

**RESOLUTION 2011 - 7685**

**A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF THE COUNTY OF PLUMAS  
TO WATER RIGHTS HOLDERS IN THE COURSE OF  
WATERSHED RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PROJECTS**

**WHEREAS**, in 1940 the Plumas County Superior Court issued a judgment and decree determining the rights of various claimants to the waters of the Middle Fork Feather River and its tributaries above Beckwourth, all of which is managed today by the California Department of Water Resources as the Middle Fork Feather River Watermaster Service Area; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1950 the Plumas County Superior Court issued a decree determining the rights of various claimants to the waters of the Indian Creek stream system, which is managed today by the California Department of Water Resources as the Indian Creek Watermaster Service Area; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2008 the Truckee River Operating Agreement affirmed the water rights of the Sierra Valley Water Company, including a priority date of 1870 under the Orr Ditch Decree; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Water Resources Control Board currently recognizes more than 500 other active water rights in Plumas County, including permits or licenses to appropriate water, certified stockponds, statements of diversion and use, and federal claims; and

**WHEREAS**, the various water rights that have been established in Plumas County are inextricably connected to property values and productive land use, which sustains the livelihoods of many of our citizens and comprises a vital part of the economy of Plumas County; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1985, the County of Plumas was one of the founding members of the Feather River Coordinated Resource Management (“CRM”) Group, which was formed with the objectives of maintaining, protecting, and improving water quality and water supply and reducing erosion that was adversely impacting land values, agricultural production, natural resources, and hydroelectric generation; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2003, the County of Plumas formed the Plumas Watershed Forum in conjunction with the California Department of Water Resources and the State Water Project Contractors to undertake watershed restoration projects to provide local benefits and also address the needs of downstream interests by shifting the timing of water flows to reduce winter floods and provide more useable water during peak summer demand; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2005, the County of Plumas adopted an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan for the Upper Feather River Watershed, creating a vision of large-scale stream and meadow restoration and active forest management, while also calling for the recognition and protection of agricultural water rights; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2009 the County of Plumas facilitated reorganization of the Feather River Regional Water Management Group to include more than 30 local, state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations to promote collaboration and inclusiveness in making decisions regarding water and watershed management and the investment of public funds; and

**WHEREAS**, the County of Plumas has consistently supported stream and meadow restoration projects with the objective of providing long-term water quality and water supply benefits to local water users; and

**WHEREAS**, the County of Plumas recognizes that concerns have been expressed regarding negative impacts to water rights and water supplies from recently completed and proposed meadow projects; and

**WHEREAS**, restoration projects have benefits related to erosion control, forage production, flood control, habitat improvement, recreation, fire suppression, and economic development, but the primary criteria for evaluating a project should be whether it protects or enhances useable water supplies and/or water quality for local water users; and

**WHEREAS**, the County of Plumas recognizes that specific processes need to be established and actions need to be taken to reconcile the objectives both of protecting water rights and of improving conditions in our forests and watersheds; and

**WHEREAS**, the County of Plumas recognizes that all watershed restoration and management projects are unique in their individual locations and each may possess different characteristics in terms of geology, hydrology, management and use, and downstream water users, all of which necessitates site-specific review of each project and its potential impacts to flows that affect water rights; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Supervisors recognizes the paramount importance of established water rights to the livelihoods of local landowners and the greater economy of Plumas County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that effective planning for stream restoration projects requires notice to and coordination with potentially affected water users; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the environmental document prepared for a stream restoration project under the California Environmental Quality Act shall include an assessment of any short-term and long-term water supply impacts; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that restoration project planning shall include contingency plans and mitigation measures to offset a range of foreseeable impacts to water supplies; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the County of Plumas shall work with interested parties to develop additional measures to be taken in the planning and implementation of stream and meadow restoration projects to help ensure that such projects do not harm any holders of water rights.

