

# Notes from 09.02.09 HBMWD's Water Resource Planning Citizen's Study Group Session #1

## Desired Outcomes

By the end of the first session, the participants in the Citizen's Study Group will have...

- An understanding of Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District's current situation
- An understanding of the Water Resource Planning process, the role of the Advisory Committee and the Study Group of which they are a part
- A list of evaluation criteria they suggest be used to develop potential options for beneficial uses of water for our community
- An understanding of next steps, desired outcomes and timing for Session # 2 of the Study Group
- Agreement on messages to communicate from this meeting
- A list of thoughts regarding what worked about this session and changes want to make for next one

## Why this is Important

(Report out from initial introductions when participants shared why the topic of water is important to them personally or professionally)

- We do two things really well—harvesting water and trees
- We have too much water—unique situation and represents its own challenges
- We have great water—taste and quality
- How do you assess the value of water?
- Organisms other than humans depend upon water
- Lots of places in the world can't harvest water. We need to maintain a resilient ecosystem
- Fisheries are important – for native people and overall economy
- We periodically have too much water
- You don't realize water's value until you run out
- Maintaining water quality is important
- Economic issue / rates

## Current situation: What stands out?

(Report out from small tables regarding what stood out for people after Carol Rische's presentation)

- History of water system
- Use it or lose it
- Carol Riche is a great asset
- Mad River water is a small part of overall watershed picture
- Sense of relief that we have time – need to get 'ducks in a row' by 2029
- Progressive water district

- Alarming that the State owns water because diversions to Southern California may be in future
- Mad River used to dry up (in previous times)
- Aging infrastructure
- It's not just water—everything that Humboldt County is tied into water. The lifeblood of Humboldt County
- Water runs down 99% of river—environment benefits the whole time (other rivers diverted earlier)
- Unique strengths that we have—locally developed system, well planned, model system
- It's a public trust resource
- Upside down rate structure: Eureka uses more than any other muni, yet they pay more (muni infrastructure included in bill)
- How concerned should we be regarding the 'third party' challenge?
- Small percentage of water is actually used

### **Proposed criteria to evaluate options for potential uses of water**

(The number after the items indicates the number of tables who said they had it on their list. There were three to four people at each table.)

- Maintain or further improve environmental integrity of the Mad River basin and/or adjacent water basins (8)
- Decisions support long term, local control of the Mad River (District control) (7)
- Local economic benefit (e.g. profits don't go somewhere else) (6)
- Support economic growth (3)
- Keeping rates as low as possible, minimize rate increases (3)
- Maintain or improve quality of life for the community (2)
- Protect Humboldt's position in the global water market
- Protect water rights as a district
- Control over governance of our water – prioritize local use
- Maintain sufficient in stream flow to protect habitat and species
- Improve environment—clean, sufficient quantity and quality of water for wildlife and people
- Maximize local control over decision-making
- Legally strong position
- Ensure adequate future supply and availability for domestic and industrial uses
- Enhance or protect rate structure
- Maintain historical volume
- Attempt to serve needs of other Humboldt County communities to create county-wide cohesiveness
- Build consensus like what existed at the time water district was created
- Economically viable
- Produce an outcome that is inspirational to other communities

### **Observations/comments about the proposed criteria**

- Consistency of thinking among participants
- Local control is key
- Enhancing the river is key
- People wanted to go beyond 'protect'
- People were thoughtful and dedicated – says a lot about Humboldt County (especially the 'randomly' chosen folks)
- Local benefit is key
- Rates weren't the emphasis

### **What worked about this session?**

(See additional comments in the summary of the written feedback and in the table notes.)

- Rotating people
- Diversity of people
- Smaller groups unusual and beneficial
- Randomly selected people really dove into the process
- Gave problem to solve together, gave clear process and ideas came together / got folks engaged
- Moved ideas around the room
- Initial background presentation level of presentation and commitment
- Food
- Speed and accuracy of messages coming out of group were captured

### **What should change?**

- Energy was going down around 8pm – maybe shorter, more frequent meetings
- Engage us in workgroups to accomplish one or two tasks between meetings (make list of possibilities, send via e-mail / U.S. mail)
- Provide background information in advance

### **Suggestion**

- Send feedback gathered at public meetings to the Study Group