

# **Watershed authority marks 25 years of stewardship**

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THE Calaveras County Water District proudly joins regional partners in honoring the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority for 25 years of dedicated service to the Mokelumne River watershed, its forests, and the communities that depend on them.

Formed in August 2000, UMWRA brought together nine public agencies, including CCWD, to protect and manage the 550-square-mile Upper Mokelumne River watershed. This rugged, high-elevation landscape is a vital source of clean water for both local residents and downstream communities.

Over the past quarter-century, UMRWA has demonstrated exceptional leadership in water resource management, forest health, and regional collaboration. From securing more than #11 million in grant funding for local water infrastructure projects to developing the Regional Water Management Plan, UMRWA has consistently delivered results that benefit our region.

“UMRWA is helping to protect our forests and our communities through these projects, and we plan to work with our partners to increase these efforts in the future,” said Jack Garamendi, former UMRWA board member and current CCWD Board vice president.

As wildfire risks have intensified, UMWRA has stepped up with bold action. In 2016, it entered into a master Stewardship Agreement with the U.S. Forest Service, launching large-scale forest health and fuels reduction efforts. Phase 1 of the Forest Projects Plan, funded with \$25 million in state grants, targeted over 25,600 acres. Phase 2 – The Mokelumne-Amador-Calaveras Forest Resilience Project – will expand restoration work across an additional 250,000 acres.

These efforts have been made possible through strategic partnerships with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board, Cal Fire, Blue Forest Conservation, the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group and Tribal Communities whose ancestral ties to the Mokelumne watershed continue to guide stewardship efforts.

Jeff Davidson, CCWD Board president, one of UMRWA’s original members, and a longtime CCWD representative, shared, “We are very proud of the forest health projects UMWRA has conducted, which minimize catastrophic wildfire risk and protect our communities.”

“For 25 years, UMWRA has served as a venue where its members work together on projects and programs to protect water quality and supply. This valuable partnership is paying off with substantial improvements for the watershed and local communities,” said Richard Sykes, UMRWA executive officer.

“We look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure the health and resilience of our watershed for generations to come,” Davidson said.