



Community Accountability and Engagement Plan

**North Edwards Water District
13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93523**

March 2022

**Completed by California Rural Water Association/Specialized Utility Services
Program (CRWA/SUSP)**

Approved by: State Water Board | DATE

**California Rural Water Association/Specialized Utility Services
Program (CRWA/SUSP)**

Dan DeMoss

1234 N. Market Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95834

916-616-7761 ddeomss@calruralwater.org

State Water Resources Control Board | SAFER Program

Reyna Rodriguez

State Water Resources Control Board – Division of Drinking Water

265 W. Bullard Avenue, Suite 101, Fresno, CA 93704

DDW-Administrator@waterboards.ca.gov

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Executive Summary

This Community Accountability and Engagement Plan (Plan) was prepared by **California Rural Water Association/Specialized Utility Services Program (CRWA/SUSP)**, the current Administrator for **North Edwards Water District**, located at **13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93523**.

This Plan provides a framework for the appointed Administrator to engage meaningfully with the community served by **North Edwards Water District**.

The purpose of this Plan:

Administrator responsibilities to engage in meaningful communication with the North Edwards Water District community are to effectively outline the pathways for community members to access information about the program administrator, the actions and priorities designated by the administrator to bring the community into compliance with the SDWA and review ongoing and future planned activities by priority that will be implemented to bring the community water system into compliance.

- The Administrator will work to establish effective community communications by implementing a new website.
- Provide updates via billing stuffers.
- Establish local community ties with civic organizations that may be active in the area.
- Put together a quarterly newsletter that will provide information on the administrator's activity and document the efforts toward water quality compliance.
- Provide relevant information regarding bottled water programs.
- Provide resource information on health effects and updated information on the utility's routine work in the field along with office hours and other meeting information.
- The board of the district meets monthly on the third Monday of each month and the community is always encouraged to attend. We hope that with the new website <https://newd.myruralwater.com/> that we will see more participation and questions at the monthly board meetings. Board meetings are announced via public posting of the agenda. The agenda is available for view five days prior to each meeting posted on the bulletin at the local Sunshine Market store located at **13015 Claymine Rd, Edwards, CA 93523** and at the Water District office door located at **13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93523**.

- Opportunities for Community feedback will be available via board meeting attendance held every third Monday of each month through the district office located at: **13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93523**, directly where staff assist community members daily, and possibly through the school district office where we are seeking to provide community education and factsheet material in partnership with the district. Members of the public can also call: **(760) 769-4520**.

The main means of communication on a regular basis will be:

- The district's website <https://newd.myruralwater.com/>
- Open office hours for actual physical interactions, at: **13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93523**. Hours: **Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9AM – 4PM**.
- The current office admin person is bilingual and assists Spanish speaking customers on a daily basis.
- Monthly Board meetings as announced via posting of the board agenda at the Sunshine Market located at **13015 Claymine Rd, Edwards, CA 93523** and the district office door at **13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93523**.
- Quarterly newsletter available on the website: <https://newd.myruralwater.com/> and inserted in the bill.
- Written communication can be made via the district's main email address listed on the website and all written communication, including billing.
- The community may also make a direct inquiry or comment via an online form on the website <https://newd.myruralwater.com/> which will be monitored during business hours **Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9AM – 4PM**.
- The website <https://newd.myruralwater.com/> will also feature an FAQ area that will address a lot of common questions about the administrator's program, water quality, and the progress of planned projects that will make the system viable and compliant with drinking water quality standards.
- The administrator will also be available personally at community meetings and project meetings.
- The administrator will provide regular public meetings when there is information that is new and directly related to the project status for compliance and management of the district. Public meetings need to be timely and informative and done with purpose.

The administrator will be reviewing questions and comments:

- Submitted by community members whether submitted via phone, email, website, or in-person including those made at community meetings and will respond within a in a reasonable timeframe.
- Written comments will be answered within two business days.
- Community meetings will be monitored for questions and concerns and anything coming out of those meetings that cannot be readily answered will be receive a response within 3 business days after the meeting.
- An example agenda for these community meetings is provided in the section below.
- Monthly activity reports are given at each board meeting and the community will have access to those reports via the website <https://newd.myruralwater.com/>
- Feedback from the public will be reviewed by the administrator and the board of directors with direction taken from the board of directors on any feedback given by the public, in any format any corrective action based on feedback given will be implemented by the Administrator per the direction of the Board of Directors.

The Community Accountability and Engagement Plan will include:

- Quarterly meetings starting in April 2022. These meetings will discuss ongoing projects and operational updates for the district. An example agenda and meeting notice can be seen as attachments A and B.
- The district also conducts monthly board meetings to which members of the community are invited to attend. The date, time, and location for the meeting is posted in accordance with the Brown Act for public notification and future agendas will be posted on the district's website.
- The district will have an inquiry form and feedback section on their website <https://newd.myruralwater.com/>. The district is implementing a new website that came online Wednesday, November 24th, 2021 and made public starting December 3rd, 2021. The website along with email will be monitored daily.
- The district will maintain a staffed office at which customers and members of the community may contact District staff either in-person at: **13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93523**, or via phone: **(760) 769-4520** or email: newd@verizon.net during regular business hours: **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9AM to 4PM**. Business hours will be posted so that the community knows when they may be able to reach District staff.

SAFER Drinking Water Program

Roles and Responsibilities

Administrator

All actions taken by an administrator shall be in the best interests of the community served and are intended to ensure the designated water system has adequate technical, managerial, and financial capacity to deliver an adequate supply of affordable, safe drinking water so that the services of the administrator are no longer necessary.

The specific Administrator responsibilities are detailed in the [Administrator Policy Handbook](#) Section 9: Obligations of Full-Scope Administrators in the Administrator Policy Handbook. For a copy of this handbook, please contact **DDW-Administrator@Waterboards.ca.gov**.

State Water Board

The SAFER Program is a set of tools, funding sources, and regulatory authorities designed to ensure Californians who currently lack safe and affordable drinking water receive it as quickly as possible:

Through its Division of Drinking Water, the State Water Board is responsible for enforcing federal and state drinking water statutes and regulating over 7,400 public water systems.

Through its Office of Public Participation, the State Water Board provides community engagement assistance to support effective public participation in State Water Board decisions and actions.

1.0 Introduction

This Community Accountability and Engagement Plan (Plan) describes the activities **California Rural Water Association/Specialized Utility Services Program (CRWA/SUSP)** will take to meaningfully engage with the community, how the Administrator will communicate and provide project information to the community, a timeline for public participation activities and public meetings, how the Administrator will incorporate input from the community, and how the Administrator will be held accountable. The Administrator will update the Plan, as necessary, to reflect changes in this process or surrounding community.

This plan is organized in the following sections:

- Section 2.0: North Edwards Water District
 - 2.1 Water System Issues
 - 2.2 Community Profile
- Section 3.0 Community Engagement and Communications
 - 3.1: Public Meetings
 - 3.2: Public Meeting Logistics
 - 3.3: Recommendations
 - 3.4 Communication Strategies
 - 3.5 Accountability
- Section 4.0: Appendices
 - Appendix A – Sample Meeting Notification
 - Appendix B – Sample Meeting Agenda
 - Appendix C – Sample Water Bill Insert
 - Appendix D – Sample Community Survey

2.0 North Edwards Water District

2.1 Water System Issues

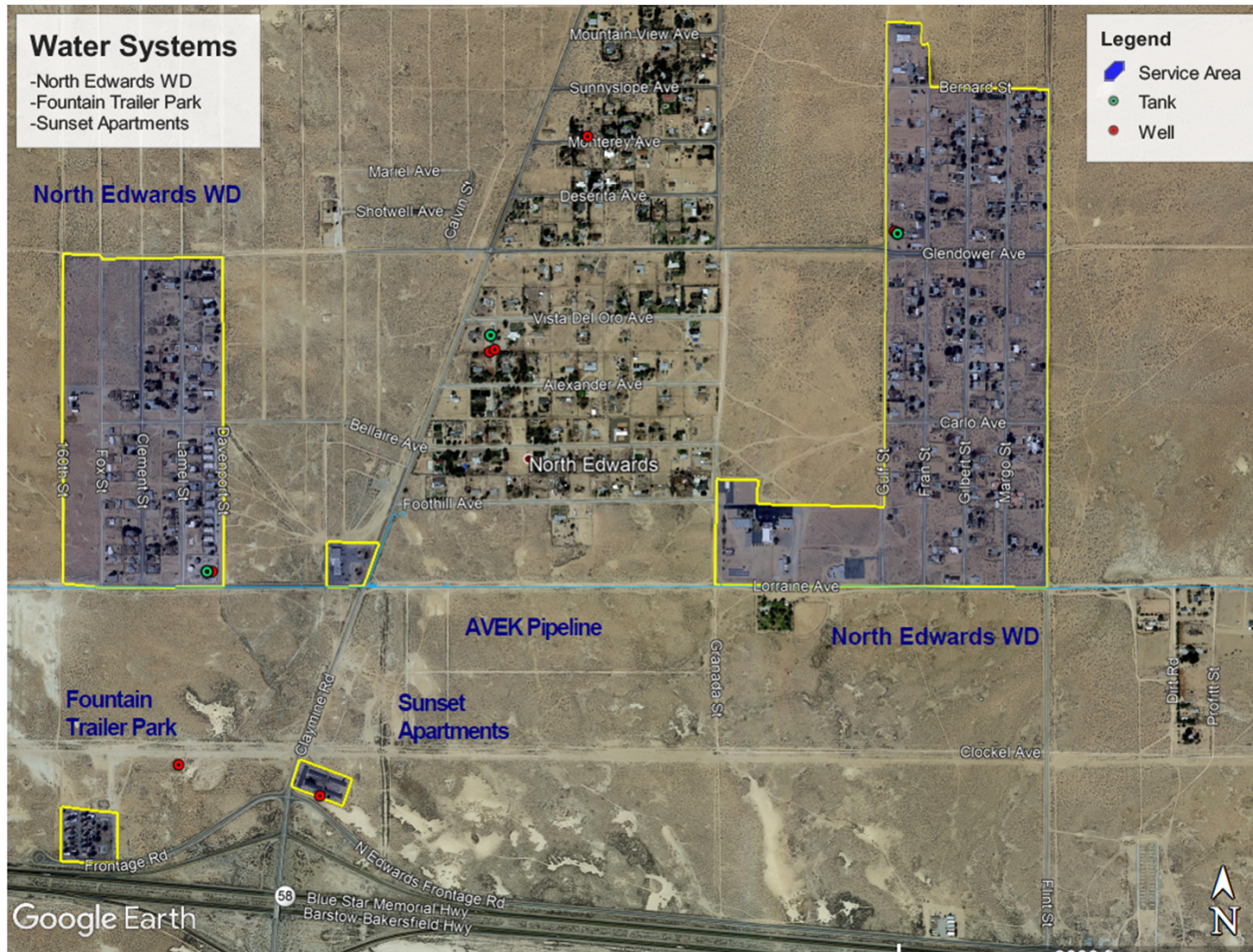
The water system is located at **13525 Fran Street North Edwards, CA 93523**

(Figure 1) Water System Issues

Primary MCL Violations	Arsenic MCL violation. Compliance order 03-19-090-038 issued in 2009 and USEPA notice of violation issued July 2019. Health effects. "Some people who drink water containing arsenic in excess of the MCL over many years may experience skin damage or circulatory system problems and may have an increased risk of getting cancer."
Governance or Board Issues	Unable to secure insurance beyond July 1, 2020, and subsequent lack of staff or adequate board members to effectively manage and/or operate the water system.

(Figure 2) – North Edwards Water District Map

This map shows North Edwards Water District’s service area as well as the locations of Fountain Trailer Park and Sunset Apartments; two nearby water systems that also have elevated levels of arsenic and are being consolidated into North Edwards Water District. Also shown is the Antelope Valley East Kern (AVEK) pipeline, which is a nearby source of drinking water that meets all regulatory standards.



2.2 Community Profile

The **North Edwards Water District** serves **944** people across **217** service connections. Information regarding the demographics of the North Edwards community were obtained from census tract data obtained from [EJ Screen American Community Survey \(ACS\) Summary Report \(North Edwards\)](#), is summarized in the table below.

EJSCREEN is an environmental justice mapping and screening tool that provides a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and demographic indicators: <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/what-ejscreen>.

Table 1 – North Edwards Population Details^[1]

Category	Count	Percentage
Total Population	850	100%
Population Reporting One Race	817	96%
White	706	83%
African American	40	5%
Asian	8	1%
Native American	0	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%
Two or More Races	33	4%
Hispanic or Latinx	235	28%
Population by Sex		
Male	478	56%
Female	372	44%
Population 25+ by Educational Attainment		
Total	628	100%
Less than 9 th Grade	29	5%
9 th - 12 th Grade, No Diploma	39	6%
High School Graduate (25 and Older)	271	43%

Some College, No Degree	249	40%
Associate Degree	41	6%
Bachelor's Degree or more	40	6%
Linguistically Isolated Households		
Total	841	100%
Speak Spanish	0	0%
Speak other Indo-European Languages	0	0%
Speak Asian-Pacific Island Languages	0	0%
Households by Household Income		
Household Income Base		
<\$15,000	67	20%
\$15,000 - \$25,000	5	1%
\$25,000 - \$50,000	81	24%
\$50,000 - \$75,000	92	28%
\$75,000 +	88	26%
Occupied Housing Units by Tenure		
Total	334	100%
Owner Occupied	180	54%
Renter Occupied	154	46%

[1] [EJ Screen American Community Survey \(ACS\) Summary Report \(North Edwards\)](#), U.S. Census Bureau.

The demographic information shows 86% of the population identifies as White. 43% of the population have completed high school and 40% have completed college or some college education. Household income levels range from 20% of the population have an income of less than \$15,000 to 24% have an income of \$25,000 - \$50,000 28% have an income between \$50,000 - \$75,000, and 26% have an income of \$75,000+. Since 0% of the population is linguistically isolated, project communications should be held in English.

3.0 Community Engagement and Communications

3.1 Public Meetings

It is anticipated that the community will be interested in the actions and activities of the designated Administrator because it includes work that directly impacts residents and customers within this water system. The activities described below will be conducted to provide accurate information to facilitate understanding and input.

Regular Public Meetings: CRWA/SUSP will host a public meeting at minimum once every three months. The public meetings will provide the community updates on the following items:

- The performance of the water system.
- The water system's financial health.
- Major projects or plans.
- Changes to water rates; and
- Other significant matters related to the designated water system.

Additional Public Meetings: Prior to taking any of the following actions, **CRWA/SUSP** will discuss these actions during a regularly scheduled public meeting or convene an additional meeting as needed.

- Development of Community Accountability and Engagement Plan.
- Development of Post-Administrator Drinking Water Service Plan.
- Establishing a final operating budget.
- Entering significant long-term contracts.
- Approving and/or entering contracts for significant planning projects or infrastructure improvements,
- Entering significant financing commitments, including any financing contracts with the State Water Board,
- Adoption of final system policies, and
- Altering water rates.

3.2 Public Meeting Logistics

- **Location** - Meetings will be held in accordance to what is convenient for the community, in-person, virtually or through a combination of in-person and virtual methods (hybrid), depending on COVID-19 public health guidelines at the time of the meeting.
- **Meeting Notice** – The administrator will provide a public notice to all affected ratepayers, renters, and property owners a minimum of a ten-days prior to the public meeting. (See Appendix A)

- **Meeting agenda** – The administrator will provide a meeting agenda for each public meeting (See Appendix B)
- **Meeting summaries** – The administrator will provide a public meeting summary to the State Water Board within two weeks after the meeting.
- **Public comments** – The administrator will provide the public with an opportunity to provide public comments at every public meeting.
- **Language access services** – The administrator will provide translated written materials and oral interpretation in a language other than English if it is known that at least 5% of the community speaks that language or another language requested by the public.

Meeting logistics:

As of **April, 2022** public meetings will be held:

In-person at

Virtually via

Hybrid – virtually and in-person

At the North Edwards Water District Office: 13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93523 and via Zoom meetings

Unsure: _____

Public meeting notice: The administrator will provide a meeting notice at least 10-days before the meeting, in the language spoken in the community and will include details that include date, time, and location or meeting platform and point-of-contact information.

Meeting agenda:

The administrator will provide a meeting agenda at every public meeting.

Meeting summary:

The administrator will provide a meeting summary to the State Water Board at least two weeks after a public meeting has taken place.

Language access:

Based on the census tract data for the **North Edwards Water District** community demographics, materials will be provided in the following languages:

English

Spanish

Other _____

3.3 Recommendations

Pre-Meeting Recommendations

- While not required, the administrator can use the sample **community survey** template to assess the level of community interest in the project, preferred ways to communicate, language(s) spoken, and most suitable dates and times to host public meetings (see Appendix D).
- Prepare **public meeting notice**, **meeting agendas**, and **water bill inserts** and/or other meeting appropriate materials (see Appendices A, B, and C).

Post- Meeting Recommendations

- While not required, the administrator could upload meeting recordings onto the water system website.

CRWA/SUSP will take the following pre- and post-meeting actions:

- Conduct a community survey
- Use public meeting notices
- Use meeting agendas
- Use bill inserts
- Develop e-mail reminders
- Regularly update website
- Develop meeting summaries
- Upload meeting recording to website
- Other _____

3.4 Communication Strategies

It is expected that the appointed administrator implements each of the following communication strategies:

- **Means of communication:** The administrator will provide regular updates to the community served by the best means identified or recommended by community and may include public meeting notices, newsletters, emails, the water system’s website, billing flyers, posting of flyers at central locations within the community, community repository, and/or other similar means of communication.

- **Language services:** The administrator will provide written materials in a language other than English if it is known that at least 5% of the community speaks that language or another language if requested by the public. If a need for another language identified, a member of the public can request these services by contacting the office by mail: **13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93523**; by phone: **(760) 769-4520**; or by email: newd@verizon.net at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.
- **Fact sheets/updates:** The administrator will provide fact sheets/updates in easy-to-understand non-technical language and should contain graphics/visuals to facilitate understanding by a lay audience. As demonstrated in the community demographic information, fact sheets/updates will be provided in **English** and in other languages spoken in the community.
- **Point-of-contact:** A designated point-of-contact will be listed on *all communications materials* for the public to contact for more information regarding actions and activities.
- **Mailing and key stakeholder e-mail lists:** Copies of the mailing list and key stakeholder list will be provided to the administrator electronically by the State Water Board. The administrator will use the water system mailing list and key stakeholder email distribution list to mail and/or email informational materials and public meeting notices. The key stakeholder list consists of representatives from community organizations and local and state agency representatives. These lists will be updated regularly by **CRWA/SUSP** to ensure accuracy and to add the addresses of individuals who request to be on the list. Copies of the mailing list and key stakeholder list will be provided to the administrator electronically by the State Water Board. **CRWA/SUSP** will also include residents, rate payers, landowners of Fountain Trailer Park and Sunset Apartments in the notification of public meetings and sharing of information.

CRWA/SUSP has identified the following methods as the most appropriate means of communicating with this community:

- Mail
- Email
- Text messages
- Fact sheets
- Newsletter
- Water system website: North Edwards Water District website: HYPERLINK <https://newd.myruralwater.com>
- Post flyers at identified centers of community (i.e. post office, markets)
- Water bill inserts

Community partners

Other _____

Point-of-contact name and contact information:

Name: **Dan DeMoss**

Organization: **CRWA/SUSP**

Address: **1234 North Market Blvd Sacramento 95834**

Phone: **916-616-7761**

Email: **ddemoss@calruralwater.org**

Table 3 – Community Accountability and Engagement Plan Timeline

Type of Action or Activity	Description or Purpose	Timeframe
<i>Establish a website with FAQ's and information on the community water quality issues and the administrator's program</i>	<i>Provide a viable communications channel for local community members to ask questions and receive information.</i>	December 2021
Community engagement will take place on a daily basis as people come in during office hours	<i>Office staff are trained, and written information will be given out as people come into the office.</i>	December 2021
Hold public meeting in April 2022 and then quarterly after the first meeting	<i>The public meetings will take place at the North Edwards Water District office located at 13525 Fran Street North Edwards, CA 93523.</i>	Monthly

3.5 Accountability

The Water Boards values community input and participation. This is who are we accountable to and why.

Respond to and incorporate community Input: Community input will be documented, considered, and incorporated in the following ways:

Community input will be received via email newd@verizon.net, in-person interactions, and formal community meetings. Response to questions and concerns will be documented and posted on the website on an ongoing basis.

Community input will be documented through office interactions, formal community meetings and via website email as they are received. Those community concerns will

be reviewed and evaluated by the administrator was well as the sitting board of directors in the monthly board meetings scheduled at 5 p.m. on the third Monday of every month located at the district office: **13525 Fran Street, North Edwards, CA 93525** and available via **Zoom** meetings link provided on posted agenda and available upon request to the district office via phone **(760) 769-4520** or via email newd@verizon.net with a response on actions taken in the newsletter and bill stuffers quarterly.

- **Public access to records:** The administrator shall make available the following documents to the public during business hours **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**
 - The current operating budget
 - The organization chart of all designated water system employees and management
 - Ownership information for the designated water system
 - Reports by auditors or other financial professionals regarding the budget or finances of the designated water system
 - Current contracts for professional services
 - All complaints regarding water system services to customers
 - Any approved Post Administrator Drinking Water Plan

Optional, such services can be offered through the establishment of an information repository at a central location in the community such as a public library, community center, school, etc. throughout the duration of the administrator. If feasible, the administrator shall make these documents available on the designated water system's website.

- **State Water Board Process to Submit Complaints and Petitions:** Any ratepayer, renter, or property owner who receives water from a designated water system which receives services from the administrator is entitled to submit a complaint or file a petition to the State Water Board for the reversal or modification of a decision of an administrator or substitution of the administrator.

To submit a complaint contact:

Reyna Rodriguez, Water Resources Control Engineer
Division of Drinking Water, State Water Resources Control Board
Phone: (559) 447-3485, Email: DDW-Administrator@waterboards.ca.gov
Mail: 265 W. Bullard Avenue, Suite 101, Fresno, CA 93704

To submit a petition:

Petitions may be submitted the following ways:

In person:

State Water Resources Control Board, Office of Chief Counsel
1001 "I" Street, 22nd Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Pamela Downing, Legal Secretary

By mail:

State Water Resources Control Board, Office of Chief Counsel
P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, CA 95812-0100
Attn: Pamela Downing, Legal Secretary

By email: DrinkingWaterPetitions@waterboards.ca.gov

By fax: (916) 341-5199

For more information, visit: [Drinking Water Petitions for Reconsideration | California State Water Resources Control Board](#)

4.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Sample Meeting Notification

Appendix B – Sample Meeting Agenda

Appendix C – Sample Water Bill Insert

Appendix D – Sample Community Survey

Appendix A – Sample Public Meeting Notice

Join us!

ADMINISTRATOR FOR **NORTH EDWARDS WATER SYSTEM** PUBLIC MEETING

A water system administrator is an entity or person appointed and funded by the State Water Board that helps failing water systems address their drinking water needs and find long-term solutions to water quality and system management.

Learn more about your drinking water, water rates, and upcoming plans to improve your drinking water system.

We will also cover:

- **[SPECIFIC TOPICS FOR THIS PUBLIC MEETING]**
 - **[Example – Water Rate Analysis]**
 - **[Example – Pending Contract with XXXX]**

Date/Time: **[DATE AND TIME]**

Location: **[ADDRESS]**

For more information, contact:

California Rural Water Association/Specialized Utility Services Program (CRWA/SUSP)

Dan DeMoss at (916) 553-4900, ddemoss@calruralwater.org or 1234 North Market Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95834.

Appendix B – Sample Public Meeting Agenda Template

PUBLIC MEETING # (Insert Meeting Number)

**California Rural Water Association/Specialized Utility Services
Program (CRWA/SUSP)**

North Edwards Water System

DAY OF THE WEEK, MONTH, DAY, 2022 from 00:00 PM – 00:00PM

Meeting Venue Name and Room, Meeting Venue Address or

INSERT Zoom Link and/or Conference Line

AGENDA

- I. Introductions & Overview of Meeting Format
- II. Required Public Meeting Updates:
 - Performance of the Water System
 - Overview of the Water System's Finances
 - Update on major projects or plans
 - Update on any changes to water rates
 - Update on significant matters related to the Water System
 - *Public Comments, Questions & Answers
- III. Public Comments will be recorded and considered by the Administrator
- IV. Next Public Meeting Date and Time
- V. Adjourn

Appendix C – Sample Water Bill Insert

Dear Resident:

California Rural Water Association/Specialized Utility Services (CRWA/SUSP) has been assigned by the State Water Resources Control Board to serve as an administrator.

A water system administrator is an entity or person appointed and funded by the State Water Board that helps failing water systems address their drinking water needs and find long-term solutions to water quality and system management.

To keep you up to date on the activities taking place to improve the North Edwards Water System, CRWA/SUSP will be hosting a public meeting at a minimum of every 3 months.

The first meeting will be held on DATE, TIME, LOCATION

For more information, call (###) ###-#### or email: ##### @ email.org

Sincerely,

Dan DeMoss, CRWA/SUSP

Appendix D- Community Survey Template (Optional Resource)

**[INSERT NAME] Water System
Community Questionnaire [MONTH YEAR]**

Please Print Clearly

Full Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: Number: _____

1) Have you participated in any public meetings regarding drinking water issues for [NAME] Water System?
(circle) Yes No

If no, why not?

3) What language(s) are spoken in this community? _____

4) Would you attend an in-person meeting related to the [NAME] Water System?

___ Yes ___ No If no, why?, _____

5) Would you participate in a virtual, online meeting, like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or on the phone?

___ Yes ___ No If, yes, do you prefer Zoom, Teams, or phone? (circle) ___ Yes ___ No

6) What is the best day of the week and time to hold a public meeting?

7) What is the best way to provide you with information regarding the [NAME] Water System? Please rate the following communication tools on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = least preferred and 5 = most preferred):

Small group meetings/discussions	1	2	3	4	5
Mailed fact sheets	1	2	3	4	5
Web site/internet	1	2	3	4	5
Information through schools	1	2	3	4	5
Information through churches	1	2	3	4	5
Public notices in a newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
Workshops (open houses)	1	2	3	4	5
Community/public meetings	1	2	3	4	5
E-mailed information	1	2	3	4	5
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	1	2	3	4	5
Information posted in public areas	1	2	3	4	5
Press releases/newspaper articles	1	2	3	4	5

8) Are there other ways for us to keep you better informed? (circle) Yes No

Please describe.