



IWPC Key Message Platform

IWPC's responsibility is to secure water for the future — and that requires diversion and storage solutions we can actually pursue, control and deliver.

- **IWPC mission = water reliability:** IWPC's mission is to protect long-term water reliability for our communities, farms, and ranches throughout the Russian River watershed. Water reliability is essential to protect our local economy and way of life.
- **PG&E's decision about their own facility:** The region is facing a historic transition – PG&E is decommissioning the Potter Valley Project, which they own, because they have determined that the project is not a responsible investment for the company or their ratepayers. Scott Dam will be removed as part of that process. We cannot force PG&E to maintain ownership of any aspect of the Potter Valley Project.
- **Pursuing what we can control:** It is not our responsibility, nor is it within our control, to try to reverse PG&E's decision to decommission the PVP. It is our responsibility to stay focused on securing a reliable supply for the future through means that *are* within our control. That means protecting our ability to divert water from the Eel River and building the storage capacity necessary to make use of that water.

IWPC must be focused on storage and diversion — not attempting to save Scott Dam.

- **Urgent action is needed:** There is a need for urgent action on solutions so that we do not have a gap in water service delivery after the Potter Valley Project is decommissioned. That means we must move quickly forward with permitting and construction of a new trans basin diversion - known as the New Eel Russian Facility - so that the infrastructure is in place when we need it; and we must move forward on building storage so we have a place to put the water that comes through the new trans basin transfer. Expanded storage is an investment that will serve us right away by improving drought resiliency and supply security.
- **Scott Dam takeover is not feasible:** PG&E has made the decision to decommission the Potter Valley Project as part of its license surrender process. Consultant-developed cost estimates show taking over the Potter Valley Project, repairing Scott Dam, and operating the Project could cost \$300M to \$500M of dollars in repairs, fish passage, relicensing, and tens of millions per year in long-term maintenance. No public agency or private entity stepped forward to assume ownership and liability for Scott Dam because it is not economically viable. Furthermore, just taking over Scott Dam would not be a complete solution because there would be no legal right to divert water from the Eel River.
- **WDA provides legal water rights:** IWPC signed a landmark Water Diversion Agreement with Tribal, State, environmental, and regional partners (including Humboldt County, Sonoma County, Sonoma County Water Agency, California Trout, Eel Russian Project Authority, IWPC,

Round Valley Indian Tribes, and Trout Unlimited) to secure the legal right to future water diversions into the Russian River watershed. The agreement requires that all signatories to the agreement support continued diversions. It also requires that all signatories “advance the timely removal of Scott Dam and Cape Horn Dam.”

- **Cannot jeopardize the WDA:** Parties working against the intentions of the Water Diversion Agreement are putting our future water security at risk. If the Water Diversion Agreement and the coalition behind it fails, there is no legal or operational pathway to continue diversions, thus putting the economic future of communities along the Russian River watershed in jeopardy. Bottom line: Fighting to preserve Scott Dam jeopardizes the agreements that protect our future water supply.

IWPC considered a wide range of storage options to actively pursue.

- **Need somewhere to store water:** Diversion alone is not enough – we must also create storage capacity to capture and use that water effectively. A continued diversion and new storage projects work together.
- **Expanded lake storage is essential:** Expanding storage capacity in Lake Mendocino - through modernization of Coyote Valley Dam - is the fundamental, most important, storage solution for Russian River water users. Because water flows come during wet winter months, storage in Lake Mendocino is necessary to supply water through the dry months. Additionally, the expanded lake storage will improve water supply reliability when we face multiple consecutive drought years.
- **Additional concepts considered:** Beyond expanding storage capacity at Lake Mendocino, IWPC and technical consultants have considered a range of water supply and storage options for Potter Valley, which lies upstream of Lake Mendocino. These options include:
 - Irrigation system efficiency improvements
 - On-farm demand management
 - Tributary storage reservoirs
 - Groundwater recharge
 - Pump-back systems from Lake Mendocino
 - In-valley pond storage in Potter Valley
 - East Fork Russian River storage concepts
- These options vary significantly in water yield, cost, environmental impacts, permitting complexity, timelines, and operational feasibility.

IWPC has now prioritized the four storage options that provide the greatest benefit and most realistic path forward.

- **1) Expanding Lake Mendocino storage by modernizing Coyote Valley Dam** is the most important long-term investment in our water future. Modernizing and raising Coyote Valley Dam offers the greatest opportunity to increase storage capacity and protect regional water supply reliability.
 - Raising the dam could double the storage capacity of Lake Mendocino, so it could

provide an overall 240,000 acre-feet of storage, benefiting the entire watershed.

- A study is underway in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. We need to continue down this path and pursue opportunities for federal funding, which may include special legislation. Federal and Tribal partnerships will make this project more affordable and achievable.
- We expect to provide approximately \$4 million in local funding to cost-share the Army Corps feasibility study. We will also need to invest about \$1 million in legal, consulting, and federal advocacy to secure project approvals and funding. In the longer term, we need to be prepared for a local construction cost share of up to \$75 million, with federal partners covering a substantial portion.
- **2) Groundwater storage and recharge within Potter Valley** provide scalable, locally controlled supply reliability. Groundwater storage could provide approximately 3,500 acre-feet per year of additional supply.
 - IWPC is pursuing feasibility work including test wells and monitoring to evaluate groundwater storage potential.
 - Increasing groundwater storage allows incremental development based on proven performance and available funding.
 - Next steps and required investment: We will need to invest approximately \$2 million to drill test production wells and monitoring wells. We should be prepared for local construction investment of \$5 million to \$20 million, depending on project scale.
- **3) Expanding pond storage in Potter Valley** provides additional local water security and flexibility. Pond storage can be expanded incrementally to meet local needs.
 - This approach provides flexibility and allows growers and communities to increase storage over time. Pond storage capacity is undetermined but could support local water reliability and complement larger regional storage investments.
 - Next steps and required investment: We will need to invest \$100,000 to \$200,000 in site assessment and feasibility work. We should be prepared for a local construction cost share of approximately \$1 million to \$5 million, plus potential private investment.
- **4) Investigating new surface storage on tributaries to the Russian River**, upstream of Lake Mendocino, could provide additional supply to Potter Valley and potentially to downstream users.
 - Several tributaries to the Russian River upstream of Lake Mendocino would be viable candidates for new storage. All of the sites are above the point of anadromy and located on private land.
 - Conceptual studies have identified a potential for 10,000- 15,000 AF of new storage.
 - Next steps and required investment: We will need to invest approximately \$3 million in

site assessment and geotechnical work. We should be prepared for local construction cost share of approximately \$50 million, plus potential private investment.

Taking action now ensures we are prepared to protect our water supply for future generations.

- This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a modern, sustainable water supply and storage system ***that we who live in the Russian River watershed control. It will be a water supply and storage system owned by a local Joint Powers Authority—the Eel Russian Project Authority—with representatives from Mendocino and Sonoma Counties—rather than by a private corporation like PG&E.*** The development of a new trans basin diversion allows the region to replace aging infrastructure with modern solutions.
- The path forward is clear:
 - Protect the legal right to water by adhering to the Water Diversion Agreement
 - Build the New Eel Russian Facility to enable diversions to continue
 - Expand storage at Lake Mendocino for regional benefit
 - Develop storage that serves Potter Valley
- These investments are essential to protect our farms, businesses, communities, and regional economy for generations to come.