

**Proposed Merger Discussions
Between**

**Redwood Valley County Water District
And**

Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District

The Boards of Directors and Staff of the two districts have met on a number of occasions during 2010 and 2011 to discuss the possibility of combining the two districts. The goal of these discussions has been to determine if it is feasible and beneficial to create a new district that could take advantage of the individual strengths and assets of the two districts while eliminating existing deficiencies. The single greatest deficiency is the lack of a reliable water right for Redwood Valley. In addition to overcoming this lack of a water right, a new combined district would have a stronger voice when dealing with State and Federal water rights and Russian River management issues.

Although the terms “merger” and “annexation” have been used to describe some form of joining the two districts, the correct term is “re-organization” or “consolidation.”

There are a huge number of details that will need to be worked out to ensure that the new consolidated entity will serve the needs of all the customers of each of the original districts in a way that most benefits all members of the community. Each Board has appointed an *ad hoc* (temporary, expressly formed for this purpose only) committee to work with Staff and return to their individual Boards to report and discuss the findings and make recommendations.

Following individual and combined *ad hoc* meetings and regular individual board meetings, the two boards scheduled a combined public board meeting so that all board members could meet together and meet with the public. The intent of this meeting was to share the status of the talks with the public and to ask the public how they feel about the proposed consolidation.

April 30, 2011. The combined boards met at a publicly noticed meeting graciously hosted by the Barra of Mendocino Winery. 35-40 members of the public, including County Supervisors, were present. The general response from the public was favorable and the public supported the boards’ decision to move forward and specifically to meet jointly with the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA). The boards voted individually to proceed with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to approach SCWA to determine if it would be possible to arrange the purchase of a permanent water right for the customers of the current Redwood Valley County Water District. In addition to an offer of a purchase by Redwood Valley, the Flood Control District is offering to abandon an application for additional water from Lake Mendocino. The vote by each board was unanimous and Staff was directed to draft a MOA for review and approval by the individual boards.

April 11, 2011. The RVCWD convened a special meeting and its board of directors unanimously approved the proposed MOA. The RRFC convened its regular meeting and its board of directors also unanimously approved the proposed MOA. ([click here to view the MOA](#)). The Boards also directed Staff, RRFC General Manager Sean White, and RVCWD General Manager Bill Koehler to meet with SCWA staff to begin preliminary discussions toward the possible purchase of a water right for Redwood Valley.

April 22, 2011. GMs White and Koehler met with SCWA GM Grant Davis and Assistant GM for Operations Pam Jeane. White and Koehler proposed that the positions defined in the MOA be used as a starting point for further discussions leading to a final agreement. SCWA was appreciative of the cooperation between RVCWD and RRFC. The understanding of the group is that in addition to the water rights purchase, the end result of any negotiations between the combined Mendocino districts and SCWA must reflect an improved ability to manage and protect the entire Russian River system. SCWA staff indicated that they would discuss the Mendocino proposal with their working groups to develop any additional components that should be considered for addition to a permanent solution.

Additional information will be provided as talks progress.