

Bobby Cochran Photography



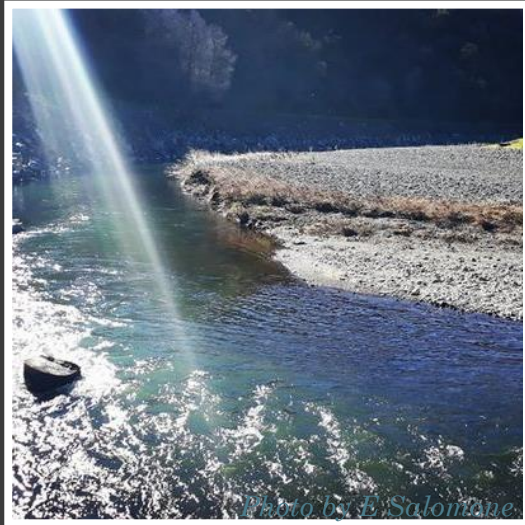
WATER SUPPLY IN THE RUSSIAN RIVER

April 2022

By Elizabeth Salomone, Russian River Flood Control District

HOW THE RIVER BEGINS

East Fork



Lake Mendocino

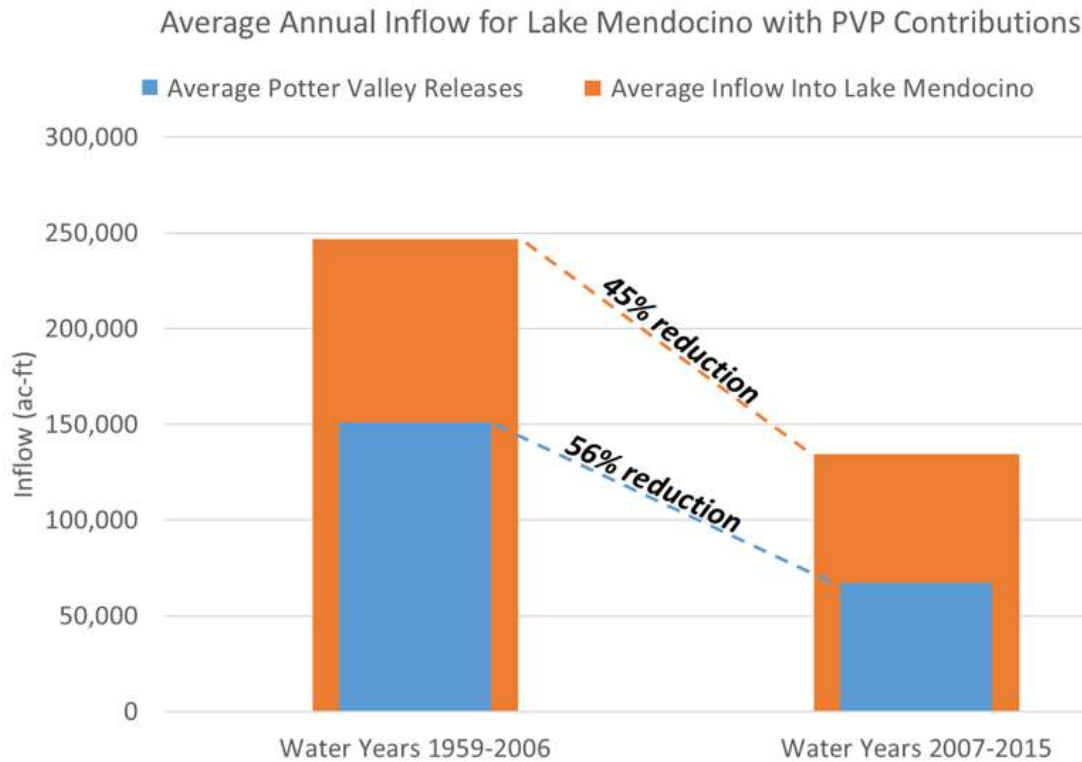


West Fork



IN-FLOWS FROM EAST FORK RUSSIAN RIVER

Reduced Inflow to Lake Mendocino



Diversions from the Eel River through the Potter Valley Project have reduced significantly due to a change in operations in 2006.

Graphic by Sonoma Water

IN-FLOWS FROM EAST FORK RUSSIAN RIVER



Annual changes occur based on Lake Pillsbury storage levels and PG&E operations. East Fork instream flows were deeply cut in 2021 due to drought conditions and operational changes.

LAKE MENDOCINO



East Fork flows pass through for Appropriative rights:

- Pre 1914
- Pre 1949 (1914-1949)
- Post 1949

Water stored by Flood Control & Sonoma Water meets:

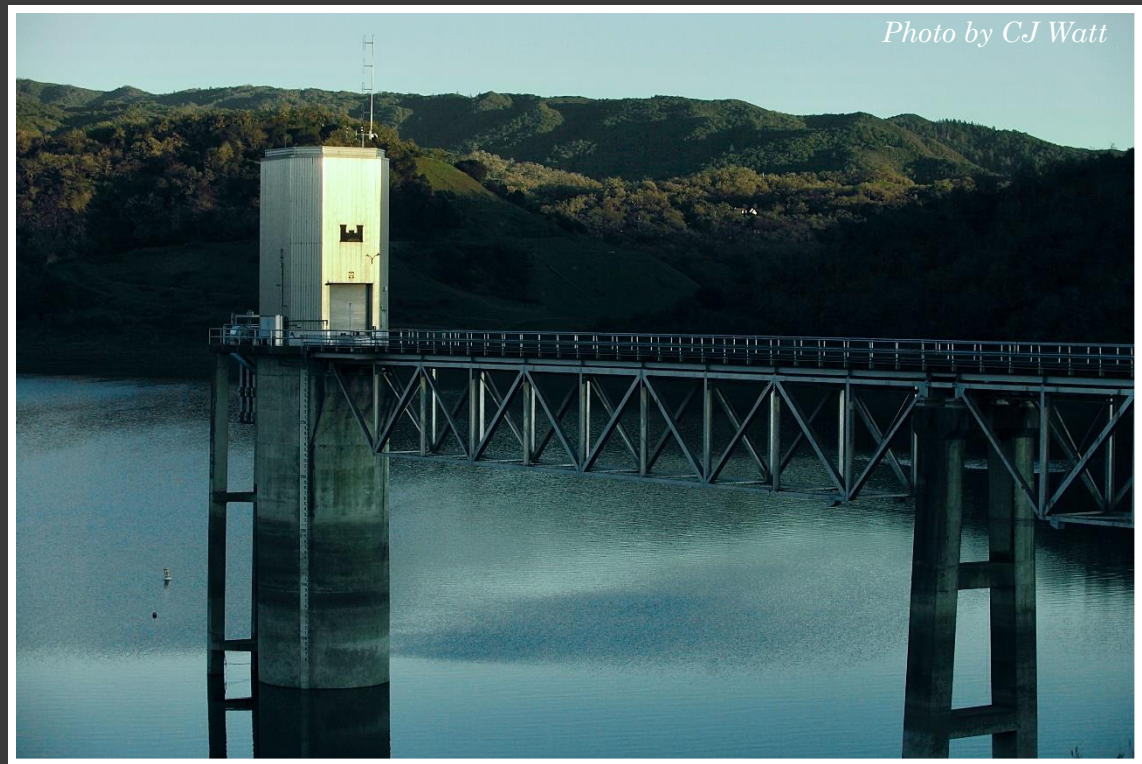
- In-stream flows
- Dry season supply under RRFC contract or 10k reservation



RRFC GIS Map

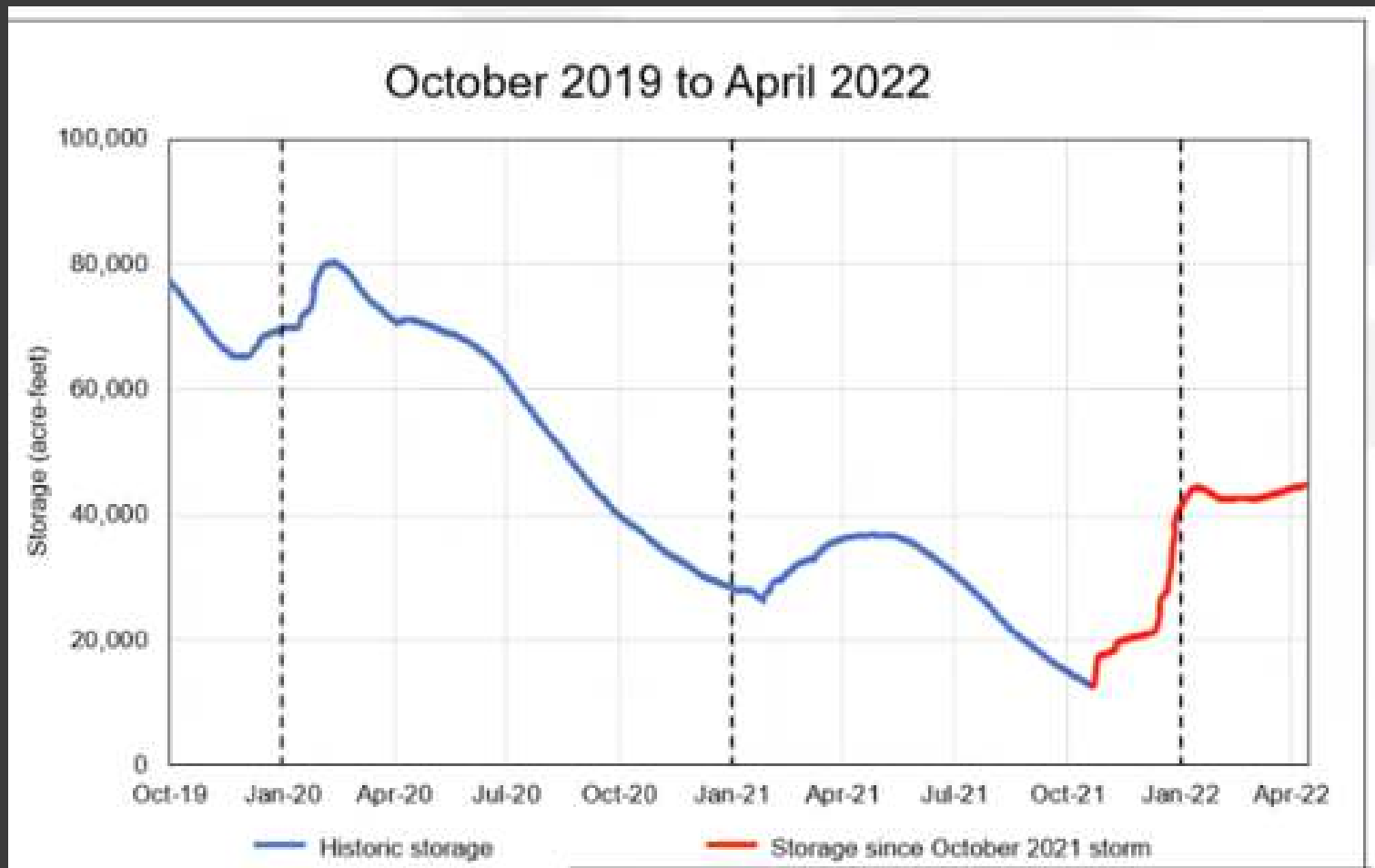
LAKE MENDOCINO RELEASES

Outflows from Lake Mendocino through Coyote Valley Dam join with the West Fork Russian River and provide water for diverters and fisheries along the main stem.



Temporary Urgency Change Petitions are filed to help maintain more water in storage by reducing minimum instream flow requirements.

LAKE MENDOCINO STORAGE



Graphic by State Water Resources Control Board

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2022

ANOTHER DRY YEAR

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Russian River Drought Response Group

2020:

State Water Resources Control Board
invites local input

2021:

Group formed to increase
communication
& facilitate a voluntary,
locally driven option

2022:

State Water Board to adopt updated
Emergency Regulations including
program for voluntary conservation

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 Voluntary Conservation 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 10th, the State Water Board is poised 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 **current** conditions of water availability from natural flows and imported water from the Potter Valley Project, a Participant who receives a Curtailment Order **may still be allowed to divert as much as:**

- If they are a Pre-1914 Appropriator: 80%
- If they are a Pre-1949 Appropriator: 70%
- If they are a Pre-1955 Appropriator:
Between 35% and 70%, depending on conditions.
- If they are 1955 or later Appropriator:
Between 35% and 60%, depending on conditions.

**** Riparian diverters to reduce diversions correlatively (together) in accordance with natural flow availability****



LARGER THREATS ON THE HORIZON

We are facing immediate *and* long-term water crises.

What are you willing to do
towards securing a sustainable water supply,
not just for 2022, but for decades into the future?

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MORE INFORMATION

Sign up for weekly Water Supply
Updates by emailing:

DistrictManager@rrfc.net

