

# State Water Board

## *Russian River Emergency Drought Regulation*

Division of Water Rights



April 14, 2022



# Russian River Watershed and Hydrology



# Russian River Watershed

## Supply

- Lake Mendocino filled by rainfall and imported flows from PG&E's Potter Valley Project (PVP). Releases from Lake Mendocino at Coyote Valley Dam combine with the Russian River, just north of Ukiah.
- Lake Sonoma filled solely by rainfall runoff. Releases from Lake Sonoma at Warm Springs Dam combine with the Russian River at the Dry Creek confluence, south of Healdsburg.

## Demand

- Roughly 1,600 diverters in the Upper Russian River watershed and 800 diverters in the Lower Russian River watershed



# Water Rights Priority System

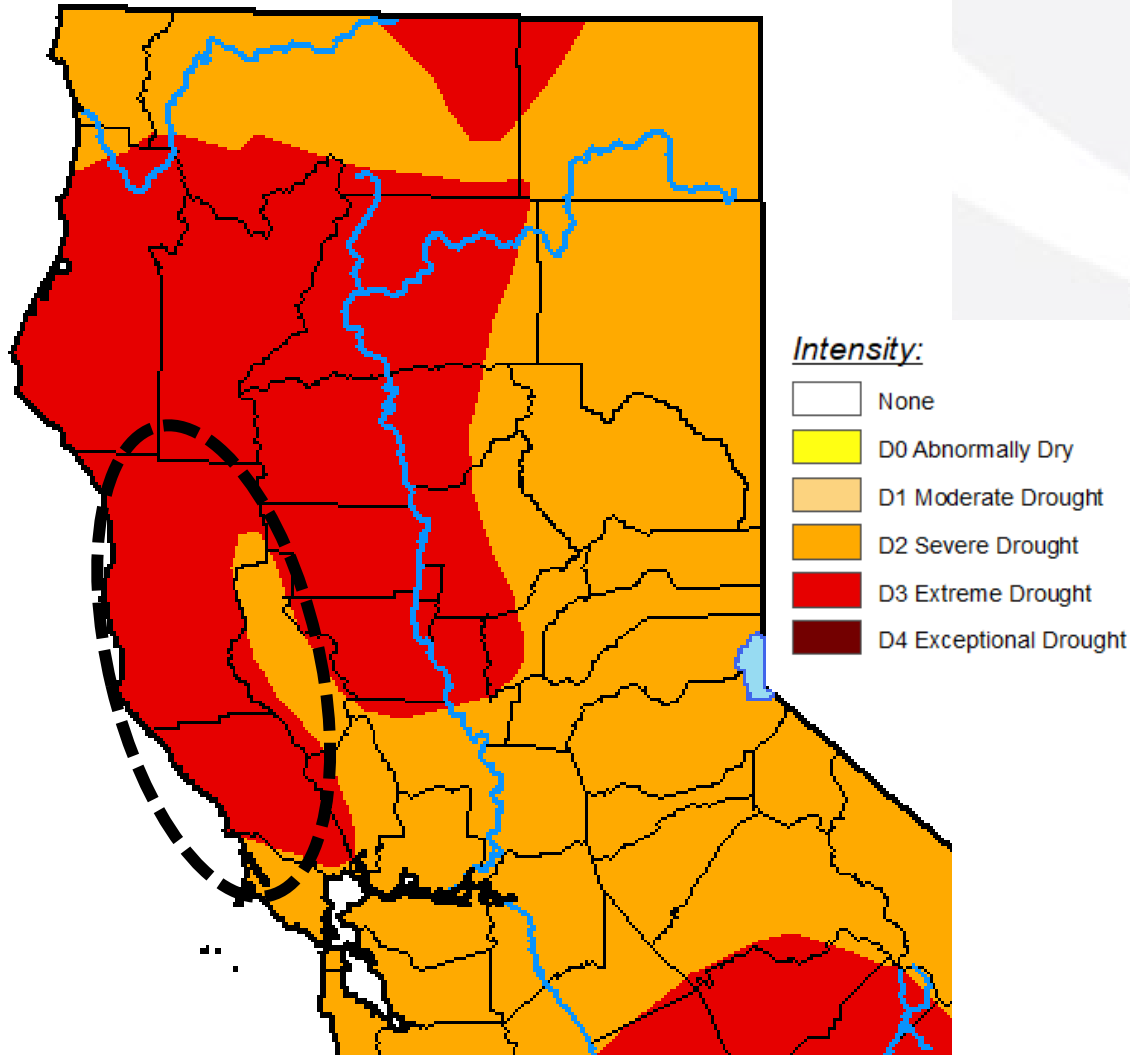
1 Riparian Rights

2 Appropriative Rights

2a Pre-1914

2b Post-1914

# Precipitation and Drought



## 2022 Average Precipitation

Mendocino County

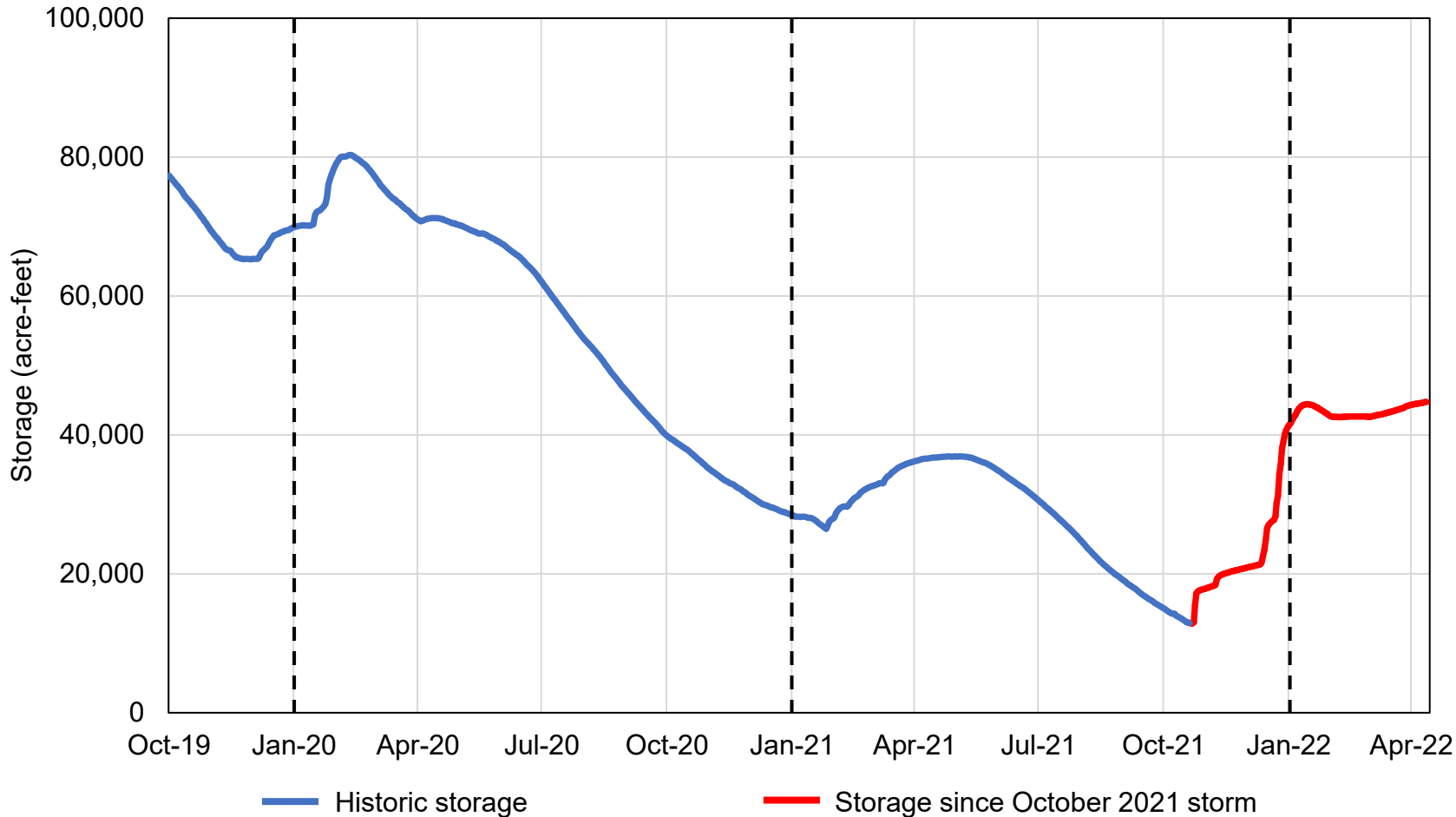
17.53 inches below normal

Sonoma County

15.64 inches below normal

# Lake Mendocino Storage

October 2019 to April 2022



Flows as of 4/12/2022

*Calpella Flow*

34 cfs

*Lake Mendocino Storage*

44,763 acre-feet

*Lake Mendocino Outflow*

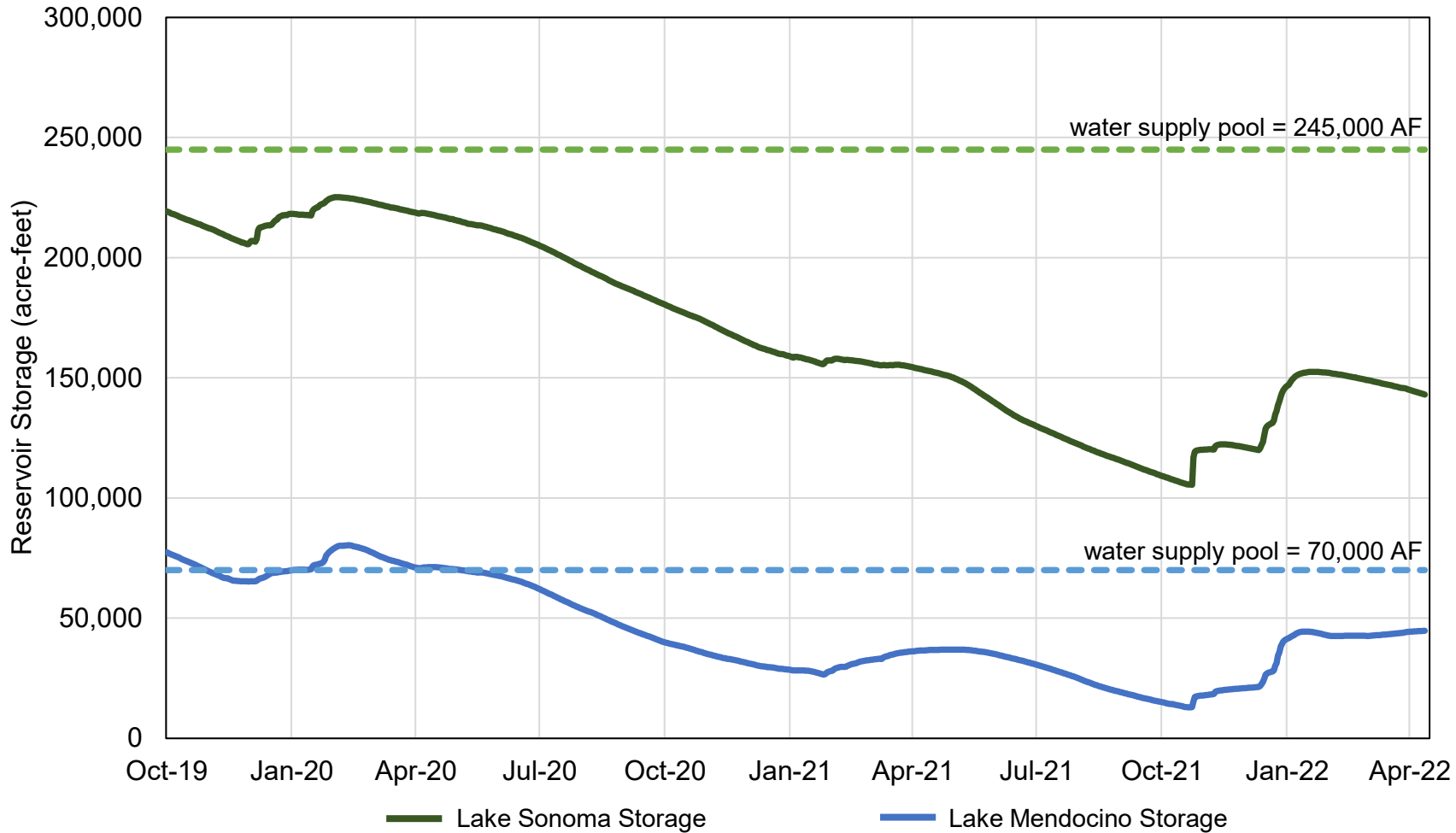
37 cfs

*Healdsburg Flow*

65 cfs

# Reservoir Storage Levels

October 2019 to April 2022

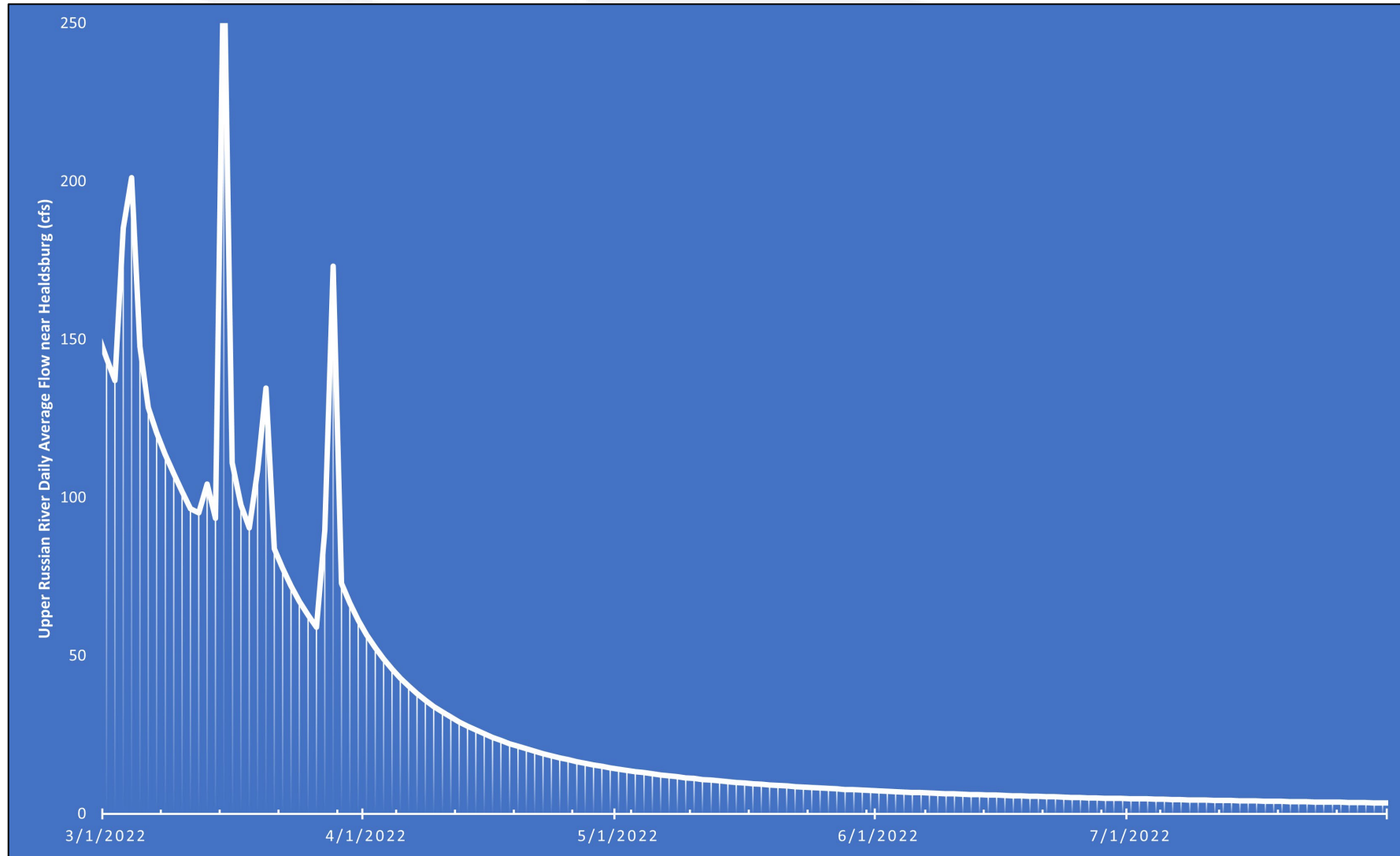


*Lake Sonoma Storage*  
143,011 acre-feet  
58.4% water supply pool

*Lake Mendocino Storage*  
44,763 acre-feet  
63.9% water supply pool

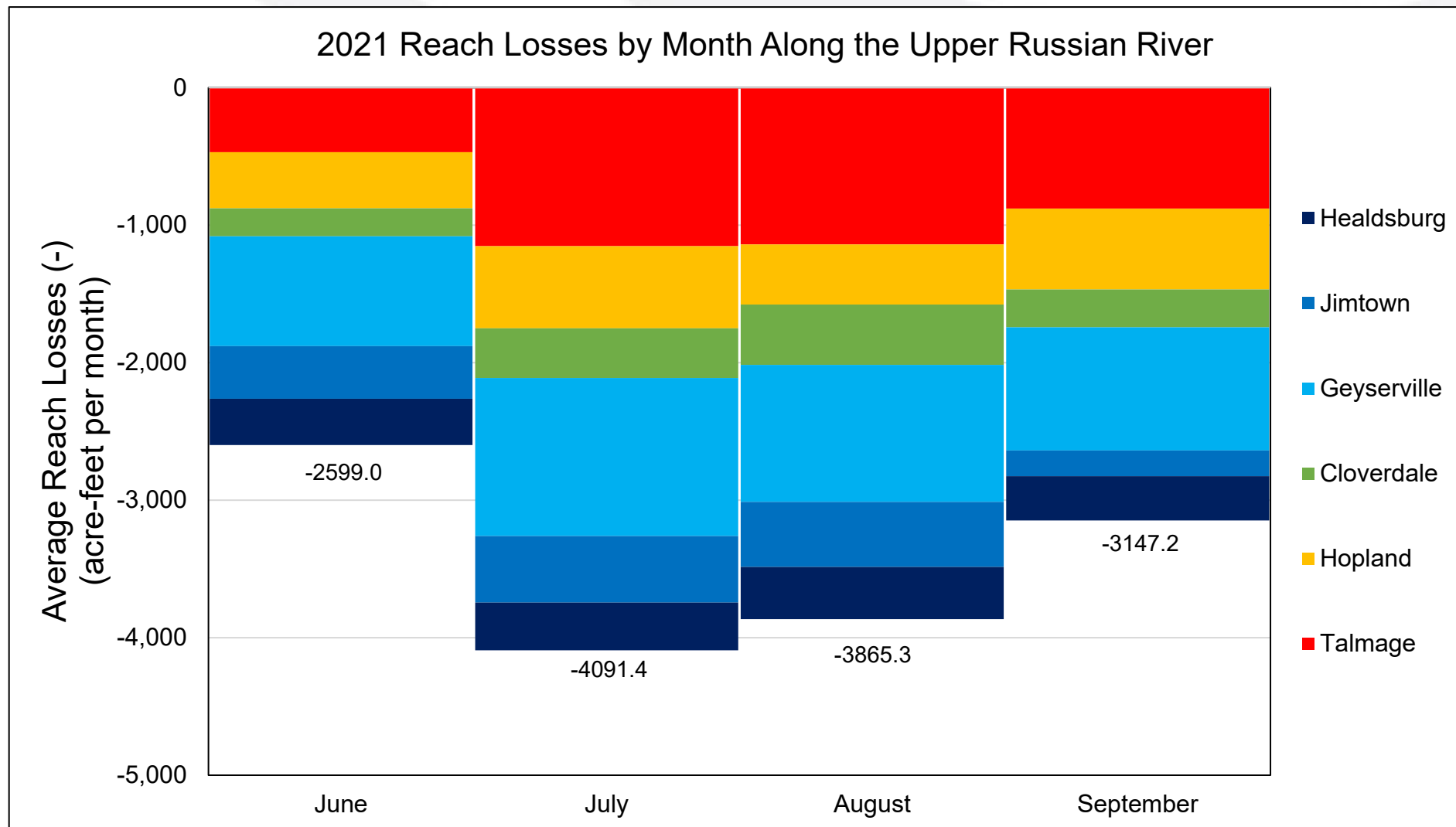
Data: DWR CDEC, USACE

# Upper Russian River Flow Projection



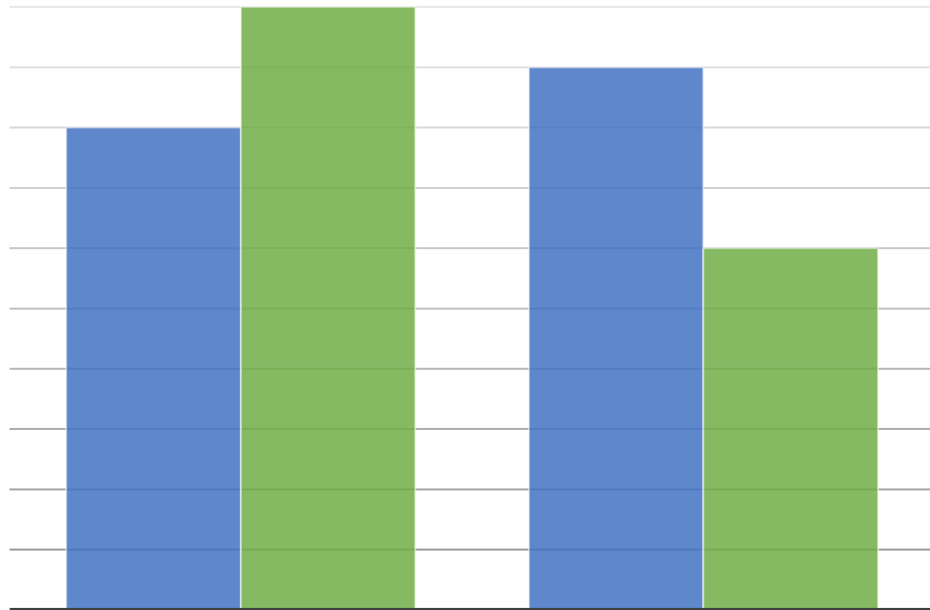


# 2021 Russian River Curtailment Efforts Recap



# Supply vs Demand Analysis

## Supply vs Demand



SHORTAGE

SURPLUS

■ SUPPLY ■ DEMAND

## Supply (cfs) (based on forecast from late February)

	June	July	August	September
Natural Flow	5.9	4.2	3.1	2.3
PVP Flow	43.4	45.4	46.4	42.5
Evaporative Loss	14.6	15.2	12.8	8.5
Health and Safety Needs	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0

## Available Supply (After Evaporative Losses) (cfs)

Natural Flow	0	0	0	0
PVP Flow	35	34	37	36

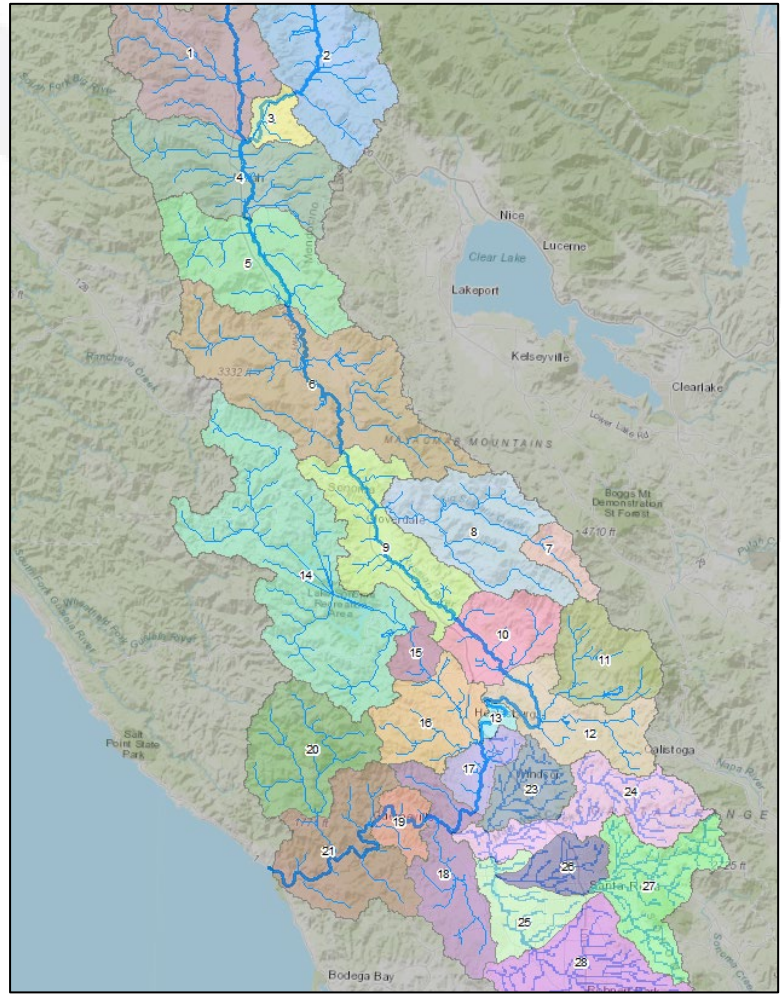
## Available Supply (After Evaporative Losses and HH&S) (cfs)

Natural Flow	0	0	0	0
PVP Flow	32	31	34	33

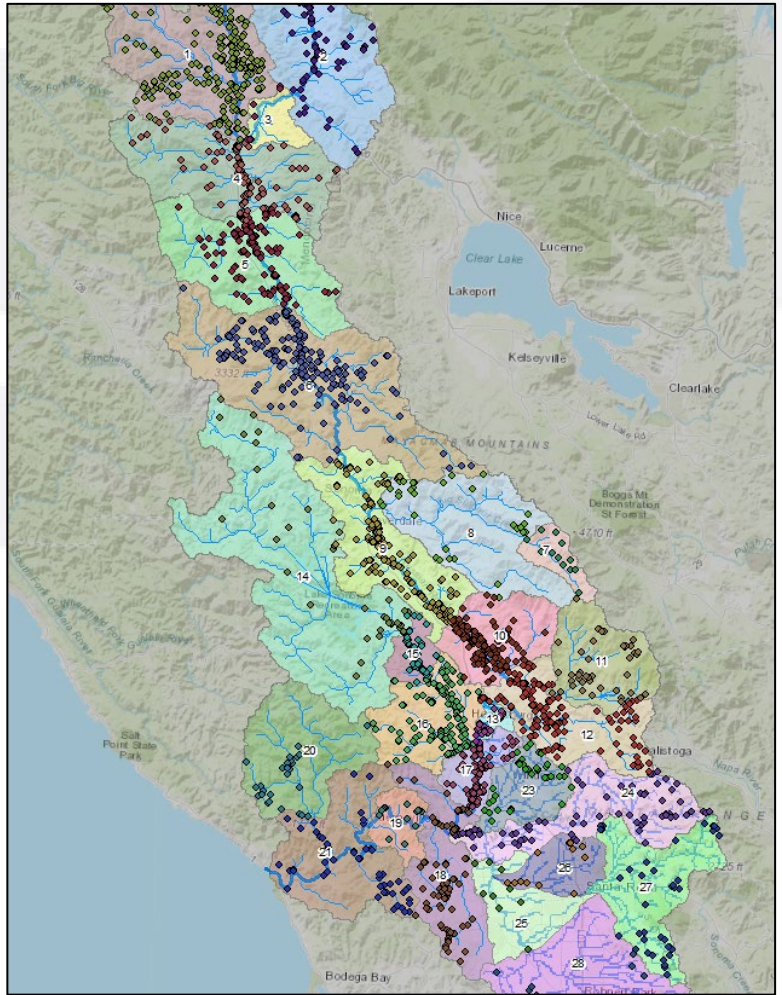
# Drought Water Right Allocation Tool (DWRAT)



Supply Flow Data



Basin Delineation



Demand Data



# Voluntary Water Users Program



# Upper Russian River Drought Response 2022 Water Users Program

State Water Resources Control Board  
Public Workshop  
April 14, 2022

# Process Overview



# Who is Working Together:

Cities of Cloverdale, Healdsburg, & Ukiah

Cal Am Water

Cal Indian Environmental Alliance

Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians

Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo

Fish Friendly Farming

Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria

Hopland Band of Pomo Indians

Jackson Family Wines

Lytton Band of Pomo Indians

Mendocino County & Sonoma County  
Farm Bureaus

Middletown Rancheria

Pinoleville Pomo Nation

Russian River Confluence

Russian River Flood Control District

Redwood Valley Little River Band of  
Pomo Indians

Sonoma Water

Sonoma Resource Conservation  
District

State Water Resources Control Board

Willow County Water District  
(representing 6 water suppliers)

# Problem

- Lack of water in the Upper Russian River Watershed leads to curtailment of water rights and significant economic impacts in our community.

# Solution

- The Program provides an adaptive local alternative to curtailment through managing water demand with limited water supply.



# Key Program Concepts

- Participation may avoid curtailment.
- All water right holders in the Upper Russian River Watershed are eligible to participate.
- Success dependent upon high participation.
- Allocate available water among both senior and junior water right holders.
- Water allocation based on average monthly reported use for 2017-2019.
- Amount to be conserved depends on water right priority and source of water.
- State Water Board will issue water supply projections for dry season and update regularly.
- Transfers and exchanges among users are permissible.
- State Water Board serves as administrator and backstop.
- State Water Board may curtail non-participating water users in order of priority.
- Creates a vehicle for improved information and better decision making.

## *Next Steps...*

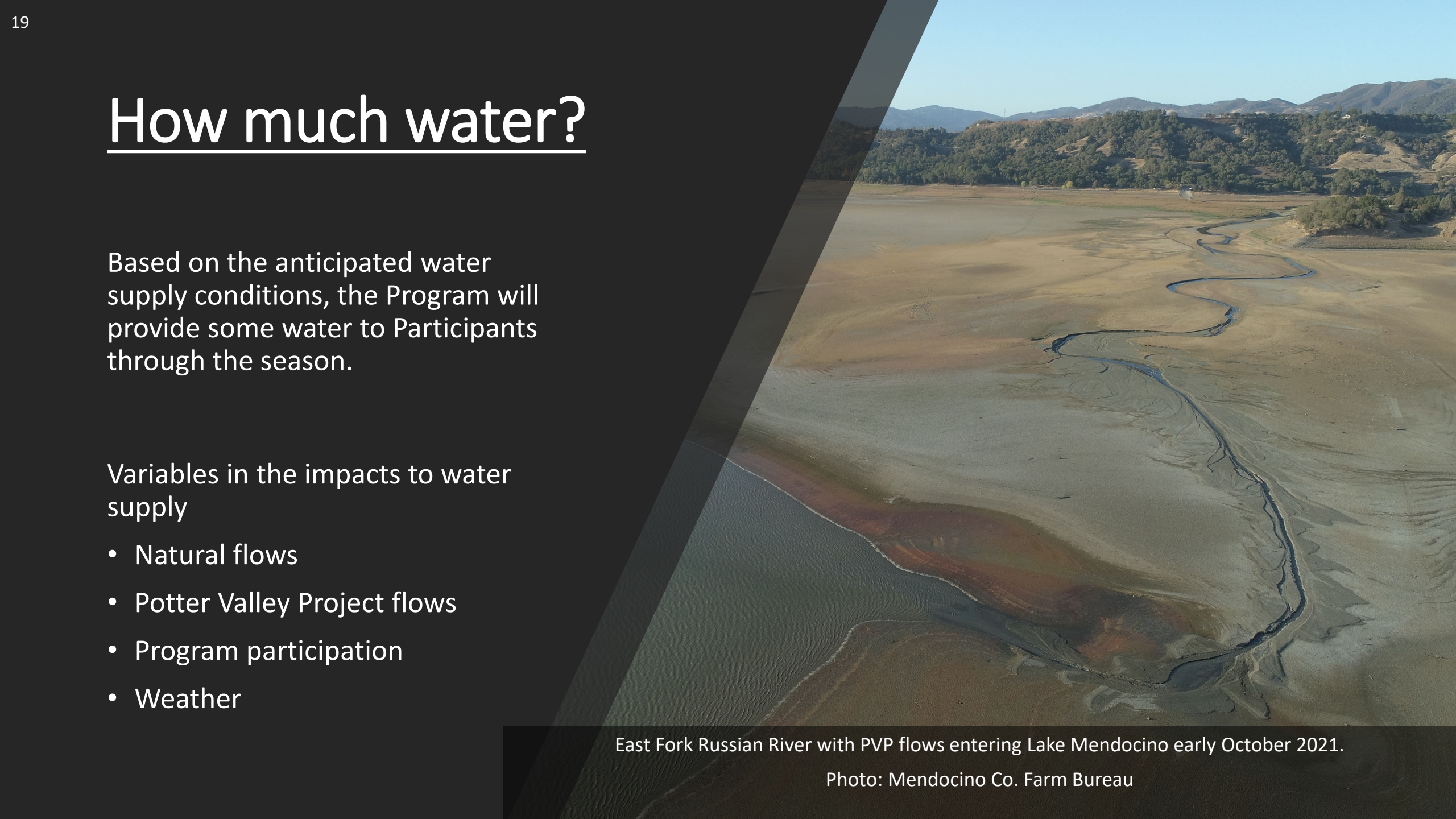
- On May 10<sup>th</sup>, the State Water Board is posed to adopt amended emergency regulations providing for curtailments in the Russian River.
- The emergency regulation will include language for an alternative option to allow water right holders to participate in the Program.
- Water Right Holders voluntarily enroll in the Program over a specified time frame.
- Monthly water use reporting required during duration of participation in Program.
- State Water Board may adjust water allocations based on water availability in the system.

# How much water?

Based on the anticipated water supply conditions, the Program will provide some water to Participants through the season.

Variables in the impacts to water supply

- Natural flows
- Potter Valley Project flows
- Program participation
- Weather



East Fork Russian River with PVP flows entering Lake Mendocino early October 2021.

Photo: Mendocino Co. Farm Bureau

# Why Sign Up?

## **Allocation**

some water is better than no water

## **Balance**

shares water availability with multiple beneficial water uses


**Be part of the solution**  
locally driven and voluntary

## **Accounting**


The region can learn how we are using water and manage it better into the future



Questions?



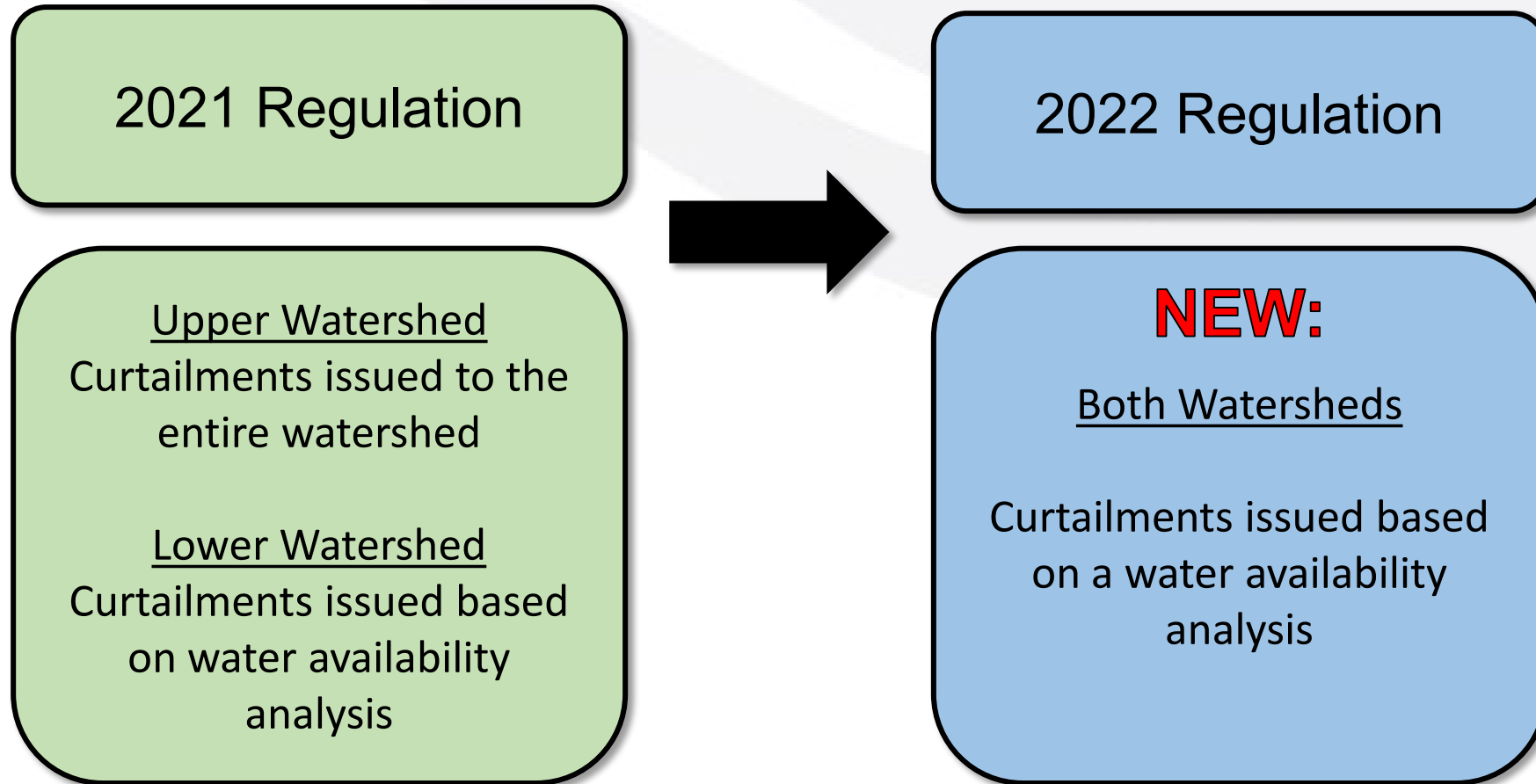
# Proposed Amended Regulation



# 2022 Russian River Emergency Regulation

1. Water Availability Methodology Revision
2. VDI Project Protection in Four Priority Tributaries
3. Local Conservation Program
4. Revisions to Curtailments & Exceptions

# Water Availability Methodology Revision





**NEW:**

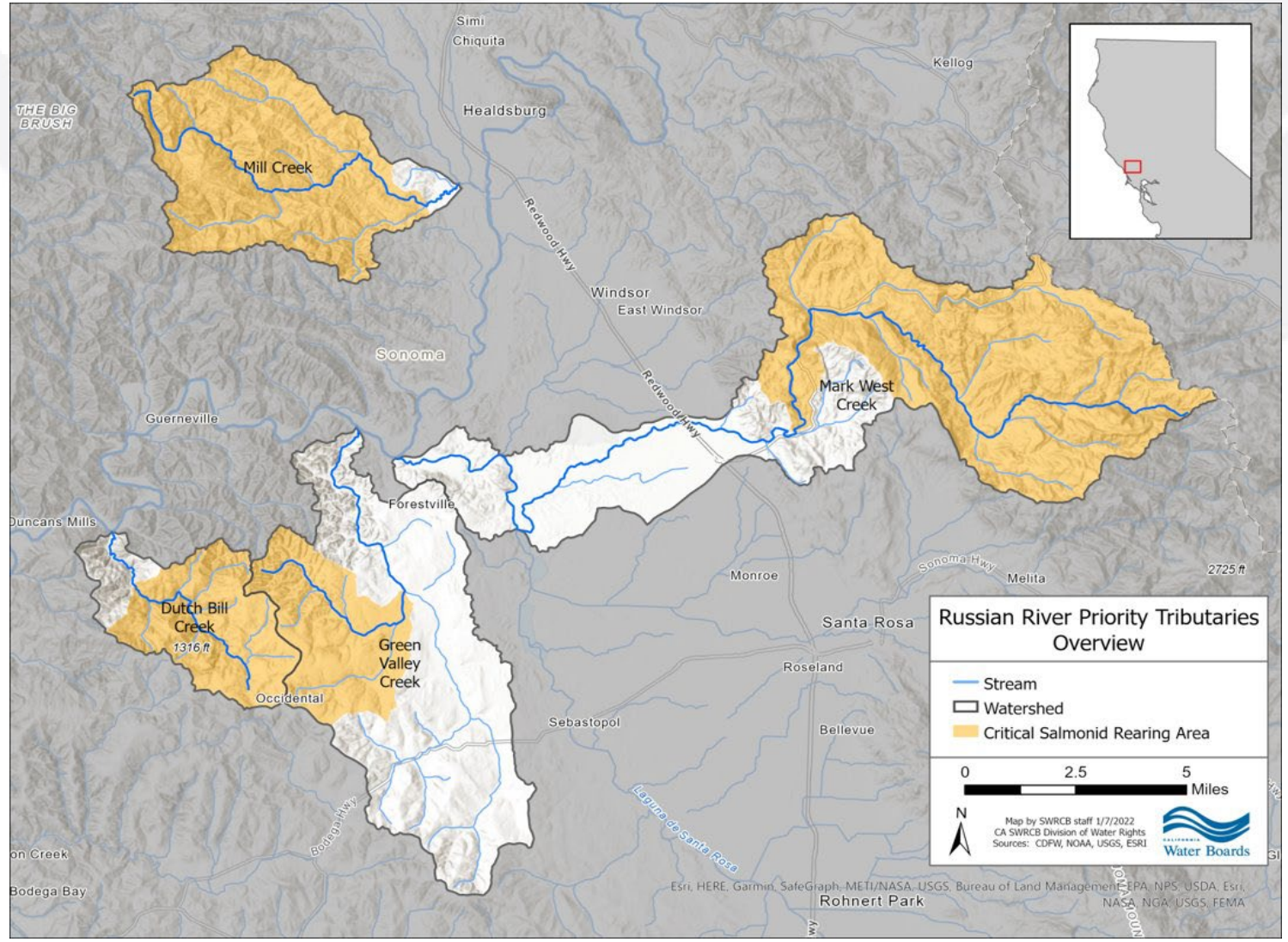
# Flow Protection for Four Priority Tributaries

Dutch Bill Creek

Green Valley Creek

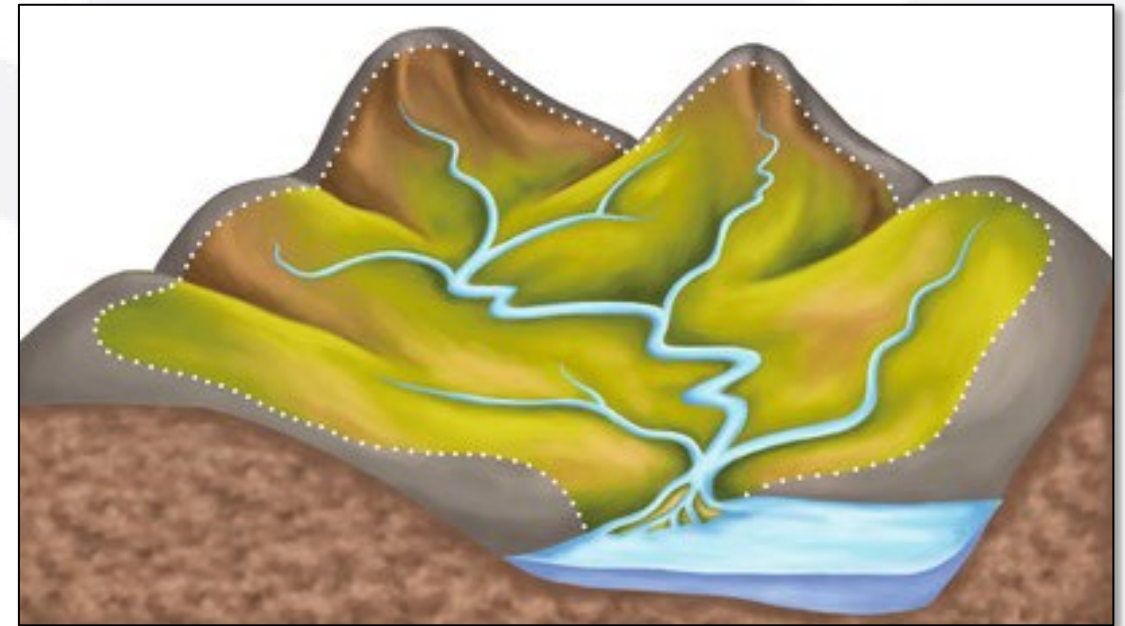
Mark West Creek

Mill Creek



# Definitions

- Administrative Terms
- Hydrology and Geography of the Watershed
- Minimum Human Health and Safety Needs



# Determining Curtailment Status

- **NEW:** Curtailment orders will be sent to all water right holders or their agent of record
- **NEW:** A curtailment status list will be published and maintained online
- The Deputy Director may require the reduction or cessation of water diversion.

**NEW:**

# Curtailments and Riparian Rights

- Implementation of curtailments and methodology for riparian rights
- Curtailment orders will implement a maximum allowable diversion, based on 2017-19 reporting
- Riparian right holders will correlatively share the available supply by reduction of their maximum allowable diversion

# Minimum Human Health and Safety

- The self-certification and petition processes are not proposed to change
  - 2021 certifications and approved petitions continue to be valid
- If the water user or service area has a conservation plan, they must certify that it is implemented

# Implementation and Reporting

- **NEW:** After receiving a curtailment order, right holders will not be required to certify receipt and compliance with the order
- Responses may be required for petitions and exceptions; existing requests will remain valid
- Reporting will be required for continued diversions

# Additional Regulation Updates Expected

1. Revisions in response to public comments
2. Addition of section supporting a regional voluntary agreement
3. Broader incorporation of sections for other watershed sections



# State Water Board Information Resources

Please email questions and comments regarding the draft regulation to:

[RussianRiverDrought@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:RussianRiverDrought@waterboards.ca.gov)

The deadline for comment submittal is April 18, 2022, by 12 pm



# State Water Board Information Resources

- [Russian River Drought Website](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/)
  - [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian\\_river/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/)
- [Subscribe to the Russian River Drought Email List or Contact Us](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/#stay_informed)
  - [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian\\_river/#stay\\_informed](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/#stay_informed)
- [Check your Curtailment Status](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/#tableau)
  - [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian\\_river/#tableau](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/#tableau)