

County Water Agency Situational Analysis Component B – Alternative Services Public Workshops & Survey

We need your help.

Water – supply and quality – is one of the most important issues facing the citizens of Mendocino County and therefore the county government.

The Mendocino County Water Agency (MCWA) was formed over fifty years ago, with the Board of Supervisors acting as the MCWA Board of Directors. Historically the MCWA has provided little leadership and a very minor role in water issues. As a result, municipalities, water districts and individuals have been on their own to provide services to their clients and themselves, often lacking funds, expertise or political clout to ensure future supply and adequate quality of water for beneficial uses.

These beneficial uses include: drinking water, agricultural water, wildlife and fisheries habitat, industrial water and recreation. All of these uses are important to the citizens of Mendocino County because they define the economy, the lifestyles, and the intrinsic beauty of the county.

Lack of unity has historically hurt Mendocino's water supply and will certainly harm it in the future if folks don't learn from history and work cooperatively to protect their water resources. A past example well understood by Russian River Valley residents is that most of the water supply contained in Lake Mendocino ended up belonging to Sonoma County. A more recent example is the proposed water bag transfer from Gualala to San Diego that did not go forward.

The current Board of Supervisors recognizes the importance of protecting and managing our water resources and has taken several steps to do so. These steps include a year-long study for restructuring the MCWA, hiring a permanent director for the MCWA, and creating county policy to support the revamped MCWA. More detail on each of these steps follows.

Agency Planning Study

As the Board of Directors for MCWA the Supervisors commissioned the locally-based University of California Cooperative Extension staff (also referred to as the UCCE MCWA Study Team) to conduct a study entitled "*A situational analysis of the Mendocino County Water Agency*". A detailed study proposal and other information concerning the study are available on the web at <http://cemendocino.ucdavis.edu>. This 12-month study began in March 2003. The purpose of the study is to use strategic and participatory planning to restructure the MCWA so that it will have a more active role in water resource management and better serve the needs of the residents of Mendocino County. It is divided into three components: A, B, and C.

Component A, which is complete, examined and summarized the current and past historical ways water resources have been managed and the role of MCWA in that process. It identified strengths and weaknesses of the current model and described visions for a future model of the MCWA including possible relationships between it and the existing water districts and municipalities.

Component B examines alternative MCWA roles and approaches specifically looking at the types of services it should offer. Public workshops and a survey will be used to collect information on possible services and to prioritize those services. Demographic information on participants will be used to account for differences in stakeholder groups, geographic or watershed location and Supervisor District. Component B captures the IF part of the IF:THEN analysis of the study. *The UCCE MCWA Study Team needs and greatly appreciates your help by participating in the public workshops and answering the survey questions.*

Component C will identify and assess the roles, approaches and services discovered in Component B by filtering them through the constraints of what is actually viable. It will take into account existing resources such

as economics, expertise and current and future relationships among the MCWA and existing water districts and municipalities. Component C captures the THEN part of the IF:THEN analysis of the study. A second survey and set of workshops is planned.

Agency Director Hire

The Board of Supervisors/Board of Directors hired Jim Stretch as Interim Director of the MCWA to serve until a permanent Director could be recruited. In May of 2003 Roland Sanford was hired as the Director of the MCWA. Both Jim Stretch and Roland Sanford have provided assistance to the UCCE MCWA Study Team.

Agency Direction and Role

In 2003 the Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 03-032. This resolution sets county policy for a restructured MCWA that give clear directions that MCWA be more involved in water resource management. It doesn't specify the form for restructure but makes several suggestions for its role regarding water supply, quality and its relationships with other entities. Below is an excerpt from Resolution 03-032.

“The Mendocino County Water Agency is directed to assume a leadership role in addressing water related matters in Mendocino County, including the protection and restoration of watersheds, water conservation, reuse and recycling, water quality, the development of impoundment of new water, the protection, restoration and enhancement of habitat, and restoration of fisheries.

The Agency is further directed to:

- *Work in Partnership with other Mendocino County water agencies, as well as local, state, and federal agencies outside of the county;*
- *Collaborate with Mendocino County water agencies through granting and technical assistance;*
- *Develop revenue for the Agency;*
- *Encourage and assist in water resource management consolidation for efficient, effective, and economical benefits; and*
- *Develop and maintain a comprehensive database of countywide assets, services, connections and capacities for all water agencies.”*

As you can see from above this issue is important and will affect the residents of Mendocino County now and in the future. Please help by completing the electronic survey. Thanks!