

Upper Russian River Water Agency Joint Powers Authority

Updated on February 12, 2018

County: Mendocino

Population: 15,045

Challenges: Water Supply and Water Rights Consolidation

Date: In progress

The Upper Russian River Water Agency (Agency) is a joint powers authority in the Ukiah Valley that is a vehicle for the consolidation of four retail county water districts and a water wholesaler in the Ukiah Valley Basin. The four retail water systems (Calpella County Water District, Millview County Water District, Redwood Valley County Water District and Willow County Water District) began by assisting each other and preparing to share water resources, if necessary, in 2014 during the peak of the drought.



Photo 1: Drought emergency intertie and pump station

Due to the high probability that local water systems might be out of water, they began cooperating on building and strengthening emergency interties using a combination of funding sources, including water system funds, Division of Drinking Water Emergency Drought Funding, and the Department of Water Resource's Integrated Regional Water Management Funding. The emergency circumstances led to a lasting collaboration that included the support of the Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District.

Building on their individual strengths and that experience, the water systems all signed a joint powers authority on December 30, 2014 to allow them to share resources and determine if a single regional water system would be the best fit for this community. Now, Calpella CWD, Millview CWD and Redwood Valley CWD contract with Willow for maintenance, operations and clerical services, while Millview contracts with Redwood Valley for administrative management

after the retirement of their long-time manager. So far, the Joint Powers Authority has been successful and there is unanimous support for their consolidation among Board Members.

The Division of Drinking Water will continue to support them as they look toward the future for more ways to strengthen their teamwork, streamline their costs and ultimately form a final legal entity.