



El Dorado Water Agency Plenary Focuses on Advancing Cross-Jurisdictional Watershed Projects That Benefit Residents and the Environment

November 15, 2024, El Dorado Hills - At its recent Countywide Plenary for Water, [El Dorado Water Agency](#) (EDWA) brought together thought leaders throughout the region to collaborate on strategies to protect the county's headwaters. The [watershed](#) provides numerous benefits for the environment and for residents near and far including food, clean water, recreation opportunities, fire risk reduction, flood protection, and more. However, natural disasters, changing weather patterns, and aging infrastructure threaten the watershed. Large multi-agency projects are needed to strengthen the watershed and protect the ecosystems and the communities that depend on it.

Discussions at the fall Plenary focused on how to best advance projects that span multiple jurisdictions and help ensure that the interests of various parties are met, instead of focusing on a single use of the land. These types of projects are often referred to as landscape-scale projects. Attendees at the Plenary included water and utility managers, business and community leaders, non-profit organizations, and staff from local, state, and federal agencies, many of whom are part of the Upper American River Watershed Group that developed the 2023 [Programmatic Watershed Plan](#).

Plenary attendees discussed the need for proactive planning and increased accountability as well as placed an emphasis on identifying common goals and sharing lessons learned. The overarching takeaway from the thoughtful discussion was the need for partnership as one organization or entity cannot advance landscape-scale projects alone.

In addition, the smaller breakout groups identified financial, regulatory, institutional, partnership, and social barriers that often stand in the way of securing investments and completing large watershed conservation and restoration projects. Common themes emerged in both breakout group and panelists discussions including challenges related to underfunded projects, conflicting priorities, redundant policies, lack of performance based assessments, internal silos, and public outreach.

“The Programmatic Watershed Plan provides a roadmap and now we are working to increase understanding of the barriers we face and deepen partnerships so we can put into place

innovative solutions to move landscape-scale projects forward,” said Rebecca Guo, General Manager of El Dorado Water Agency.

The panelists, Kathleen McIntyre (Tahoe Regional Planning Agency); JoAnna Lessard (Yuba Water Agency); Elena DeLacy (American River Conservancy); Mark Egbert (El Dorado & Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts); and Rae Dunstan (Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative) encouraged attendees to think about how they can be a strategic partner and work with others both in and outside their jurisdiction.

They discussed how it is important to define the roles of partners and play to their strengths. They also described partnerships they established to advance forest health, water quality, and water for fire suppression infrastructure, giving attendees examples of how they brought all of the key players to the table to move multi-benefit landscape-scale projects forward to benefit our local communities and environment.

To view the Plenary materials and learn more please visit the [EDWA website](#).

About the El Dorado Water Agency

El Dorado Water Agency celebrates 65 years of water resource planning and management, dedicated to ensuring that El Dorado County has adequate and affordable water to maintain economic prosperity, protect the environment, and support the rural-agriculture way of life for today and in the future. El Dorado Water Agency is a public agency created under the 1959 El Dorado County Water Agency Act.

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