

Meeting Notes

Sierra County Drought Resilience Plan

Task Force Meeting 1: Kick-Off

Date/Time: April 26, 2024 / 1:00 PM

Place: 100 Courthouse Sq
Boardroom
Downieville, California 95936

Next Meeting: To be determined.

Attendees: Sierra County Drought Task Force:
Lee Brown, Bryan Davey, Evelyn de Mello, Sharon Dobija, Billy Epps, Mike Fisher,
Elizabeth Morgan, Brandon Pangman, Teri Parham, Paul Roen, LeTina Vanetti

California Department of Water Resources:
Sarah Ko

Stantec:
Neil Stewart, Katie Hardaker

Meeting Purpose: To kick off the convening of the Sierra County Drought Task Force (Task Force), review relevant drought legislation, and provide an overview of the County Drought Resilience Plan (DRP) and Risk Assessment.

Notes: The following are notes and comments obtained during the meeting:

- **Background and Overview for Legislation and Direct Technical Assistance (DTA)**
 - Neil provided an overview of the legislation that required the formation of the Task Force and DRP.
 - Elizabeth and Brandon inquired about the size requirements for systems considered under the DRP and suggested that other systems should be included if not already covered by another plan.
 - Elizabeth mentioned that the California State Water Resources Control Board has interpreted the designation of state small water systems (SSWS) differently than expected based on part-time status and/or total connections. Neil noted that the DRP can include systems beyond those required by the legislation.
- **Overview of the County Service Plan (CSP) and DRP**
 - Neil provided an overview of the CSP logistics, including team organization and invoice management.
 - Neil provided an overview of the proposed DRP chapters and development schedule.
 - Neil provided an overview of the proposed internal and external communications and engagement approach.
 - Sharon asked where folks will go for help once the DRP is completed. Neil and Bryan suggested that the responsible entity would be based on the group's input and will be indicated in the DRP. Paul and LeTina suggested that the DRP provides a starting place to address the problem and for use in applications for funding.

- **Risk Assessment**

- Neil provided an overview of the Baseline Risk Assessment and asked that the Task Force members consider whether data presented was accurate and complete.
- Evelyn asked who will implement the DRP, and Neil responded that the role will be identified by the Task Force and documented in the DRP.
- Brandon asked if the DRP will address short-term versus long-term solutions on a temporary to multi-year basis. Neil responded that the DRP can include long-term solutions for infrastructure failure.
- Neil provided a baseline map of the known domestic well locations and clarified that well locations were sourced from well completion reports post-1970.
 - Paul suggested that Jenny could provide well information.
- Neil provided a new baseline well map that displayed well location as well density.
 - The Task Force generally agreed that the map looked accurate but was likely missing wells that the County may have record or knowledge of. The County does not have a specific well database and would have to review every file manually. Neil suggested the data gap be highlighted in the DRP and remediation be included as a long-term strategy.
 - Brandon asked if there was a similar map for spring sources, and noted they were likely at a higher risk than well systems. Sharon and Elizabeth noted that the county includes quite a few spring sources. Neil responded that the Stantec team did not have a spring map prepared for the meeting.
 - The Task Force has local knowledge about spring-sourced system locations.
 - Brandon and Evelyn suggested the DRP include all systems (including spring systems) that are not otherwise covered.
 - Sharon noted that she and Tim put together a map of all the systems in Sierra City several years ago.
- Neil provided a baseline map of the known SSWS locations.
 - Bryan mentioned that there are many systems in Sierra City that are smaller than a SSWS, and Evelyn suggested that systems with one-to-four connections be included in the DRP. The group also noted that all systems in Sierra City are spring-based.
- Sharon noted that there has not been much of an issue with wells going dry in the county, which led to discussion about water quality concerns and past problems. Neil asked if water quality was a larger concern than supply.
 - Elizabeth mentioned that Verdi and Pike experience water quality issues.
 - Brandon mentioned that Pike is located in fractured rock area and Elizabeth mentioned the region has both spring and well systems.
- Neil provided a map of the physical vulnerability in the county as assessed by the California Department of Water Resources.
 - Mike commented that the west side of the county is vulnerable to fire, which was reflected in the scores for Sierraville into the valley, as well as Calpine. He noted Verdi's score may be attributed to fire risk although it has already burned.

- Neil added that fractured rock basins often drive vulnerability scores, and Paul noted that problems in the alluvial basin are due to agriculture. Neil noted that agriculture was also included in the risk assessment calculations.
- Brandon indicated the map looked accurate to him.
- Neil provided a map of the social vulnerability in the county as assessed by the California Department of Water Resources.
 - The group agreed that the boundaries used in the map did not align with boundaries typically used by the county to distinguish different regions. Neil suggested that a different map could be used for the assessment.
- **Next Steps Discussion:**
 - Neil provided an overview of the next steps for continued Task Force and DRP development.
 - Paul asked about the file size for documents shared between Stantec and the County, and Neil confirmed the files will be manageable in size.
 - Neil noted the next Task Force meeting will be scheduled for June.
 - LeTina confirmed she will add the kick-off presentation to the shared County folder.
 - Neil confirmed he will send a PDF version.

Action Items:

- **All.**
 - Schedule the subsequent Task Force meeting.
- **Sierra County** Task Force to complete the following items:
 - Add the kick-off presentation to the shared County folder.
 - Review and/or identify any data gaps to be discussed at the next Task Force meeting.
 - Paul to contact the Sierra Valley Ground Water Management District to see what GIS Maps or other items could be shared to inform our planning.
 - Sharon and Brandon - to try to locate historic maps of the Sierra City Spring/Surface water areas.
- **Stantec** to complete the following items:
 - Provide final meeting notes to the Task Force. **Due date: 3 May 2024.**
 - Send a PDF of the kick-off PowerPoint to the Task Force. **Due date: 3 May 2024.**
 - Send the link for the well-completion report database. **Due date: 3 May 2024.**
 - Send the Baseline Risk Assessment to the PCT and Task Force for Review. **Due date: 20 May 2024**
 - Confirm whether other water systems (i.e., those smaller or larger than the SSWS) are covered under another form of drought planning.
 - Reach out to Jenny to obtain map of domestic wells.
 - Send a follow-up email to the county regarding inclusion of springs in the DRP.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM