

MOUNTAIN COUNTIES WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION

# Strategic Plan 2023-2025





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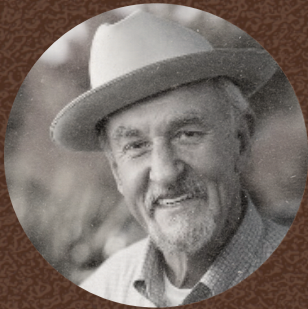


# Board of Directors



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# Executive Leadership



**Justin Caporusso**  
*Executive Director*



**Tom Cumpston**  
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**Dave Breninger**  
*Governmental Affairs*





Welcome,

It is with great pleasure to introduce our updated 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan provides renewed focus for the association from energy and thoughtfulness of our Directors and Members.

Mountain Counties Water Resources (MCWRA) has enjoyed decades of advocating for and influencing policy on our most valuable natural resource - water.

At the core of our Strategic Plan and among our Members is collaboration. We recognize as individuals, and as an association, we cannot make sufficient progress in protecting and enhancing our region's water supply for future generations without relying on our local, state and federal partnerships. Many agencies and individuals are on the "front lines" of these efforts with a majority of voices having a unified message. It is the intent of MCWRA to enhance those efforts and messages through a renewed sense of urgency requiring a laser focus.

From our Members to partner agencies and the general public our responsibility is great; to harness the expertise among our members and partners to provide continuing education to the public so they can join with us in our advocacy efforts for a safer and sustainable future.

Advocacy is key to buy-in and securing funding for watershed protection and enhancement, and other water related initiatives. Our legislative platform is robust and will undergo a renewed sense of purpose, not only now but often into the future. Water is our lifeblood, and as stewards of its natural infrastructure we must begin to make a great impact.

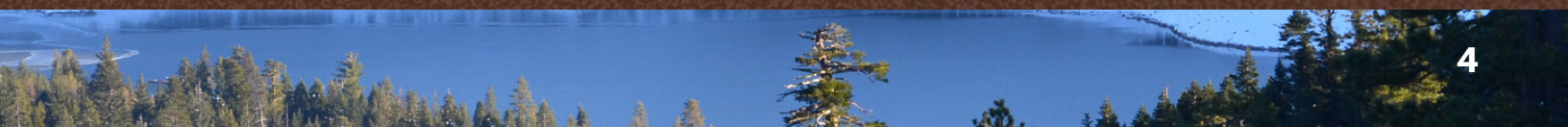
Thank you to the MCWRA Board of Directors and our Executive Director for working to provide a refreshed set of priorities, and for taking the time to recognize the value in revisiting our Mission, Vision, and Values as we work together toward a common direction.

This Strategic Plan and the priorities identified within will provide a roadmap for the Executive Director, and guide the Association's outreach, education, and advocacy efforts.

MCWRA is committed to this journey as an advocate, partner, educator, and champion for our most valuable natural resource. Thank you.

Sincerely,

President







# Our History

Organized in the early 1950s as the initial State Water Plan was being prepared, the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA) originally worked with the Department of Water Resources to identify water needs and plans for water development in the MCWRA region.

The MCWRA region includes the foothills and mountains of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, and a portion of the Cascade Range. The area extends from the southern tip of Lassen County to the Northern part of Fresno County, and overlays the eastern portions of the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River hydrologic regions.

Since the formation of the Association, the state's water landscape and policies have changed tremendously. The Area of Origin statutes as well as Pre-1914 water rights are being constantly called into question as they relate to efficient water use, allocation, and beneficial uses. In 1979, the Association was reorganized to represent the Counties of Origin in gaining water rights protection and development.

In 2005, the California Department of Water Resources recognized and established the MCWRA region as an "Area of Interest" along with the "Delta" in the California Water Plan Update; a blueprint for sustainability.

Laws enacted in 2009 set the stage for multiple policy and operational change implications for the MCWRA region, which if not carefully monitored and strategically influenced, will significantly erode the water rights protections and local water use/allocation priorities currently enjoyed by mountain counties agencies. In response to the looming legislative and regulatory actions, the MCWRA Board of Directors refocused the Association, established Water Policy Principles, and took action to provide a higher level of education to policymakers and advocacy for our members to help protect the water resources in the Sierra Nevada watershed with strong emphasis on outreach, education, and legislative influence to benefit the Sierra Nevada watershed.

The extreme megafires that have plagued the MCWRA region over the past decade have led the Association to a strategic focus on forest management advocacy, outreach, and education. The Water Policy Principles were updated in 2022 to reflect the current priorities of the Association.





# Our Mission

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Promote statewide importance of Sierra Nevada water resources through advocacy and collaboration

# Our Vision

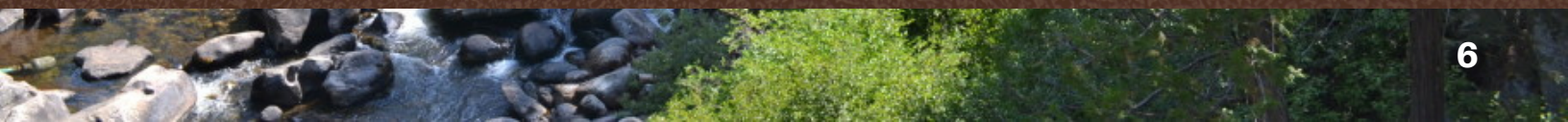
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To be the premiere advocate to influence water policy and protection of the Sierra Nevada watershed

# Our Values

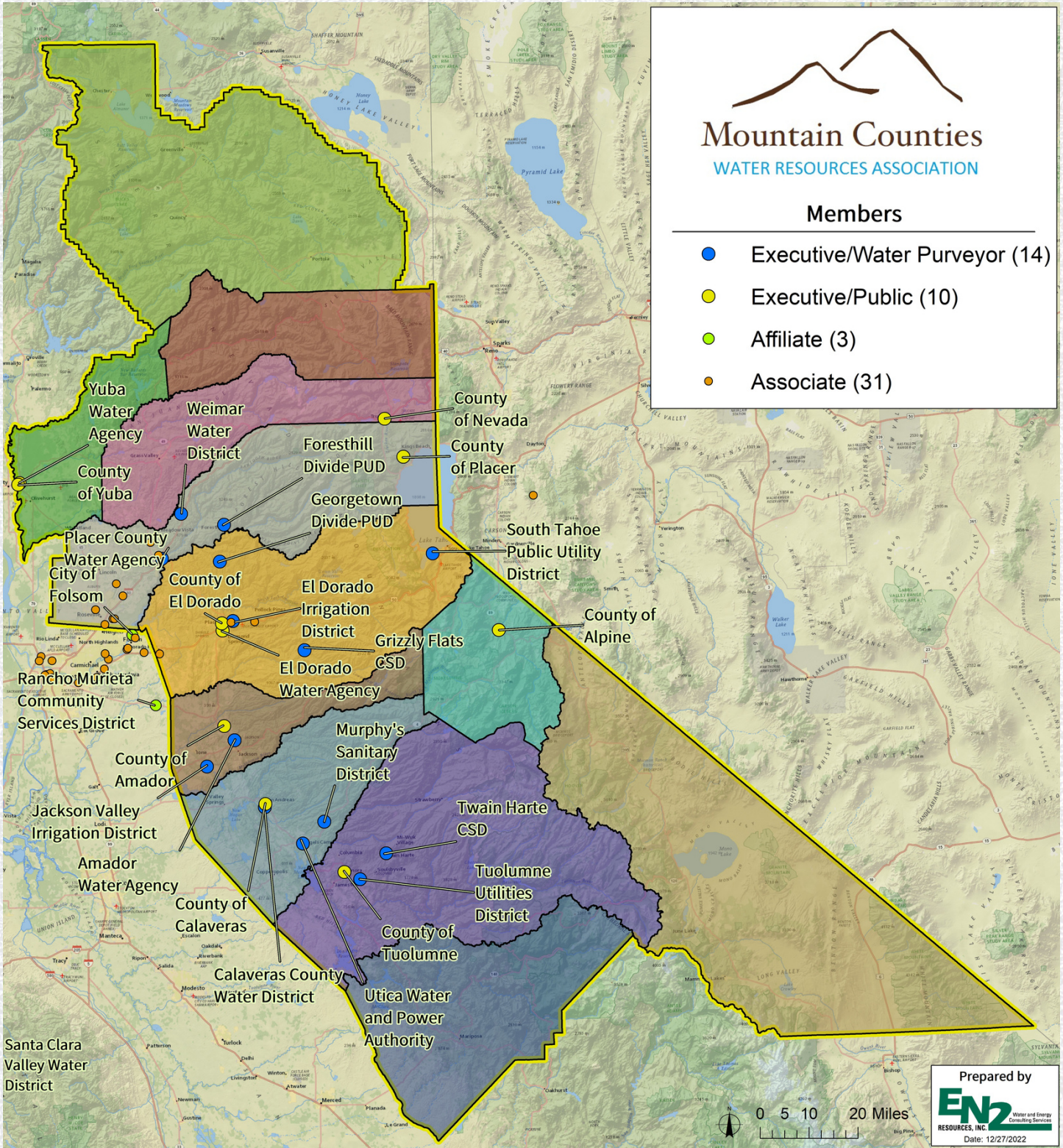
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- Leadership
- Advocacy
- Collaboration
- Education





# MCWRA Membership







# MCWRA Membership

**Executive Membership:** Any county, public district, or other public agency located in the State of California in the counties of origin, or adjacent to the central region of the Sierra Nevada that is involved in water development, acquisition, treatment, or storage may become an Executive Member upon written application, approval by the Board, and payment of the required membership dues. Acceptance to Executive Membership shall authorize full participation in MCWRA activities. The General Manager, Executive Officer, or appointed representative shall represent their organization in the Executive Membership and shall be the voting representative from its public entity.

**Associate Membership:** Any consulting organization or corporation involved in treating, controlling, developing, acquiring, using, or supplying water for any purpose (including protecting, drainage, or reclamation of lands, and/or producing power) for the inhabitants or lands within the counties of origin or adjacent to the central region of the Sierra Nevada in the State of California may become an Associate Member upon written application, approval by the Board, and payment of the required membership dues. Acceptance to Associate Membership shall authorize participation in MCWRA activities but shall not entitle any right to vote or hold office.

**Affiliate Membership:** Any water purveyor involved indirectly with MCWRA and/or its Executive Members in achieving mutual regulatory, political, and legislative goals for this region, its members, and those affiliated with MCWRA may become an Affiliate Member. Acceptance to Affiliate Membership shall authorize participation in MCWRA activities but shall not entitle any right to vote or hold office.





# Our Strategic Priorities



California's Headwaters



Water Rights



Water Supply



Forest Management



Statewide Collaboration



# California's Headwaters

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME
Support Increased Investment in healthy watersheds	Promote statewide and local policies that protect current investments	Ongoing
	Encourage local agency partners to advocate by creating a unified approach	Ongoing
Promote policies, projects and funding to protect the Sierra Nevada's watershed	Develop an advocacy platform to be used by MCWRA members to share with partner agencies	2024/Annual
Increase awareness of the importance of the Sierra Nevada watershed	Develop an education initiative spearheaded by partner agencies	2024/Annual



# Water Rights

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME
<p><b>Develop and execute a Water Rights educational campaign</b></p>	<p>Work with partners and stakeholders to draft content and collateral materials defining Water Rights, and highlighting the need for preservation and protection</p>	<p><b>2023</b></p>
	<p>Host materials on digital platform</p>	
	<p>Host an annual Water Rights webinar for MCWRA members</p>	<p><b>Annual</b></p>
<p><b>Preserve and protect priority principle Water Rights</b></p>	<p>Work with Legislative Committee and Legislative Advocacy team to track and engage in Water Rights legislative and regulatory activities</p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>Defend area of origin Water Rights</b></p>		



# Forest Management

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME
<p><b>Encourage science-based plans and actions</b></p>	<p>Convene appropriate parties for an initial panel discussion for MCWRA members on current science-based approaches used and possible future alternatives</p>	<p><b>2023/Ongoing</b></p>
	<p>Develop forest management principles for MCWRA as part of an annual advocacy platform/document</p>	<p><b>Annual</b></p>
<p><b>Collaborate with partner organizations and associations on forest management advocacy</b></p>	<p>Identify and convene partner organizations and associations for an annual forest management workshop/study session</p>	<p><b>Annual/Ongoing</b></p>
	<p>Align MCWRA with existing coalitions focused on forest management advocacy</p>	



# Statewide Collaboration

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME
<b>Water Resources Advocacy</b>	Develop a comprehensive Sierra Nevada region advocacy plan	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Enhance relationships with organizations and key individuals in Southern California and the Bay Area</b>	Sustain relationship with California-United Water	<b>Annual/Ongoing</b>
	Co-host annual California-United Water educational events and opportunities	
	Maintain leadership role and participation in Urban Water Institute	



# Water Supply

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME
<p><b>Achieve additional water storage capacity for California</b></p>	<p>Provide initial report on current water storage projects to MCWRA Board of Directors</p>	<p><b>2023/Annual</b></p>
	<p>Work with individual water storage projects to host introductory project briefings and annual updates</p>	
<p><b>Achieve additional water supply capacity for California</b></p>	<p>Advocate for current water storage projects while developing a long-term strategy for advocacy of future water storage projects</p>	
<p><b>Collaborate with strategically identified partners</b></p>	<p>Utilize Southern California and other strategic partnerships to enhance and amplify organized advocacy for water storage and water supply projects</p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>



**MOUNTAIN COUNTIES WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION**



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