



Community Accountability and Engagement Plan

**Valley Ford Water Association
14405 Highway 1, Valley Ford, CA 94972**

June 2025

Completed by Russian River Utility Company - Administrator

Approved by: State Water Board | 2/20/2026

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Executive Summary

This Community Accountability and Engagement Plan (Plan) was prepared by **Russian River Utility**, the current Administrator for **Valley Ford Water Association**, located at **14405 Highway 1, Valley Ford, CA, 94972**.

This Plan provides a framework for the appointed Administrator to engage meaningfully with the community served by **Valley Ford Water Association**.

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

- Notices posted in multiple public locations
- Bill inserts or direct mailing

The administrator will be reviewing questions and comments:

- Via email
- Direct mailing
- Phone calls

The Community Accountability and Engagement Plan will include:

- Meetings held monthly, bi-monthly, or tri-monthly.
- Meeting location and time will be posted publicly and sent by mail.
- Notifications of meetings will be sent via email, and/or posted in multiple public locations.
- The public can provide feedback by email at rwater@sonic.net, or direct mailing. The direct mailing address is Russian River Utility, PO Box 730, Forestville, CA 95436. Questions/concerns/feedback will be included in an agenda for scheduled meetings.
- The Administrator will be available to address public questions/concerns at the scheduled meetings.

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 X: Obligations of 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 Engagement, Equity and Tribal Affairs, 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 **Russian River Utility** 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: Valley Ford Water Association
 - 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 Valley Ford Water Association

2.1 Water System Issues

Valley Ford Water Association has a number of issues that have required it to be placed on the State Water Resources Control Board's Failing Water System List. The Valley Ford Water Association is a failing water system primarily due to its contaminated groundwater source, which shows high levels of nitrates and coliform bacteria like E. coli. Valley Ford Water Association's service area is shown in Figure 1. The system has repeatedly failed to meet disinfection standards and maximum contaminant levels for nitrates. Consequently, the public water supply in the Valley Ford area currently relies on hauled water, and the Valley Ford Water Association is undergoing a project to improve or replace its groundwater infrastructure and treatment systems. To read the full engineer's report that details the problems of the water system, please call 707-887-7735 to schedule an appointment to view the report.

Figure 1. Valley Ford Water Association Service Area



2.2 Community Profile

The Valley Ford Water Association serves 148 people across 17 service connections. Information regarding the demographics of the Valley Ford Water Association community were obtained from census tract data obtained from <https://data.census.gov/all?q=valley+ford,+california>.

Table 1 – Valley Ford Water Association Population Details^[1]

Category	Count	Percentage
Total Population	148	100%
Population Reporting One Race	103	70%
White	102	69%
African American	0	0%
Asian	2	1%
Native American	2	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%
Two or More Races	18	12%
Hispanic or Latinx	38	16%
Population by Sex		
Male	74	50%
Female	74	50%
Population 25+ by Educational Attainment	Not Available	Not Available
Total		
Less than 9 th Grade		
9 th - 12 th Grade, No Diploma		
High School Graduate (25 and Older)		
Some College, No Degree		
Associate Degree		
Bachelor's Degree or more		
Linguistically Isolated Households	Not Available	Not Available
Total		
Speak Spanish		
Speak other Indo-European Languages		
Speak Asian-Pacific Island Languages		
Households by Household Income	Not Available	Not Available
Household Income Base		
<\$15,000		
\$15,000 - \$25,000		
\$25,000 - \$50,000		
\$50,000 - \$75,000		
\$75,000 +		
Occupied Housing Units by Tenure		
Total	17	11%
Owner Occupied	11	7%
Renter Occupied	6	4%

^[1]https://data.census.gov/profile/Valley_Ford_CDP,_California?g=160XX00US0681778

Valley Ford, California, is known for its small-town charm, historic Valley Ford Hotel and the site of the 1976 Christo and Jean-Claude Running Fence art installation. The town offers a mix of country hospitality with culinary and artistic sophistication, featuring gourmet restaurants, the popular Valley Ford Cheese & Creamery, and shops highlighting local artisans.

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: Russian River Utility 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, **Russian River Utility** 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** – Russian River Utility will reach out to commercial locations that seem suitable to hold public meetings. Meetings will be held in accordance with what is convenient for the community. This may be 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 ten days prior to the public meeting (see Appendix A).
- **Meeting agenda** – The Administrator will provide a meeting agenda 72 hours before each public meeting. It will be mailed directly to each home and posted publicly in several locations in Valley Ford (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 June 2025 public meetings will be held:

In-person at the Valley Ford Cheese and Creamery and other locations

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 Valley Ford community demographics, materials will be provided in the following languages:

English

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> 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 notices**, **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.

<p>Russian River Utility will take the following pre- and post-meeting actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a community survey<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use public meeting notices<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use meeting agendas<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use bill inserts<input type="checkbox"/> Develop e-mail reminders<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly update website<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop meeting summaries<input type="checkbox"/> Upload meeting recording to website<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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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 is identified, a member of the public can request these services by contacting the office by mail: **VFWA c/o RRU PO Box 730, Forestville, CA 95436**; by phone: **707-887-7735**; or by email: **rruwater@sonic.net** at least 10 business days 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 **Russian River Utility** 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. **Russian River Utility** will also include residents, rate payers, landowners of Valley Ford Water Association in the notification of public meetings and sharing of information.

Russian River Utility has identified the following methods as the most appropriate means of communicating with this community:

- X Mail
- Email
- Text messages
- Fact sheets
- X Newsletter
- Water system website:
- X Post flyers at identified centers of community (i.e., post office, markets)
- X Water bill inserts
- Community partners

Other _____

Point-of-contact name and contact information:

Name: **James Dunton or Stephanie Voet**

Organization: **Russian River Utility**

Address: **PO Box 730, Forestville, CA 95436**

Phone: **707-887-7735**

Email: **rruwater@sonic.net**

Table 2 – Community Accountability and Engagement Plan Timeline

<i>Type of Action or Activity</i>	<i>Description or Purpose</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
<i>Meet the Administrators</i>	<i>Introduce the community to RRU and explain why we are here</i>	<i>June 2025</i>
<i>Public Meeting</i>	<i>Updates in the water system</i>	<i>November 2025</i>
<i>Public Meeting</i>	<i>Updates in the water system</i>	<i>March 2026</i>
<i>Public Meeting</i>	<i>Updates in the water system</i>	<i>June 2026</i>

3.5 Accountability

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

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

Notes and names will be documented, scanned and saved. Hard copies will be stored in a binder for staff to review at any time. If there are questions or concerns, they will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

- **Public access to records:** The administrator shall make available the following documents to the public during business hours **Monday – Friday, 9a – 4p, except weekends and holidays.**
- 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:

Maritza Flores Marquez, PE, Water Resource Control Engineer
 Division of Drinking Water, State Water Resources Control Board
 Phone: (916) 341-5745
Email : DDW-Administrator@waterboards.ca.gov

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 Notification

ALL WELCOME
Valley Ford Water Association
PUBLIC MEETING

A water system administrator has been appointed and funded by the State Water Board to help struggling 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:

- **Current status of the water system**
- **Questions or concerns from water customers**

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

Location: **[ADDRESS]**

For more information, contact:

Russian River Utility
James Dunton or Stephanie Voet
PO Box 730
Forestville, CA 95436
707-887-7735
rruwater@sonic.net

Appendix B – Sample Public Meeting Agenda

PUBLIC MEETING # 1
Valley Ford Water Association
Day of the Week, Month Day, 2026
00:00 p.m.
Meeting Venue
Meeting Venue Address

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 and Answers
- III. Public Comments will be recorded and considered by the Administrator
- IV. Next Public Meeting Date and Time
- V. Adjournment

Appendix C – Sample Water Bill Insert

Dear Valley Ford Water Association Customer,

Month 2026

The Russian River Utility Company has been assigned by the State Water Resources Control Board to serve as the Administrator for the Valley Ford Water Association. Russian River Utility is located in Forestville and has been serving Sonoma County since 1986.

A water system Administrator is appointed and funded by the State Water Board to help struggling water systems address their drinking water needs and find long-term solutions to water quality and system management issues.

To keep you up to date on the activities taking place to improve the Valley Ford Water Association, Russian River Utility will be hosting a public meeting at a minimum of every 3 months. You are encouraged to participate in the process of improving your water system to meet the current drinking water standards. You will be notified of the date, time and location at least 10 days prior to this first meeting date.

If you have a water emergency, call our 24-hour on call answering service. An operator will be notified to address the concern – 707-887-7735.

For more information, call (707) 887-7735 or email rruwater@sonic.net.

Sincerely,

James Dunton and

Stephanie Voet

Appendix D- Community Survey Template (Optional Resource)

Valley Ford Water Association Community Questionnaire MONTH 2026

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 Valley Ford Water Association? (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 Valley Ford Water Association?

Yes **No** If no, why?, _____

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

Yes 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 Valley Ford Water Association? 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.