire erosion and other impacts..

Rising temperatures from climate change affect snowpack levels in the upper reaches of the watershed leading to less snow and reduced snowmelt contributions to river flow during the warmer months. Higher temperatures also lead to increased evaporation rates. These flow changes are progressive, and increase over time with the warming of the planet.

While addressing these new challenges, government entities are also dealing with aging infrastructure, such as dams and water diversion systems, which can be inefficient or prone to failure, exacerbating water management problems. Further, competing water rights among agricultural users, municipalities, and environmental needs can lead to conflicts and complex regulatory issues.

Balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability has always been difficult, especially in areas reliant on agriculture and tourism. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach that involves stakeholders at all levels, including local communities, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. Effective management strategies must integrate scientific research, policy initiatives, and community engagement to build resilience and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Russian River watershed.

Many agencies and groups exist with missions that intersect on water quality, water quantity, watershed resilience, and community sustainability issues tied to the Russian River Watershed. Some information and data sharing happens through partnerships and outreach, but often information is siloed by the nature of how it is developed, presented, and shared. Solutions to address conservation and use of water resources remain fragmented. Public understanding of watershed issues can be hampered by siloing of work and data, and valuable input can be constrained. Opportunities for creating change and taking action can slip away or be underutilized when groups do not take advantage of working together.

The Russian River Confluence was envisioned as a hub for sharing of information, highlighting

available services, and maximizing efficiencies in resources through partnering—all geared toward the resilience of the Russian River Watershed. Bringing together diverse stakeholders to help further local solutions to complex water management needs can build knowledge and trust. Shared knowledge with trust in the information on the state of the watershed and progress toward improved health can promote cooperation among stakeholders to facilitate solutions. A robust watershed hub can help build the reservoir of shared information and build trust in that information. By involving stakeholders and the public in education and restoration projects, the RRC will serve as a central connection point for collaboration, information, and data-sharing.

The purpose of the RRC is to inform and inspire collective action to address water quality and quantity issues and be guided by its multi-entity Steering Committee collaborative. As part of this Water Smart Collaborative project, the RRC proposes to address Task Area A: Watershed Group Development through September 2028 via the following activities:

1. **Developing a Charter** in Year 1 for the Russian River Confluence Collaborative that sets out the purpose, vision, and goals for the watershed group pursuant to Conservation Works' Bylaws Article IV, Sections 1, 3, and 4. The Charter will establish the Collaborative's processes for:
  - a. Information sharing among members to increase access to available data and information that can support members restoration activities and project planning as well as add to public awareness and knowledge of watershed issues and the work—both ongoing and needed—to resolve these issues;
  - b. Collaborative deliberation for action item(s) consideration and approval;
  - c. Development and maintenance of agendas and minutes; and
  - d. Other operational, administrative and business practices.
2. Creating a **5-year Strategic Plan** to address priority activities. Planning will help the RRC develop a strategy to navigate the important activities and decisions it needs to make for delivering impact. The RRC will reach consensus through a highly collaborative process to create a Plan that helps focus on key priorities to facilitate decision-making over the next few years, while also adapting to new conditions and opportunities as they arise. This task will also help provide a roadmap for watershed-wide restoration priority planning.
3. Creating and deploying a **Communications and Outreach Strategy** for additional stakeholder engagement to establish broad-based and diverse membership. This plan shall include:
  - a. Tabling at community events, networking, and targeted outreach to specific groups and individuals, including northern watershed groups, additional Tribal representation, and small watershed group representation.
  - b. An annual Collaborative Members Assessment Survey sent to our

members/stakeholders to gain an idea of projects that would improve watershed health and resiliency.

- c. Developing and refining collateral to enhance messaging on watershed protection and restoration, including brochures, videos, website content, newsletters, and similar materials. Working to coordinate and align website content with key strategic partners like R3MP would be part of the initial year 1 messaging work.
  - d. Publishing a user-friendly and accessible list on its website of ongoing conservation opportunities, outreach activities, and projects being performed and proposed within the watershed.
4. Hosting the **first “Annual Convening Conference on the State of the Russian River Watershed,”** bringing together stakeholders and community members to discuss the health and resilience of the Watershed with a science-based focus. The proposed Year 3 Conference will also provide an opportunity for tours of past watershed resiliency projects.
5. Creating a **Funding Plan** for a sustainable organization. By diversifying our funding streams and leveraging strategic partnerships, we can ensure the financial stability and sustainability of our watershed conservation initiatives. The funding plan would include:
- a. Increasing Respect Russian River product sales and Respect Rosé wine sales;
  - b. Pursuing grants from federal and state agencies, foundations, and corporate partners;
  - c. Engaging in community fundraising events and donation drives;
  - d. Seeking sponsorships from local businesses; and
  - e. Appealing to individuals for donations through direct mail, social media, and e-news.
6. Facilitating additional information gathering in the watershed to inform decision-making. Information includes summaries of related projects of others working in the watershed, and identifying additional issues and needs related to water quality, water quantity and restoration needs within the watershed. This includes reviewing existing plans related to the watershed and identifying baseline information.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

### **E.1.1. Evaluation Criterion A—Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope**

#### **E.1.1.1. Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity**

The RRC collaborative is an organization with diverse membership, including public agencies,

nonprofits, industry representatives, Tribal partners, small subwatershed groups, and other community organizations. The RRC seeks to add additional representatives from within the watershed including increasing the number of involved stakeholders from Tribes, agricultural interests, under-represented neighborhoods, fishing industry, tourist industry, Sonoma State University, Santa Rosa Junior College, Mendocino College, and small subwatershed groups.

RRC members represent entities that either have a role in affecting changes or are being impacted by changes in water quantity or water quality in the Russian River Watershed. For example, conservation/restoration interests listed below perform conservation work and/or care for lands or subwatersheds that are impacted by conservation work or lack thereof. Similarly, municipal interests are representatives of cities or community service areas that rely on the watershed for water supply or can impact the watershed from wastewater discharges.

The table below sets out the existing Collaborative entities and their general role in the watershed. The table further identifies those we seek to involve with outreach through this grant.

Table 1. TYPE	EXISTING (Role)	SEEKING COORDINATION and COLLABORATION
NGOs	<p><i>Conservation/Restoration Interests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Works</li> <li>• Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation*</li> <li>• Landpaths</li> <li>• Pepperwood Preserve</li> <li>• Russian Riverkeeper</li> <li>• Sonoma Land Trust</li> </ul> <p><i>Municipal Interests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russian River Watershed Association* (represents 10 municipalities along the river)</li> </ul> <p><i>Recreational Interests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sonoma County Tourism</li> </ul> <p><i>Scientific Interests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russian River Regional Monitoring Program* (including San Francisco Estuary Institute as implementing entity)</li> </ul>	<p>Friends of Felta Creek Friends of Gibson Creek Friends of Lake Sonoma Friends of Mark West Watershed Friends of Roseland Creek Green Valley Watershed Council Mendocino County Farm Bureau Mendocino Winegrowers Russian River Alliance Sonoma County Farm Bureau United Winegrowers of Sonoma County [others to be determined]</p>
EDUCATION		<p>Mendocino College Santa Rosa Junior College Sonoma State University</p>
BUSINESS	<p><i>Recreational Interests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch Creative</li> <li>• REI</li> <li>• Shelter-Co</li> </ul> <p><i>Conservation/Restoration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Yost Associates+</li> </ul>	<p>Agricultural operators Geothermal Operators Tourism industry Fisherpeople</p>

	<i>Agriculture</i> Equality Vines+	
LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SPECIAL DISTRICTS	<i>Conservation/Restoration</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District*</li> <li>• Mendocino County Resource Conservation District *</li> <li>• Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District+*</li> <li>• Sonoma Resource Conservation District*</li> </ul> <i>Municipal/County</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mendocino County Supervisor District 1</li> <li>• Mendocino County Supervisor District 2</li> <li>• Sonoma County Economic Development Board</li> <li>• Sonoma County Supervisor District 4*</li> <li>• Sonoma County Supervisor District 5*</li> <li>• Sonoma County Transportation &amp; Public Works</li> <li>• Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water)</li> </ul> <i>Recreational</i> Sonoma County Regional Parks*	City of Ukiah City of Cloverdale City of Healdsburg Town of Windsor City of Santa Rosa City of Rohnert Park City of Sebastopol City of Cotati
STATE	<i>Conservation/Restoration/Regulatory</i> North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board*	Dept. Fish & Wildlife Dept. Water Resources State Water Resources Control Board [others to be determined]
TRIBAL	<i>Conservation/Restoration</i> Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians	California Indian Environmental Alliance Coyote Band of Pomo Indians Elem Indian Colony Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria Hopland Band of Pomo Indians Kashia Band of Pomo Indians Mendocino, Lake, Sonoma Tribal Environmental Program (MLSTEP) Pinoleville Pomo Nation Potter Valley Tribe Redwood Valley Little River Band of Pomo Yokayo Tribe
FEDERAL		US ARMY Corps Of Engineers USDA Forest Service USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service USDI Bureau Of Land Management

		USDI Fish & Wildlife Service USDC NOAA Fisheries
Multi-Entity Partnerships		Russian River Coho Partnership
* Letter of support included		+donation of financial support provided

The RRC will use the outreach plan developed under this grant along with social media and public service announcements to inform the general public of our mission and goals, inviting people to contact us for information and/or involvement. We will proactively identify individuals within each of the targeted groups with which we seek additional collaboration, and will provide an informational handout prior to meeting with the individual(s) regarding the activities and benefits of collaborating. We will seek additional representation from unincorporated communities, subwatershed groups, Tribes, farmers, ranchers, fisherpeople, industrial water users, and recreational users.

Upstream and downstream areas of the watershed have differing economic positions and demographics which impacts the amount of active resiliency planning and implementation in the overall watershed. Sonoma County has over 5 times the population and 1.5 times greater median household income, while having less overall poverty than Mendocino County. Stipends to assist with participation for Tribes, non-profit organizations and others who struggle to participate can help level the playing field for collaborative engagement, and the RRC will offer a stipend for attending meetings to facilitate their participation. Additional collaboration can help ensure that disparate opinions are considered, all voices are heard, deliberations can utilize diverse experiences and talents, and solutions are equitably developed. This collaboration also fosters a sense of shared responsibility and cooperation.

#### **E.1.1.2. Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope**

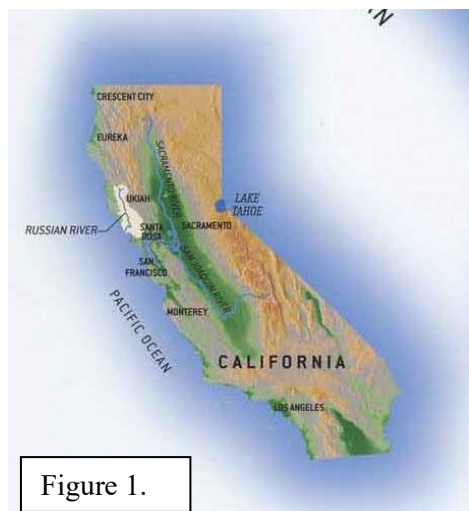


Figure 1.

The entire Russian River Watershed (Hydrologic Unit Codes 18010110) is included in this proposal. The watershed is located north of the San Francisco Bay area of California, and originates in the uplands of Mendocino County and drains south through Sonoma County to enter the Pacific Ocean near Jenner (Figure 1). Figure 2 shows the two County governmental boundaries within the watershed, and the several incorporated Cities within the Russian River watershed basin. Many smaller communities are located within the watershed, most within the valleys along the mainstem of the River.



The Laguna de Santa Rosa is the largest subwatershed draining to the Russian River and is located in the southern portion of the watershed. The City of Santa Rosa metropolitan area is the largest urban center in the watershed with a population of about 339,000 people and borders the Laguna de Santa Rosa. In contrast, the City of Ukiah is the largest metropolitan area in Mendocino County and is in the upper portion of the watershed with a population of a little over 16,000. Many areas of the Mendocino County upper watershed area are considered underserved. The areas upstream of the Laguna de Santa Rosa in the southwestern area of the City of Santa Rosa are considered underserved, as are some of the lower portions of the watershed below the confluence of the Laguna de Santa Rosa with the river.

Representatives of the two county governments and of the municipal governments (either directly or indirectly through the Russian River Watershed Association) are already members of the RRC. Two major stakeholder groups and partners of the RRC also encompass nearly the entire watershed area: the Russian River Watershed Association mentioned earlier and the Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP). Other stakeholder groups come from within both county areas,



however the majority of the current RRC membership groups are in the southern half of the watershed. Additional representation from the upper portion of the watershed in Mendocino County, from the southwestern part of the City of Santa Rosa, and from the lower Russian River area below the Laguna de Santa Rosa confluence with the river specifically will be priority areas for seeking additional Collaborative involvement through this grant.

## **E.1.2. Evaluation Criterion B—Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs**

### **E.1.2.1. Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues**

The Russian River Watershed in California faces numerous environmental and resource management challenges that are interlinked and complex. These issues are influenced by both natural factors and human activities, creating a multifaceted problem for the ecosystem and the communities relying on it.

#### **Declining Ecological Resiliency**

The watershed's ability to recover from disturbances is decreasing due to a combination of factors including climate change, invasive species, and habitat loss. These stressors reduce the ecosystem's ability to maintain its functions and services. Aquatic and riparian ecosystem degradation is also an issue as the health of these ecosystems is declining due to water withdrawals, pollution, and physical alterations like damming and channelization. These changes disrupt the natural processes and habitats critical for wildlife. In 2010, Community Foundation Sonoma County engaged in a four-year process to develop a consensus-based Biodiversity Action Plan for Sonoma County, which found that “habitat loss due to land use changes (such as open space conversion to housing or intensive agriculture) and fragmentation (the conversion of large intact habitats into small, discontinuous parcels) was the single biggest threat to biodiversity.” The Plan found that other “threats to biodiversity in Sonoma County include: invasions of non-native species, disruption of natural water cycles, air and water pollution, a lack of knowledge or gaps in the scientific knowledge base, and the uncertainty and stress of global climate change.”

#### **Water Supply Shortages**

Prolonged droughts, which are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change, have severely stressed water supplies in the Russian River. This shortage is illustrated by a 2022 action of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). which approved an unprecedented voluntary water sharing agreement for the Russian River basin. This voluntary sharing agreement resulted from a group of urban water users, suppliers and representatives from the agricultural community in Mendocino and Sonoma counties meeting frequently to develop a water use program. Those discussions resulted in an agreement that includes calculations and implementation directives to avoid SWRCB curtailment of water use under its water right permits regulatory program.

#### **Wildfire Risk and Post-Fire Concerns**

The watershed is increasingly at risk of wildfires, a problem worsened by drought and climate change. Wildfire season now is nearly year-round. One of the most destructive fires involving the Russian River watershed was the October 8, 2017, Tubbs Fire, estimated to have burned 36,810 acres with at least 22 people believed to have been killed in the fire which swept down forest and rangeland and entered the City of Santa Rosa, destroying more than 2,800 homes in Santa Rosa alone.

The Redwood Complex Fire, which also started on October 8, 2017, was the result of two fires merging — the Potter Valley and Redwood Valley fires. The Potter Valley fire started in northwest Mendocino County and joined a second fire in Redwood Valley that ignited at approximately on October 9. Because of the steep terrain, fuel moisture, and northwest winds the fire blazed for 21 days, prompting large evacuations and closure of major highways and local roadways. The fire burned over 36,000 acres, destroyed 350 homes, and killed 9 people

Annual fires since 2017 continue to engulf large acreages in the watershed, and in 2024 the fire season started earlier and is expected to last longer than prior years. Post-fire impacts include soil erosion, sedimentation of waterways, and destruction of habitats, which further stress the ecosystem and water quality.

### **Flooding**

While drought is a major concern, the watershed also faces periodic flooding. This dual threat is partly due to altered land use patterns and climate change, which affect the timing and intensity of precipitation and runoff. Rainfall is likely to be more variable in the future in terms of both low and high annual extremes, and the watershed response. With high intensity storms, the watershed is likely to become more “flashy” as development has lessened permeable surfaces and increased stormwater runoff.

### **Water Quality Impairments**

Water quality in the Russian River Watershed is impaired by pollutants from agricultural runoff, urban stormwater, and failing septic systems. These contaminants include pesticides, nutrients, and pathogens, which harm aquatic life and pose health risks to humans. Several water bodies within the Russian River watershed have been identified as being impaired for the following pollutants under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d): Sediment, Temperature, Indicator Bacteria, pH, Low Dissolved Oxygen, Mercury, Nitrogen, and Phosphorous. Both Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino have also been listed as impaired on the 303(d) list due to mercury pollution measured in fish tissue.

### **Endangered Species Concerns**

Several species within the watershed are endangered or threatened, including the coho salmon and steelhead trout. Habitat degradation, water diversions, and barriers to migration have critically impacted these species' populations.

## **Drought Impacts**

Extended drought periods have strained the water resources, leading to reduced stream flows and aquifer levels. This impacts not only human water supply but also the health of aquatic and riparian ecosystems.

## **Habitat Fragmentation and Degradation**

Development, agriculture, and infrastructure projects have fragmented and degraded habitats within the watershed. This fragmentation isolates wildlife populations, reduces biodiversity, and hinders the movement and survival of species.

## **Conflicts Over Water Supply**

There are significant disagreements among agricultural, residential, environmental, and recreational stakeholders over the allocation and use of water. These disputes are intensified during drought periods when water is scarce. Inter-basin water transfer from the Eel River watershed into the Russian River watershed at Potter Valley is also a major conflict area.

## **Stakeholder Challenges**

Affected stakeholders, including local communities, farmers, conservationists, and government agencies, face difficulties in balancing water use with ecological conservation. Collaborative efforts and integrated management plans are essential but challenging to implement.

In summary, the Russian River Watershed's issues are deeply interconnected, requiring a holistic approach to manage water resources, restore ecosystems, and reduce risks from climate change. The Russian River Confluence can promote sustainable practices, stakeholder collaboration, and adaptive management which are crucial to improving the watershed's resilience and health.

### **E.1.2.2. Sub-criterion No. B2. Project Benefits**

A collaborative approach can help address the complex environmental and resource management challenges in the Russian River Watershed. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, such a collaborative can develop and implement comprehensive strategies that strengthen the watershed's resilience and sustainability. Addressing the watershed's challenges requires long-term commitment and planning. A collaborative can develop strategic plans that set clear goals, timelines, and metrics for success, ensuring that efforts are sustained over time. The RRC can foster and promote integrated watershed management plans that consider all aspects of the watershed, including water quality, water quantity, habitat conservation, and land use. This approach can develop solutions that are holistic and address the root causes of problems. In addition, our collaborative can:

Foster Shared Data Collection and Monitoring

Effective approaches to resolve conflicts over competing interests and address declining resiliency require sound data. Accurate, scientifically sound, and up-to-date data can support system changes to reduce climate change impacts including droughts and flooding and resolve water quality impairments to protect habitat and aquatic species. Watershed health monitoring by the R3MP and other organizations of critical indicators can inform decision-making and allow for the success of adaptive management practices. The RRC is partnering on this proposal with the R3MP, which is in the process of establishing a robust coordinated monitoring program centered on watershed health status and trends, with an initial focus on biostimulatory conditions and stream habitat. By enhancing the partnership with R3MP through the RRC collaborative, we can help ensure that data-driven restoration activities can be assessed for change, and course corrections can ensue when needed.

(R3MP Charter:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wjTrj2tcdciwjZmdl3xfmRibvSEYC-V/view>; R3MP Initial Monitoring Plan:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d0UF8IAH0kEhzqWPkLTjrC7pQOA7\\_dPx/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d0UF8IAH0kEhzqWPkLTjrC7pQOA7_dPx/view?usp=drive_link))

#### Enhance Stakeholder Engagement

Ensuring all stakeholders have information early and often has been challenging in past planning efforts, and some complex plans have failed to be implemented due to lack of adequate stakeholder engagement, particularly with Tribal entities. By engaging a wide range of stakeholders—including local communities, Tribes, farmers, businesses, environmental groups, and government agencies—a collaborative can help ensure that all voices are heard. This engagement is intended to foster a sense of shared responsibility and cooperation.

#### Provide Ongoing Education and Outreach

Educating the public about the importance of watershed health and the impact of their actions is crucial. A collaborative can develop and implement education and outreach programs to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors. As climate change exacerbates many of the watershed's challenges as described under B.1., a collaborative can develop and implement climate adaptation strategies and educate the public on implementation measures throughout the entire watershed.

#### Help Prioritize Restoration and Prevention Activities

A collaborative can help identify and support restoration projects that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change. Serving as an informational hub, the RRC is a way for organizations to find shared goals and develop collaborative proposals that leverage resources for more impactful change.

Agriculture is a major land use in the watershed and a significant water user. A collaborative can promote sustainable farming practices that reduce water use, minimize

runoff, and enhance soil health through programs for efficient irrigation, cover cropping, and other measures. Pooling resources and efforts may attract increased funding from various sources, including government grants, private foundations, and community fundraising.

This collective effort could provide additional financial support necessary to implement large-scale projects and initiatives for riparian buffer restoration, wetlands protection, streambank stabilization, floodplain connectivity, and more. Working together, members of the Collaborative also can advocate for increasing green infrastructure, and developing watershed-wide drought contingency plans, policies and regulations that protect the basin.

#### Assist in Conflict Resolution

Conflicts over water use and land management are common in the watershed. Once a collaborative is strengthened through addition of stakeholders and development of a solid infrastructure, collaboratives often can provide a platform for addressing disputes through increased dialogue and negotiation, and through consensus building may help propose mutually beneficial solutions to decision-makers.

#### Encourage Research and Innovation

Encouraging research and innovation can lead to new solutions for watershed management. A collaborative can partner with academic institutions, research organizations, and technology companies to develop and test new approaches and technologies.

### **E.1.3. Evaluation Criterion C—Readiness to Proceed**

Conservation Works has several ongoing programs related to water conservation and climate change resiliency. We accomplish our mission by performing environmental education and action with youth and other community members that involves on-the-ground change and makes a real difference in ecosystem restoration, water conservation, climate change adaptation, fire resiliency, and healthy sustainable communities in our north coast area.

We have the capacity and the technical capability to implement the proposed project. For several years, Conservation Works has established the Russian River Watershed as one of its priority watersheds. A new Charter will need to be developed as part of this Project implementation. Conservation Works' bylaws currently allow it to establish a special committee which may be delegated all the authority of the Board "so that it may act with the authority of the Board to the extent and with the scope provided by the Board...and the Board...may rely on it in discharging their fiduciary duties." The RRC will develop a Charter for the operations of the RRC collaborative that complies with the Bylaws and allows the Steering Committee to directly guide, fund, and implement all RRC programs. Conservation Works will need to amend its Bylaws to recognize this special committee, Charter, and its delegated authority.

The proposed project has both concurrent and sequential work activities, as outlined below:

<b>TASK DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>SCHEDULE</b>	<b>MILESTONE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</b>
<b>TASK 1. Project Management</b>			
Subtask 1.1 Project Management	Aug 2025 - Aug 2028		Conservation Works
<b>TASK 2, Development of Governing Charter</b>			
Subtask 2.1 Draft Charter	Aug 2025 - Nov 2025	Draft charter	Existing Steering Committee
Subtask 2.2 Adopt Charter	Dec 2025 - Feb 2026	Charter	Existing Steering Committee
Subtask 2.3 Conservation Works Bylaws Revised	Jan 2026 – Aug 2026	Revised By-laws	Conservation Works Board of Directors
<b>TASK 3. Creating a 5-Year Strategic Plan</b>			
Subtask 3.1 Develop Draft Strategic Plan	Jan 2026 - Nov 2026		New Collaborative Committee
Subtask 3.2 Adopt 5-Year Strategic Plan	Dec 2026 - Mar 2026	Strategic Plan	New Collaborative Committee
<b>TASK 4. Communications and Outreach Strategy</b>			
Subtask 4.1 Develop Outreach Plan	Aug 2025 – Jun 2026	Outreach Plan	New Collaborative Committee, SFEI
Subtask 4.2 Develop Messaging Collateral	Jan 2026 – Aug 2026	Brochure, Fact Sheet, Video	New Collaborative Committee
Subtask 4.3 Align Partners Website Content	Jan 20256 – Dec 2026		New Collaborative Committee, SFEI
Subtask 4.4 New Tribal Participants added	Jan 2026 – March 2027		New Collaborative Committee
Subtask 4.5 New underserved community representatives added	Jan 2026 – Mar 2027		New Collaborative Committee
Subtask 4.6 Collaborative Members Assessment Survey	Feb 2027 – Mar 2028	2 surveys, a year apart	New Collaborative Committee
<b>TASK 5: Convening</b>			
Subtask 5.1 Deploy Annual Convening Conference	Nov 2027 – May 2028	Conference	New Collaborative Committee, SFEI
Subtask 5.2 Develop State of the Watershed	May 2028 – July 2028	State of the Watershed Report	New Collaborative Committee, SFEI
<b>Task 6. Develop Funding Plan</b>			
Subtask 6.1 Create Funding Plan	Jan 2026 – Dec 2026	Funding Plan	New Collaborative Committee, SFEI
<b>Task 7. Support Information Gathering</b>			
Task 7.1 Support Information Gathering	Aug 2025 – Aug 2028		New Collaborative Committee

#### **E.1.4. Evaluation Criterion D—Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities**

Our project recognizes the watershed threats posed by climate change and the need to strengthen

community resilience. Our project tasks are designed to help build resilience across the whole watershed. In addition, solutions to address watershed issues need to be equitable and involve all perspectives. Currently, the Collaborative lacks sufficient engagement with Tribal groups and with underserved communities, and this proposal supports increased engagement activities to remedy this lack.

#### **E.1.4.1. Climate Change**

The watershed's ability to recover from disturbances is decreasing as climate change combines with expanding habitat loss from community development and growth. Although the federal [resilience.climate.gov](https://resilience.climate.gov) mapping does not show high risk from rising sea levels within the Russian River watershed, the coastal mouth by Jenner will be impacted by rising sea level. In addition, many other stressors reduce the ecosystem's ability to maintain its functions and services. In particular, over-extraction of water for agricultural, residential, and industrial uses has led to significant water shortages. This overuse is exacerbated by prolonged droughts, which are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change.

The RRC Collaborative approach will help identify and prioritize restoration projects that increase the watershed's resilience to climate change. Serving as an informational hub, the RRC can foster shared goals and develop collaborative proposals that leverage resources for more impactful change. For example, our *State of the Watershed* report arising from the Convening Conference will be broadly distributed and can focus attention on the priority needs in the watershed to increase resiliency. At the same time, we can induce actions as our collaborative's outreach collateral developed through this project can broadly promote sustainable farming practices that reduce water use, minimize runoff, and enhance soil health through programs for efficient irrigation, cover cropping, and other measures. Further, our proposed Funding Plan can also provide additional financial support necessary to fund the implementation of large-scale projects and initiatives for responding to climate change induced impacts. The Collaborative will also advocate for increasing green infrastructure, and developing watershed-wide contingency plans, policies and regulations that make the basin more resilient to changes from global warming.

#### **E.1.4.2. Benefits to Disadvantaged, Underserved, and Tribal Communities**

The RRC will seek additional representation from Tribes, disadvantaged neighborhoods, and underserved communities. The Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool indicates that many disadvantaged communities exist in the watershed, including several Federally Recognized Tribes. The population of Mendocino County as a whole is 55.8% disadvantaged, with 18% below poverty levels. Tracts in Mendocino County that are disadvantaged within the Russian River watershed include 06045011800 (on or around Hopland), 06045010900 (on or around upper Russian River area), 06045011600 (on or around Ukiah), 06045010900 (on or around Calpella), 06045010862 (on or around Potter Valley). In Sonoma County, tracts that are disadvantaged within the Russian River watershed include 06097154201 (on or around Cloverdale), 06097152903 (on or above NW Santa Rosa), 06097152802 (on or around NW Santa Rosa), 06097153104 (on or around the Roseland District of Santa Rosa), 06097153104 (on or around the Wright District of Santa Rosa), and 06097151462 (on or around the southwest

Fairgrounds area of Santa Rosa).

Our Collaborative recognizes that the two county areas within the watershed have disparate economic positions which impacts the amount of active resiliency planning and implementation in the overall watershed. Sonoma County has over 5 times the population and 1.5 times greater median household income, while having less overall poverty, than Mendocino County. Stipends to assist with participation in the Collaborative for Tribes, non-profit organizations, neighborhood groups and others who struggle financially to participate can help level the playing field for collaborative engagement and offers numerous benefits:

### **Inclusive Representation**

- **Equitable Voice:** By offering stipends, the collaborative ensures that voices from disadvantaged areas, such as Tribes and groups in other disadvantaged areas, are heard. This is crucial for developing comprehensive and inclusive solutions that reflect the needs and concerns of all stakeholders, not just the more affluent ones.
- **Diverse Perspectives:** Engaging a broad range of participants—tribes, non-profits, neighborhood groups—brings diverse perspectives to the table, which can lead to more innovative and effective resilience strategies.
- **Stronger Partnerships:** Stipends reduce financial barriers to participation, making it easier for groups from economically disadvantaged areas to engage actively. This leads to higher attendance and more active involvement in meetings and decision-making processes. This limited financial support from stipends helps build and sustain partnerships between different groups, encouraging long-term collaboration and mutual support in watershed management.
- **Motivation:** Financial support can incentivize participation, particularly for those who might otherwise be unable to afford the time or resources to engage fully in the collaborative effort.

### **Improved Planning and Implementation**

- **Comprehensive Solutions:** With diverse input, the collaborative can develop more robust and effective watershed management plans that consider the needs of both economically disadvantaged and more affluent areas. This results in solutions that are practical and beneficial across the entire watershed.
- **Equitable Implementation:** Greater participation from diverse stakeholders will help increase equitable solution implementation, as all participating groups have a fair opportunity to contribute and benefit from the planned actions.
- **Building Trust:** By addressing economic disparities and making participation more accessible, the collaborative builds trust among stakeholders. This trust is essential for effective communication and cooperation.
- **Community Empowerment:** Supporting local groups and organizations through stipends empowers them to play a more active role in watershed management, fostering a stronger sense of community ownership and stewardship.
- **Resilient Networks:** A more inclusive collaborative effort strengthens the network of participants, making it more resilient to challenges and better equipped to address future



issues.

In addition, Our Collaborative has several components that align with some of the Bureau of Reclamation tribal trust responsibilities, including: (1) promoting effective communication between Tribes and other organizations while providing opportunities for Tribal involvement in the decision-making process; and (2) supporting programs that interface with Tribal water rights implementation.

## BUDGET SUMMARY

The budget provides support for seven tasks outlined in the “Readiness to Proceed” section to support staffing (salary and benefits) as well as supplies, contractor support, venue rental and participant support for oversight and implementation of the project: (1) Project Management; (2) Charter-Staff support for developing a Charter in Year 1 for the Russian River Confluence Collaborative that sets out the purpose, vision, and goals for the watershed group; (3) Strategic Plan-Staff support to facilitate the collaborative’s development of a 5-year strategic plan; (4) Communications And Outreach Strategy—staff and contractor support for guiding the creation and implementation of the strategy, including developing outreach materials such as brochures and posters, preparing newsletters, and tabling at outside events to engage with the community; (5) First Annual Watershed Convening—staff and contractor support for developing the agenda, preparing for and hosting the first “Annual Convening Conference on the State of the Russian River Watershed,” bringing together stakeholders and community members to discuss the health and resilience of the Watershed with a science-based focus; (6) Funding Plan—staff and contractor support for creating a Funding Plan for a sustainable organization; (7) Facilitating Additional Information Gathering In The Watershed To Inform Decision-Making—staff and contractor support for gathering, reviewing, and facilitating community understanding of watershed data. Further details can be found in the Budget Detail and Narrative spreadsheet (Attachment B to the NOFO).

Contractors include the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) staff who will provide services to achieve several of the goals of the grant. The Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP) addresses watershed health, management, planning, and coordination, and this grant would support SFEI, who is currently serving as the implementing entity of the R3MP, to participate in and help coordinate on a number of activities under the grant as described above.

Table 2. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources	Amount
Non-Federal Funds	\$0
Requested federal Reclamation Funding	\$300,000
TOTAL	\$300,000

## APPENDIX 1

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT



COUNTY OF SONOMA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, RM. 100A  
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403  
(707) 565-2241



August 13, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The Fifth District of Sonoma County is a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC), and has appreciated the ongoing collaboration support of Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council). Their organization's fiscal sponsorship support since 2019 has helped our collaborative efforts begin to develop a workable structure that will benefit all of our members' work in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program, and support the proposal as an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on [select those that are most important to your organization, or identify other issues that you have a particular focus]:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Foster sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.



COUNTY OF SONOMA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, RM. 100A  
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403  
(707) 565-2241



- Expand opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Minimize conflicts over water use and land management in the watershed by serving as a collaborative platform for addressing disputes through increased dialogue and negotiation, helping to find mutually beneficial solutions.

Sincerely,

Lynda Hopkins

Supervisor – District 5, Sonoma County, Board of Supervisors



**AG + OPEN SPACE**  
SONOMA COUNTY

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space) is an original member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) and has appreciated the ongoing collaboration and support of Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council). Their organization's fiscal sponsorship since 2019 has helped our collaborative efforts begin to develop a workable structure that will benefit the work of all our members in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.


We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program, and support the proposal as an important step in creating a lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient, and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on the following:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.
- Expanding opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.

We appreciate your consideration of their proposal as the funding is critical to meeting our shared goals of a healthy and resilient watershed.

Sincerely,

  
Misti Arias (Aug 26, 2024 16:29 PDT)

Misti Arias  
General Manager

**SONOMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, RM. 100A  
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403



**JAMES GORE**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT SUPERVISOR**  
Email: [District4@sonoma-county.org](mailto:District4@sonoma-county.org)  
Phone: 707-228-9521

August 19, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The County of Sonoma is a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC), and has appreciated the ongoing collaboration support of Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council). Their organization's fiscal sponsorship support since 2019 has helped our collaborative efforts begin to develop a workable structure that will benefit all of our members' work in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program, and support the proposal as an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed.

We recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Foster sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.

- Expand opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Minimize conflicts over water use and land management in the watershed by serving as a collaborative platform for addressing disputes through increased dialogue and negotiation, helping to find mutually beneficial solutions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Gore', with a stylized, cursive script.

James Gore  
Fourth District Sonoma County Supervisor  
National Association of Counties (NACo) President



900 Sanford Road  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
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*Restoration Field Supervisor*  
  
Ayla Mills  
*Nursery Program Manager*  
  
Brent Reed  
*Stewardship Program Director*  
  
Asa Voight  
*Preserve Manager*  
  
Debra Wright  
*Accounting Manager*

August 20, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber,

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit conservation organization established in 1989 in Sonoma County, California. The Laguna de Santa Rosa is a large freshwater wetland complex and the largest sub watershed of the Russian River. We are a member organization of the **Russian River Confluence (RRC)** and we have appreciated the ongoing collaborative support of Conservation Works in reviving the RRC and beginning to develop a sustainable structure that will benefit all of our members' work in watershed protection and resiliency. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

We support Conservation Works' grant proposal titled "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" to support an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed. Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Foster sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.
- Expand opportunities for restoration activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anne Morkill  
Executive Director





SONOMA  
COUNTY  
REGIONAL  
PARKS

*Bert Whitaker*  
*Director*

August 12, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber,

Sonoma County Regional Parks is proud to be a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) and values the ongoing collaborative support provided by Conservation Works, also known as the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council. Since 2019, their organization's fiscal sponsorship has been instrumental in establishing a functional framework that benefits all our members' efforts in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued partnership in the years ahead.

We have reviewed the grant proposal, "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group," for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program. We wholeheartedly support this proposal as a crucial step toward achieving lasting impacts for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We are committed to our continued participation in the RRC collaborative to drive community action toward a healthy, resilient, and regenerative Russian River watershed.

We specifically recognize the importance of enhancing collaborations to expand opportunities for restoration activities that:

- Enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Engage interested parties in solving watershed issues, ensuring all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Provide education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Foster the sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and enable adaptive management practices.

Thank you for considering our support for this vital initiative. We are eager to continue our collaboration and contribute to the sustainability and prosperity of the Russian River watershed.

Sincerely,

Bert Whitaker, Director

2300 County Center Dr.

Suite 120A

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

(707) 565-2041

[SonomaCountyParks.org](http://SonomaCountyParks.org)



707.462.3664  
410 Jones St., Suite C-3  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
[www.mcrcd.org](http://www.mcrcd.org)

August 19, 2024

Robin Graber  
Water SMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD) is a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) and has appreciated the ongoing collaborative support of Conservation Works, also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council. Conservation Works' fiscal sponsorship support since 2019 has helped RRC with collaborative efforts begin to address watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

I have reviewed the proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" to the BOR's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program. MCRCD supports the proposal because it will serve as an important step in creating a lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. MCRCD commits to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help guide community action towards a healthier, resilient, and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, MCRCD recognizes the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving water supply issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard, and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to encourage conservation and sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and government agencies.
- Expand opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. D. Scriven".

Joseph D. Scriven  
Assistant Executive Director



Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District is a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) and has appreciated the ongoing collaboration support of Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council). Conservation Works' fiscal sponsorship support since 2019 has helped our collaborative efforts begin to develop a workable structure to benefit our members' work in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program and support the proposal as an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard, and solutions are equitable.
- Expand opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Minimize conflicts over water use and land management in the watershed by serving as a collaborative platform for addressing disputes through increased dialogue and negotiation, helping to find mutually beneficial solutions.

Sincerely,

*Brittany Jensen*

Brittany Jensen, Executive Director



**MEMBER AGENCIES**

- City of Cloverdale
- City of Cotati
- City of Healdsburg
- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Sebastopol
- City of Ukiah
- County of Mendocino
- County of Sonoma
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Town of Windsor

**ANDY RODGERS**  
Executive Director

300 Seminary Avenue  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 508-3670

[info@rrwatershed.org](mailto:info@rrwatershed.org)  
[www.rrwatershed.org](http://www.rrwatershed.org)

August 15, 2024

SENT VIA: EMAIL

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

**SUBJECT:** Grant Proposal—Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group

Dear Robin:

Serving as Executive Director for the Russian River Watershed Association (RRWA), I am writing to express support for Conservation Works' application for funding of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) through the Bureau of Reclamation Water Smart Collaborative Grant program.

The RRWA is a coalition of ten cities, counties, and special districts in the Russian River watershed that have come together to coordinate regional programs for clean water, habitat restoration, and watershed enhancement, and has long prioritized efforts like this one that promote the sustainability and resiliency of our region's water resources.

We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program and support the proposal as an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard, and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.

- Expanding opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Minimizing conflicts over water use and land management in the watershed by serving as a collaborative platform for addressing disputes through increased dialogue and negotiation, helping to find mutually beneficial solutions.

We thank you for your consideration to fully fund this important regional water resiliency project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andy Rodgers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andy Rodgers, RRWA Executive Director



August 27, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation - Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Subject: Support for Conservation Works' Proposal *Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group - Russian River Confluence*

Dear Ms. Graber:

On behalf of the steering committee of the Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP), we are pleased to support Conservation Works' Bureau of Reclamation Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal *Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group – Russian River Confluence*. The R3MP was established in 2019, coinciding with the establishment of the Russian River Confluence (RRC), and provides the scientific information necessary for successful long-term management of Russian River watershed health, in the context of climate change, land use change, and population growth. The R3MP is envisioned as an integral part of a scientific enterprise centered on the watershed and is closely aligned with the mission, vision, and goals of the RRC.

Since 2019 Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council) has served as the fiscal sponsor for the RRC, a critical function that has supported RRC's collaborative watershed protection and resiliency efforts throughout the watershed. Both the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) and the City of Santa Rosa, the state and local governments that we represent as co-chairs of the R3MP, have supported the RRC since its inception. We have reviewed Conservation Works proposal and believe the requested funding and scope of work will allow the RRC to further coalesce into a well-functioning watershed collaborative, able to advance key initiatives aimed at improved outreach and education, data and information sharing to inform watershed management decision-making, and implementation of projects designed to enhance the watershed's resilience to the impacts of climate change. The RRC serves as the venue for collaboration among the organizations and interests working to protect the Russian River watershed, and with additional funding Conservation Works will be ideally suited to provide the administration and organization necessary for the RRC collaborative to achieve critical initiatives the collaborative envisions together.

The San Francisco Estuary Institute – Aquatic Science Center (SFEI-ASC) has been under contract with the Regional Water Board since 2017 to provide the administrative, governance, and technical support for the R3MP. SFEI-ASC, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, is a leading science and environmental research organization of the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary and beyond and has been increasingly providing information and services in the Russian River watershed and the entire north coast of California. Several of the key tasks included in Conservation Works proposal, including the development of a Communications and Outreach Strategy (Task 4), planning and implementing the first Annual Convening Conference on the State of the Watershed (Task 5), and developing a Funding Plan (Task 6) would be partially supported by SFEI-ASC on behalf of the R3MP. Though the steering committee of the R3MP is comprised of a diverse group of representatives from state, local, and tribal governments, special districts, and nongovernmental organizations, the R3MP will benefit from continued coordination with Conservation Works on outreach and communication of our overlapping interests and goals. Further, conducting outreach and education and convening a “state of the watershed” conference is a longstanding goal of the R3MP, and SFEI-ASC’s coordination with Conservation Works through this grant will make that goal a reality. Finally, developing funding plans for both RRC and R3MP to secure sustainable funding for both entities is fundamental for the long-term success of these critical watershed enterprises.

The R3MP is committed to continued participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed. We strongly support Conservation Works’ proposal. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Matt St John (Aug 27, 2024 13:23 PDT)

Matt St John  
Environmental Program Manager  
Regional Water Board



Sean McNeil (Aug 27, 2024 12:49 PDT)

Sean McNeil  
Deputy Director of Environmental Services  
City of Santa Rosa



---

## North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

August 21, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation - Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Subject: Support for Conservation Works' Proposal *Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group - Russian River Confluence*

Dear Ms. Graber:

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) is pleased to support Conservation Works' Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal *Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group – Russian River Confluence*. Since 2019 Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council) has served as the fiscal sponsor for the Russian River Confluence (RRC), a critical function that has supported RRC's collaborative watershed protection and resiliency efforts throughout the watershed. The Regional Water Board, a member organization of the RRC, is the water quality regulatory agency for the California North Coast which includes the Russian River watershed. Our mission is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of North Coast water resources and our vision statement "Healthy watersheds. Effective regulation. Strong partnerships." closely aligns with the purpose and goals of the RRC.

As a member of RRC's steering committee, we have reviewed Conservation Works proposal and believe the requested funding and scope of work will allow the RRC to further coalesce into a well-functioning watershed collaborative, able to advance key initiatives aimed at improved outreach and education, data and information sharing to inform watershed management decision-making, and implementation of projects designed to enhance the watershed's resilience to the impacts of climate change. The RRC serves as the venue for collaboration among the organizations and interests working to protect the Russian River watershed. However, without funding for administration and governance of the collaborative, the RRC could falter and risk advancement of key initiatives that can only be realized through collaboration. Conservation Works is well poised to administer the collaborative and to provide the necessary organization and leadership to achieve critical initiatives the collaborative envisions.



Though the steering committee of the RRC is made up of a diverse group of organizations, the RRC will benefit from development of a Communications and Outreach Strategy, which will allow expanded outreach and collaboration with diverse stakeholders, importantly including with Tribes and disadvantaged communities within the watershed. Engagement with the diverse interest groups in the watershed will strengthen partnerships, foster collaboration, and result in positive action towards watershed resilience.

The Regional Water Board is committed to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed. We strongly support this proposal. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Valerie Quinto  
Executive Officer



Resolution No. 2024-004

**AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR WATERSMART GRANT FOR DEVELOPING A  
COLLABORATIVE WATERSHED GROUP–RUSSIAN RIVER CONFLUENCE**

WHEREAS, the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council is doing business as Conservation Works;

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024 has issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) No. R23AS00362; and

WHEREAS, procedures in NOFO No. R23AS00362 require the applicant to certify by resolution the approval of application before submission of said application to the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the applicant may enter into an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation to carry out a project titled Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group–Russian River Confluence.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council has previously authorizes either of two people to negotiate and enter into agreements--Executive Officer Oona Heacock or Treasurer Susan Warner--up to awards of \$2,000,000, and expressly continues to authorize these people to negotiate agreements with the Bureau of Reclamation for the Collaborative Watershed Group–Russian River Confluence project.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council approved the filing of an application for grant program funds and certifies that funds under the jurisdiction of the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council Board of Directors are available to begin the project.

Approved and adopted the 28th day of August 2024.

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution No. 2024-004 was duly adopted by the following electronic emailed vote:

Ayes:   5   Noes:   0   Absent:   2  

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Braudrick".

---

Peter Braudrick, President

## OTHER APPLICATION STATEMENTS AND COMPONENTS

### **D.2.2.4. Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance**

Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment (e.g., soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat)? No, as this is an outreach and engagement project with no on-the-ground restoration activities.

Please briefly describe all earth-disturbing work and any work that will affect the air, water, or animal habitat in the project area. There will be no earth-disturbing work in this project.

Please also explain the impacts of such work on the surrounding environment and any steps that could be taken to minimize the impacts. There will be no earth-disturbing work in this project.

Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a Federal threatened or endangered species, or designated critical habitat in the project area? If so, would they be affected by any activities associated with the proposed project?

There are endangered and threatened species as described in our Technical Proposal, and our outreach conveys education on actions others can take to protect the species.

Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as “Waters of the United States”? If so, please describe and estimate any impacts the proposed project may have.

There are wetlands and surface waters as described in our Technical Proposal, and our outreach conveys education on actions others can take to protect the places.

When was the water delivery system constructed?

The watershed contains some water delivery systems that exceed 100 years of age. Our outreach and education project does not directly impact these systems.

Will the proposed project result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)? If so, state when those features were constructed and describe the nature and timing of any extensive alterations or modifications to those features completed previously.

Our project does not directly result in any modifications or effects on an irrigation system.

Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?

Our watershed has such features but these are not directly impacted by our education and outreach project.

Are there any known archeological sites in the proposed project area?

Our watershed has many such sites but these are not directly impacted by our education and outreach project.

#### **D.2.2.5. Required Permits or Approvals**

No permits or approvals are necessary for this education and outreach project.

#### **D.2.2.6. Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement Applicants**

Other watershed projects address resiliency efforts, and our project will coordinate and share information on these projects as that is part of this project proposal to reduce siloing of information and engagement. Our described work does not duplicate any proposal or project that has been submitted for funding consideration to any other potential funding source, however we continue to fundraise for supporting the Russian River Collaborative work. If at any time a proposal is awarded funds that would be duplicative of the funding requested from Reclamation, we will notify the our point of contact or the Program Coordinator immediately.

#### **D.2.2.7. Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**

The North Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council doing business as Conservation Works certifies that no actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission. We require our Board Members to file yearly conflict of interest statements.

#### **D.2.2.8. Uniform Audit Reporting Statement**

Our organization is not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If future years require such an audit, the audit will be performed and we will provide our Employer Identification Number (EIN) associated with that report and state where it is available, including through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website.



Resolution No. 2024-004

**AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR WATERSMART GRANT FOR DEVELOPING A  
COLLABORATIVE WATERSHED GROUP–RUSSIAN RIVER CONFLUENCE**

WHEREAS, the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council is doing business as Conservation Works;

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024 has issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) No. R23AS00362; and

WHEREAS, procedures in NOFO No. R23AS00362 require the applicant to certify by resolution the approval of application before submission of said application to the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the applicant may enter into an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation to carry out a project titled Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group–Russian River Confluence.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council has previously authorizes either of two people to negotiate and enter into agreements--Executive Officer Oona Heacock or Treasurer Susan Warner--up to awards of \$2,000,000, and expressly continues to authorize these people to negotiate agreements with the Bureau of Reclamation for the Collaborative Watershed Group–Russian River Confluence project.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council approved the filing of an application for grant program funds and certifies that funds under the jurisdiction of the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council Board of Directors are available to begin the project.

Approved and adopted the 28th day of August 2024.

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution No. 2024-004 was duly adopted by the following electronic emailed vote:

Ayes:   5   Noes:   0   Absent:   2  

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Peter Braudrick".

---

Peter Braudrick, President

## APPENDIX 1

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT





COUNTY OF SONOMA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, RM. 100A  
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403  
(707) 565-2241



August 13, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The Fifth District of Sonoma County is a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC), and has appreciated the ongoing collaboration support of Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council). Their organization's fiscal sponsorship support since 2019 has helped our collaborative efforts begin to develop a workable structure that will benefit all of our members' work in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program, and support the proposal as an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on [select those that are most important to your organization, or identify other issues that you have a particular focus]:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Foster sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.



COUNTY OF SONOMA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, RM. 100A  
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403  
(707) 565-2241



- Expand opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Minimize conflicts over water use and land management in the watershed by serving as a collaborative platform for addressing disputes through increased dialogue and negotiation, helping to find mutually beneficial solutions.

Sincerely,

Lynda Hopkins  
Supervisor – District 5, Sonoma County, Board of Supervisors



**AG + OPEN SPACE**  
SONOMA COUNTY

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space) is an original member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) and has appreciated the ongoing collaboration and support of Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council). Their organization's fiscal sponsorship since 2019 has helped our collaborative efforts begin to develop a workable structure that will benefit the work of all our members in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.


We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program, and support the proposal as an important step in creating a lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient, and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on the following:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.
- Expanding opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.

We appreciate your consideration of their proposal as the funding is critical to meeting our shared goals of a healthy and resilient watershed.

Sincerely,

  
Misti Arias (Aug 26, 2024 16:29 PDT)

Misti Arias  
General Manager

**SONOMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, RM. 100A  
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403



**JAMES GORE**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT SUPERVISOR**  
Email: [District4@sonoma-county.org](mailto:District4@sonoma-county.org)  
Phone: 707-228-9521

August 19, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The County of Sonoma is a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC), and has appreciated the ongoing collaboration support of Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council). Their organization's fiscal sponsorship support since 2019 has helped our collaborative efforts begin to develop a workable structure that will benefit all of our members' work in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program, and support the proposal as an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed.

We recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Foster sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.

- Expand opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Minimize conflicts over water use and land management in the watershed by serving as a collaborative platform for addressing disputes through increased dialogue and negotiation, helping to find mutually beneficial solutions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Gore', with a stylized, cursive script.

James Gore  
Fourth District Sonoma County Supervisor  
National Association of Counties (NACo) President



900 Sanford Road  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
Ph. 707.527.9277  
Fx. 707.527.5075  
[www.lagunafoundation.org](http://www.lagunafoundation.org)

**Board of Directors**

Dr. Morgan Marchbanks, *President*  
John Dell'Osso, *V. President*  
Janine Barnes, *Treasurer*  
Barbara Zarakov, *Secretary*  
Clayton Creager  
Arthur Deike  
Michael Shklovsky  
Wendy Eliot

**Staff**

Anne Morkill  
*Executive Director*  
  
Christine Fontaine  
*Director of Education Programs*  
  
Adrienne Gause  
*Administrative Director*  
  
Heather Baggett  
*Administrative Assistant*  
  
Ashley Carreno  
*Environmental Education Coordinator*  
  
Danielle Carney  
*Conservation Science Specialist*  
  
Sierra Castillo  
*Development and Communications Manager*  
  
Sarah Gordon  
*Conservation Science Program Director*  
  
Maggie Hart  
*Outreach Manager*  
  
Elias Lopez  
*Restoration Field Supervisor*  
  
Ayla Mills  
*Nursery Program Manager*  
  
Brent Reed  
*Stewardship Program Director*  
  
Asa Voight  
*Preserve Manager*  
  
Debra Wright  
*Accounting Manager*

August 20, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber,

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit conservation organization established in 1989 in Sonoma County, California. The Laguna de Santa Rosa is a large freshwater wetland complex and the largest sub watershed of the Russian River. We are a member organization of the **Russian River Confluence (RRC)** and we have appreciated the ongoing collaborative support of Conservation Works in reviving the RRC and beginning to develop a sustainable structure that will benefit all of our members' work in watershed protection and resiliency. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

We support Conservation Works' grant proposal titled "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" to support an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed. Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Foster sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.
- Expand opportunities for restoration activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anne Morkill  
Executive Director



SONOMA  
COUNTY  
REGIONAL  
PARKS

*Bert Whitaker*  
*Director*

August 12, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber,

Sonoma County Regional Parks is proud to be a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) and values the ongoing collaborative support provided by Conservation Works, also known as the North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council. Since 2019, their organization's fiscal sponsorship has been instrumental in establishing a functional framework that benefits all our members' efforts in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued partnership in the years ahead.

We have reviewed the grant proposal, "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group," for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program. We wholeheartedly support this proposal as a crucial step toward achieving lasting impacts for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We are committed to our continued participation in the RRC collaborative to drive community action toward a healthy, resilient, and regenerative Russian River watershed.

We specifically recognize the importance of enhancing collaborations to expand opportunities for restoration activities that:

- Enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Engage interested parties in solving watershed issues, ensuring all voices are heard and solutions are equitable.
- Provide education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Foster the sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and enable adaptive management practices.

Thank you for considering our support for this vital initiative. We are eager to continue our collaboration and contribute to the sustainability and prosperity of the Russian River watershed.

Sincerely,

Bert Whitaker, Director

2300 County Center Dr.  
Suite 120A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
(707) 565-2041  
[SonomaCountyParks.org](http://SonomaCountyParks.org)





707.462.3664  
410 Jones St., Suite C-3  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
[www.mcrcd.org](http://www.mcrcd.org)

August 19, 2024

Robin Graber  
Water SMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD) is a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) and has appreciated the ongoing collaborative support of Conservation Works, also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council. Conservation Works' fiscal sponsorship support since 2019 has helped RRC with collaborative efforts begin to address watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

I have reviewed the proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" to the BOR's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program. MCRCD supports the proposal because it will serve as an important step in creating a lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. MCRCD commits to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help guide community action towards a healthier, resilient, and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, MCRCD recognizes the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving water supply issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard, and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to encourage conservation and sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and government agencies.
- Expand opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. D. Scriven".

Joseph D. Scriven  
Assistant Executive Director





Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Graber:

The Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District is a member of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) and has appreciated the ongoing collaboration support of Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council). Conservation Works' fiscal sponsorship support since 2019 has helped our collaborative efforts begin to develop a workable structure to benefit our members' work in watershed protection and resiliency throughout the basin. We look forward to continued participation in the years ahead.

We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program and support the proposal as an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard, and solutions are equitable.
- Expand opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Minimize conflicts over water use and land management in the watershed by serving as a collaborative platform for addressing disputes through increased dialogue and negotiation, helping to find mutually beneficial solutions.

Sincerely,

*Brittany Jensen*

Brittany Jensen, Executive Director



**MEMBER AGENCIES**

- City of Cloverdale
- City of Cotati
- City of Healdsburg
- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Sebastopol
- City of Ukiah
- County of Mendocino
- County of Sonoma
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Town of Windsor

**ANDY RODGERS**  
Executive Director

300 Seminary Avenue  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 508-3670

[info@rrwatershed.org](mailto:info@rrwatershed.org)  
[www.rrwatershed.org](http://www.rrwatershed.org)

August 15, 2024

SENT VIA: EMAIL

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

**SUBJECT:** Grant Proposal—Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group

Dear Robin:

Serving as Executive Director for the Russian River Watershed Association (RRWA), I am writing to express support for Conservation Works' application for funding of the Russian River Confluence (RRC) through the Bureau of Reclamation Water Smart Collaborative Grant program.

The RRWA is a coalition of ten cities, counties, and special districts in the Russian River watershed that have come together to coordinate regional programs for clean water, habitat restoration, and watershed enhancement, and has long prioritized efforts like this one that promote the sustainability and resiliency of our region's water resources.

We have reviewed the grant proposal "Russian River Confluence: Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group" for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program and support the proposal as an important step in creating lasting impact for water resiliency in the Russian River watershed. We commit to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed.

Specifically, we recognize the importance of enhancing collaboration on:

- Engagement by interested parties on solving issues in the watershed to help ensure that all voices are heard, and solutions are equitable.
- Education and outreach to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices among residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Sharing of watershed activities, data, and monitoring information to inform decision-making and allow for adaptive management practices.

- Expanding opportunities for restoration and prevention activities that enhance habitat quality, improve water quality, and increase the watershed's resilience to climate change.
- Minimizing conflicts over water use and land management in the watershed by serving as a collaborative platform for addressing disputes through increased dialogue and negotiation, helping to find mutually beneficial solutions.

We thank you for your consideration to fully fund this important regional water resiliency project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andy Rodgers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andy Rodgers, RRWA Executive Director



August 27, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation - Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Subject: Support for Conservation Works' Proposal *Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group - Russian River Confluence*

Dear Ms. Graber:

On behalf of the steering committee of the Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP), we are pleased to support Conservation Works' Bureau of Reclamation Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal *Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group – Russian River Confluence*. The R3MP was established in 2019, coinciding with the establishment of the Russian River Confluence (RRC), and provides the scientific information necessary for successful long-term management of Russian River watershed health, in the context of climate change, land use change, and population growth. The R3MP is envisioned as an integral part of a scientific enterprise centered on the watershed and is closely aligned with the mission, vision, and goals of the RRC.

Since 2019 Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council) has served as the fiscal sponsor for the RRC, a critical function that has supported RRC's collaborative watershed protection and resiliency efforts throughout the watershed. Both the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) and the City of Santa Rosa, the state and local governments that we represent as co-chairs of the R3MP, have supported the RRC since its inception. We have reviewed Conservation Works proposal and believe the requested funding and scope of work will allow the RRC to further coalesce into a well-functioning watershed collaborative, able to advance key initiatives aimed at improved outreach and education, data and information sharing to inform watershed management decision-making, and implementation of projects designed to enhance the watershed's resilience to the impacts of climate change. The RRC serves as the venue for collaboration among the organizations and interests working to protect the Russian River watershed, and with additional funding Conservation Works will be ideally suited to provide the administration and organization necessary for the RRC collaborative to achieve critical initiatives the collaborative envisions together.

The San Francisco Estuary Institute – Aquatic Science Center (SFEI-ASC) has been under contract with the Regional Water Board since 2017 to provide the administrative, governance, and technical support for the R3MP. SFEI-ASC, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, is a leading science and environmental research organization of the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary and beyond and has been increasingly providing information and services in the Russian River watershed and the entire north coast of California. Several of the key tasks included in Conservation Works proposal, including the development of a Communications and Outreach Strategy (Task 4), planning and implementing the first Annual Convening Conference on the State of the Watershed (Task 5), and developing a Funding Plan (Task 6) would be partially supported by SFEI-ASC on behalf of the R3MP. Though the steering committee of the R3MP is comprised of a diverse group of representatives from state, local, and tribal governments, special districts, and nongovernmental organizations, the R3MP will benefit from continued coordination with Conservation Works on outreach and communication of our overlapping interests and goals. Further, conducting outreach and education and convening a “state of the watershed” conference is a longstanding goal of the R3MP, and SFEI-ASC’s coordination with Conservation Works through this grant will make that goal a reality. Finally, developing funding plans for both RRC and R3MP to secure sustainable funding for both entities is fundamental for the long-term success of these critical watershed enterprises.

The R3MP is committed to continued participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed. We strongly support Conservation Works’ proposal. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Matt St John (Aug 27, 2024 13:23 PDT)

Matt St John  
Environmental Program Manager  
Regional Water Board



Sean McNeil (Aug 27, 2024 12:49 PDT)

Sean McNeil  
Deputy Director of Environmental Services  
City of Santa Rosa

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## North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

August 21, 2024

Robin Graber  
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program  
Bureau of Reclamation - Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Subject: Support for Conservation Works' Proposal *Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group - Russian River Confluence*

Dear Ms. Graber:

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) is pleased to support Conservation Works' Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal *Developing a Collaborative Watershed Group – Russian River Confluence*. Since 2019 Conservation Works (also known as North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council) has served as the fiscal sponsor for the Russian River Confluence (RRC), a critical function that has supported RRC's collaborative watershed protection and resiliency efforts throughout the watershed. The Regional Water Board, a member organization of the RRC, is the water quality regulatory agency for the California North Coast which includes the Russian River watershed. Our mission is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of North Coast water resources and our vision statement "Healthy watersheds. Effective regulation. Strong partnerships." closely aligns with the purpose and goals of the RRC.

As a member of RRC's steering committee, we have reviewed Conservation Works proposal and believe the requested funding and scope of work will allow the RRC to further coalesce into a well-functioning watershed collaborative, able to advance key initiatives aimed at improved outreach and education, data and information sharing to inform watershed management decision-making, and implementation of projects designed to enhance the watershed's resilience to the impacts of climate change. The RRC serves as the venue for collaboration among the organizations and interests working to protect the Russian River watershed. However, without funding for administration and governance of the collaborative, the RRC could falter and risk advancement of key initiatives that can only be realized through collaboration. Conservation Works is well poised to administer the collaborative and to provide the necessary organization and leadership to achieve critical initiatives the collaborative envisions.

Though the steering committee of the RRC is made up of a diverse group of organizations, the RRC will benefit from development of a Communications and Outreach Strategy, which will allow expanded outreach and collaboration with diverse stakeholders, importantly including with Tribes and disadvantaged communities within the watershed. Engagement with the diverse interest groups in the watershed will strengthen partnerships, foster collaboration, and result in positive action towards watershed resilience.

The Regional Water Board is committed to ongoing participation in the RRC collaborative to help drive community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed. We strongly support this proposal. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Valerie Quinto  
Executive Officer

## OTHER APPLICATION STATEMENTS AND COMPONENTS

### **D.2.2.4. Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance**

Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment (e.g., soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat)? No, as this is an outreach and engagement project with no on-the-ground restoration activities.

Please briefly describe all earth-disturbing work and any work that will affect the air, water, or animal habitat in the project area. There will be no earth-disturbing work in this project.

Please also explain the impacts of such work on the surrounding environment and any steps that could be taken to minimize the impacts. There will be no earth-disturbing work in this project.

Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a Federal threatened or endangered species, or designated critical habitat in the project area? If so, would they be affected by any activities associated with the proposed project?

There are endangered and threatened species as described in our Technical Proposal, and our outreach conveys education on actions others can take to protect the species.

Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as “Waters of the United States”? If so, please describe and estimate any impacts the proposed project may have.

There are wetlands and surface waters as described in our Technical Proposal, and our outreach conveys education on actions others can take to protect the places.

When was the water delivery system constructed?

The watershed contains some water delivery systems that exceed 100 years of age. Our outreach and education project does not directly impact these systems.

Will the proposed project result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)? If so, state when those features were constructed and describe the nature and timing of any extensive alterations or modifications to those features completed previously.

Our project does not directly result in any modifications or effects on an irrigation system.

Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?

Our watershed has such features but these are not directly impacted by our education and outreach project.



Are there any known archeological sites in the proposed project area?

Our watershed has many such sites but these are not directly impacted by our education and outreach project.

**D.2.2.5. Required Permits or Approvals**

No permits or approvals are necessary for this education and outreach project.

**D.2.2.6. Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement Applicants**

Other watershed projects address resiliency efforts, and our project will coordinate and share information on these projects as that is part of this project proposal to reduce siloing of information and engagement. Our described work does not duplicate any proposal or project that has been submitted for funding consideration to any other potential funding source, however we continue to fundraise for supporting the Russian River Collaborative work. If at any time a proposal is awarded funds that would be duplicative of the funding requested from Reclamation, we will notify the our point of contact or the Program Coordinator immediately.

**D.2.2.7. Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**

The North Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council doing business as Conservation Works certifies that no actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission. We require our Board Members to file yearly conflict of interest statements.

**D.2.2.8. Uniform Audit Reporting Statement**

Our organization is not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If future years require such an audit, the audit will be performed and we will provide our Employer Identification Number (EIN) associated with that report and state where it is available, including through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website.

## CITIES INVOLVED

Ukiah, Mendocino County, CA

Cloverdale, Sonoma County, CA

Healdsburg, Sonoma County, CA

Windsor, Sonoma County, CA

Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, CA

Rohnert Park, Sonoma County, CA

Cotati, Sonoma County CA

Sebastopol, Sonoma County, CA