

# **First Annual Report**

## **Mendocino County Russian River Main Stem Diverters**

### **Water Demand Management Program**

**Submitted: September 1, 2015**

**Submit below information for each APPROVED WDMP Property by September 1st to:**  
[Kyle.Wooldridge@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Kyle.Wooldridge@waterboards.ca.gov)

**CC: [Kathy.Mrowka@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Kathy.Mrowka@waterboards.ca.gov) and [John.O'Hagan@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:John.O'Hagan@waterboards.ca.gov)**

### **Updates to Inventory**

(Below, please provide any updates to the initial inventory that was submitted on March or May 15th if applicable)

### **2015 Frost Season Frost Water Diversion Information Pursuant to 23 CCR 862 (c)(1)(E).**

( Please fill out and attach the 2015 frost season water diversion reporting spreadsheets

### **Stream Stage Monitoring Data**

The main stem of the Russian River currently has a number of United States Geological Survey (USGS) gages in place along the river. The USGS maintains the gages and also provides the technical support to ensure the quality of the data that is collected. These gages are available online for reference by the individual WDMP members, the fisheries agencies and the SWRCB to access and review. Data recording intervals meet the requirements described in 23 CCR 862 (c)(2). The gages relevant to Mendocino County and to this WDMP include:

USGS gage 11462080 (Russian River Near Talmage)

USGS gage 11462500 (Russian River Near Hopland)

USGS gage 11463000 (Russian River Near Cloverdale)

Following the installation of the Talmage USGS gage in 2009 to improve river management for frost protection, no additional gages have been deemed necessary to install at this time.

For the 2015 frost season, each individual participating in this WDMP identified the USGS gage that is downstream from their diversion through the online reporting tool described below. This information was provided to the Sonoma County Water Agency to assist with coordination of river management by reach.

Each individual participant agreed to report their anticipated frost water demand (both direct diversions and pond recharge) through an online reporting tool by 6 p.m. on the evening of an anticipated frost event. The 6 p.m. deadline was

a change from the original 10 p.m. deadline that was approved in the initial WDMP submittal in February. The reporting time change was made at the request of SCWA in order to better manage main stem flows for anticipated frost protection demand.

Moving the online reporting deadline to 6 p.m. made it challenging for WDMP participants to accurately determine if frost water use would actually be necessary during an anticipated frost event later that evening or within the early hours of the next morning. This was especially true for diverters using direct diversion methods or licensed underflow wells. Individuals using stored water had more flexibility to determine recharge and the reporting deadline change was not as challenging.

Due to the reporting time change and related challenges for accurately predicting the need for frost water, some diverters were later than the 6 p.m. deadline for submitting reports or water use was reported by the 6 p.m. deadline, but in reality was not utilized due to lack of frost conditions. For the 2015 frost season, there were some frost events that were anticipated that never materialized so water was not needed and there were some frost events that were not expected that required water use. This is the challenge for trying to predict possible water demand for a frost event that may or may not occur 8-12 hours in advance. Communication via email or telephone continued with SCWA to augment the online reporting tool information to assist with flow management during the frost season.

To work on improving the online frost water use diversion reporting, representatives from SCWA, RRFC, the Mendocino County Farm Bureau, the California Land Stewardship Institute (contracted with RRFC to set up and maintain online reporting tool and provide reports to SCWA) and WDMP participants were in contact via email and/or telephone to discuss what was being reported using the online reporting tool, anticipated weather conditions and potential frost events. On April 17th, a conference call was held with the above named representatives to discuss how the current reporting process was working in relation to river management, suggestions for changes to the current reporting process and options for the 6 p.m. reporting deadline. The WDMP participants expressed the challenges of reporting anticipated demand by 6 p.m. and SCWA explained the need for the earlier notification to ensure the river flows could be managed. From this conversation, it was determined that overall for the first attempt at using the online reporting tool that the system was working fairly well. The 6 p.m. reporting deadline remained in place and WDMP participants were reminded throughout the 2015 frost season to report anticipated water demand as close to 6 p.m. as possible.

Each individual WDMP member was able to print out an email receipt acknowledging that they reported anticipated frost water demand and/or diversions using the online tool. These receipts are included as an attachment in this annual WDMP report.

## **Progress Toward Development of Protective Stream Stages**

Flows and ramping rates for the mainstem of the Russian River have been established by the Biological Opinion (BO) for Water Supply, Flood Control Operations, and Channel Maintenance conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District (RRFC) in the Russian River watershed (NMFS 2008). All mainstem flows are managed to be compliant with the 2008 BO Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) by SCWA. The BO can be found here: <http://www.scwa.ca.gov/rrifr/>

It is the intent of this WDMP to be compliant with the established stages, flows and ramping rates for the mainstem of the Russian River established in the BO. Each individual WDMP participant was responsible for coordinating their diversions with the SCWA, who is responsible for the operations of Coyote Dam and maintaining minimum instream flows as stated in the BO.

There were no notifications of any violations of the established stages, flows and ramping rates for the mainstem of the Russian River established in the BO during the 2015 frost season.

### **Consultation With Agencies**

Per the 2015 Main Stem Russian River WDMP, consultations with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) will occur on an as needed basis. Since the initial WDMP consultations with the fishery agencies at the end of January, there has not been any communication from the agencies regarding the WDMP.

During the consultations with the fisheries agencies early in 2015, it was indicated that NMFS was unsure of what the scope of their involvement would be with the WDMP development and implementation. To date, there has been no clarification made on how or if NMFS will be engaged in the process so no additional contact has been made. DFW was engaged in the initial consultation for the WDMP, but there was no need to consult with DFW during the 2015 frost season.

The fishery agencies have been contacted to schedule a discussion regarding the Main Stem Russian River WDMP prior to the 2016 frost season.