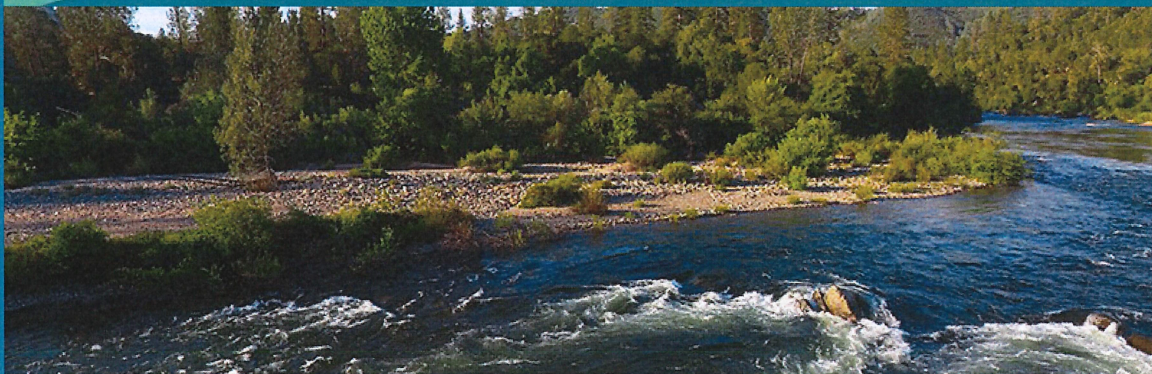


Nicholas Schneider
El Dorado Water NEWStream June Edition

June 2023



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A Word From Our Board Chair, Lori Parlin

Please join me in wishing Ken Payne all the best in his retirement! Ken has been a remarkable asset to the Agency as the General Manager for the past eight years, and I have had the distinct opportunity to work with him more extensively since I joined the Agency's Board of Directors in 2019. Ken has provided me and the rest of the Board with a wealth of knowledge and experience, along with unwavering support and guidance, as we worked together to address challenges and navigate numerous water resource programs and projects to benefit the county.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I wanted to express my sincere gratitude to Ken for everything he has done for the Agency's Board, staff and partners and for his relentless efforts to secure adequate water supplies for our county – now, and into the future. We wish him a retirement filled with great food and coffee, lots of family time, many more travel adventures and hopefully at least a little bit of downtime to relax. Congratulations on your remarkable career, Ken!

Please also join me in congratulating Rebecca Guo on her appointment as the Interim General Manager of the Agency. Rebecca has supported the Agency on various projects and program efforts since 2016 and joined the Agency staff earlier this year. We take comfort in knowing we'll be forging ahead under Rebecca's leadership.



Agency Advocates for Key Water Resiliency Projects

Wildfire resilience, water supply reliability and drought protection were among the key topics our board members and staff discussed with Congressional representatives and federal policymakers on two recent trips to Washington, D.C. We highlighted the county's resource management challenges and discussed ways that federal lawmakers can help address current and future climate challenges. This included highlighting the importance of assessing and monitoring the post-fire hydrological response in the American and Cosumnes watersheds to support critical watershed and forest management research and practices.



Other discussions included Alder Creek Reservoir, a proposed off-stream high elevation storage which would capture snowmelt and create storage from the upper South Fork of the American River, as well as progress made on upgrading snowpack stations in the Sierra Nevada to improve forecast reliability, timeliness and accuracy of snowpack conditions.

"We are taking a comprehensive look at how climate extremes are changing the paradigm of water management and using this lens to guide our advocacy efforts at both the state and federal levels," said Lori Parlin, Agency Board Chair. "I'm proud that the Agency is taking a broad view of our current challenges and at the same time working to address future resource management needs."

At the state level, we are focusing our advocacy efforts on supporting legislation that bolsters wildfire and fuels management and protects water quality and quantity. This includes supporting bills that strengthen forest health, address climate resilience, water supply including groundwater banking, flood risk mitigation and specific projects such as wildfire fuels reduction projects, stream gages and prescribed grazing.

"We appreciate that our representatives recognize the work we are doing in collaboration with federal, state and regional entities in El Dorado County, to strengthen watersheds and forest management and to ensure our region has an adequate water supply now and into the future,"

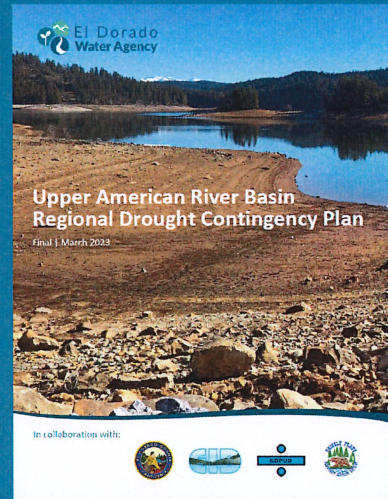
said Rebecca Guo, Agency Interim General Manager. “We must share the investments to advance projects that will prepare our region for wildfires, floods and prolonged drought.”



Agency Releases Final Regional Drought Contingency Plan

On April 26, 2023, we were informed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) that the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan (UARB RDCP) was found to be in accordance with the Drought Response Program requirements.

The UARB RDCP is a collaborative planning effort to build long-term resiliency to drought for the western foothill area (West Slope) of El Dorado County. We facilitated the development of the plan in partnership with Reclamation, through a WaterSMART Drought Response Program grant. Plan development also included close collaboration with public water agencies, tribes, land use authorities, resource managers, the public and other interested parties.



The UARB RDCP supports the resource management strategies of our [2019 Water Resources Development and Management Plan \(WRDMP\)](#) by improving drought preparedness and response, and it promotes the objectives of El Dorado County’s adopted General Plan (2004) to encourage a strong economy while preserving the rural-agricultural way of life in El Dorado County. The UARB RDCP complements the public water agency-specific water shortage contingency plans, provides a coherent approach on a regional level for better coordination and promotes shared benefits for the entire West Slope area.

To view the final UARB RDCP, please visit the [Long-Term Drought Resiliency Planning page](#) of our website.



Mosquito Fire Recovery Efforts Continue for Georgetown Divide Public Utility District

The Mosquito Fire that burned in Placer and El Dorado counties last year was designated the state's largest wildfire of 2022. The fire began on September 6, 2022, above Oxbow Reservoir in the Middle Fork American River drainage, on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. The fire went on to burn 76,788 acres, destroying 78 structures and damaging 13 more, in the small, rural communities of Michigan Bluff, Foresthill and Volcanoville in El Dorado County.

"While the fire was burning, our operators were out with the fire crews, making sure the water continued to flow for the firefighting efforts to protect our community," said Nicholas Schneider, General Manager of the Georgetown Divide Public Utility District (GDPUD). "As the fire was burning, ash and debris were continuously entering our canal system and required extensive work to prevent complete clogging and overflows."

GDPUD's water infrastructure was significantly impacted by the fire, including three destroyed stream gages, destruction of its protective flume cover and levee roads damaged by truck and equipment traffic. GDPUD has since completed temporary repairs to levee roads, initiated the removal of damaged trees and completed construction of a new, modernized flume cover.

Erosion and debris continue to impact the water system, especially as a result of the major rainstorms in the region this winter, resulting in increased maintenance needs and costs. GDPUD staff is continuing to seek grant funding to assist with necessary system repairs. GDPUD was also included in Congressman Kevin Kiley's initial selections for community project funding, which were announced in April. This request would allocate \$1.5 million for the construction of a two-million-gallon fire resilient water storage tank to aid in fire suppression efforts.

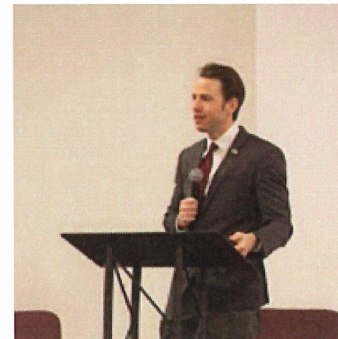


Countywide Plenary for Water Highlights Need for Watershed Management Adaptation and Collaboration Amid Challenges from Ongoing Drought, Fires and Floods

We held our Spring 2023 Countywide Plenary for Water (Plenary) on April 13 in El Dorado Hills. Around 50 representatives from federal, state and local government agencies, water utilities, watershed management organizations, tribal representatives and business organizations attended the biannual event, which serves as a forum to facilitate dialogue between leaders in water management and the community at large. The theme of this April's event was, "Adapting to a Paradigm Shift in Water Management," and focused on changes in approach to watershed protection amid recurring droughts, fires and floods.

Lori Parlin, the Agency's Board Chair and El Dorado County Supervisor, provided the opening remarks, highlighting the role climate extremes have played in shaping the county's landscape and the need for ongoing collaboration and continued momentum toward climate resilience.

The Plenary's keynote address was provided by Congressman Kevin Kiley, who stressed the importance of removing barriers in addressing the county's resource management and highlighted his efforts to improve accessibility of federal resources. Congressman Kiley also answered participant questions regarding climate preparedness and response actions.



Following Congressman Kiley's keynote address, Stantec Lead Facilitator Emily Finnegan moderated a panel discussion focused on how decision-makers are adapting to the paradigm shift in watershed management and what agencies can do to collectively address climate challenges, overcome watershed management obstacles and prioritize investments. Panelists included Ken Payne, Agency General Manager; Mark Egbert, District Manager of the El Dorado and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts; Ken Pimlott, Chair of the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council and retired CAL FIRE Chief; Michael Ranalli, President of the El Dorado County Farm Bureau; and David Batker, President of Batker Consulting.

Discussion included our role in coordinating the county's response to climate change, the need for agencies to demonstrate action at the local level in order to build trust within communities, the importance of taking a holistic approach to preparing communities and watersheds for wildfire, the critical importance of recharging groundwater aquifers and consideration of the upper American River watershed as a working asset in order to plan for the investments necessary to maintain it. The panel also addressed participant questions.

Following the panel, participants attended one of two breakout group discussions. One group focused on the value of the Upper American River Watershed and considered the opportunities to leverage ecosystem goods and services, identified barriers to incorporating ecosystem goods and services into decision-making and discussed actions that could be taken to overcome those barriers. The other group focused on responding to extreme climate events and identified areas for improving the emergency response to extreme climate events, strategies for achieving those improvements and potential implementation leads and indicators for success.

The Spring 2023 Plenary concluded with closing remarks from Ken Payne, and an overall agreement from participants on the importance of continued collaboration and discussion around adapting to a paradigm shift in water management.

We convene the Plenary to foster collaboration on water resources development and management countywide, consistent with our 2019 WRDMP policies. For more information, please visit EDWaterAgency.org/plenary.



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