

Section 8: Coordination and Outreach

This section provides information on outreach and coordination with local agencies and the broader public, undertaken as part of IRWMP development.

8.1 Coordination with Local Land Use Planning

The RWMG includes the City of Santa Clarita, CLWA, LACFCD, NCWD, RMC, SCWD, SCVSD, and VWC. The City of Santa Clarita is the land use planning agency responsible for land use decisions within City borders. Los Angeles County is the land use agency for the unincorporated areas of the Region. Most projects envisioned within this IRWMP in some way are affected by land use planning.

8.1.1 Linkages Between the IRWMP and Local Planning Documents

This section describes the linkages and dynamics between the IRWMP and local planning. The IRWMP has drawn heavily on existing planning documents and planning programs of local agencies in the following ways:

- **Regional Description.** The IRWMP has utilized information from the *Los Angeles County General Plan*, the County's *Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan*, the City of Santa Clarita's *General Plan*, data from the ongoing OVOV planning process, and the *Business Plan for the Angeles National Forest*, as well as discussions with City, County, and National Forest planning staff, to describe the Region. The IRWMP relies on these planning documents to describe the existing setting of the Region, including existing and planned land uses (see Section 2). In addition to providing information on the social and cultural makeup of the regional community, these plans also provided information on population projections, economic conditions and trends and special environmental resources and environmental water demands.

The *Los Angeles County General Plan*, the County's *Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan*, the City of Santa Clarita's *General Plan*, OVOV, and the *Business Plan for the Angeles National Forest* provided a framework from which to further analyze potential regional issues and needs with the Stakeholder group.

- **Regional Issues, Needs, and Objectives.** Stakeholders were asked to identify major water issues and problems. Specific consideration of regional water supplies and issues was informed with data from multiple local planning documents, but primarily from UWMPs prepared by the local water agencies. Water quality issues were examined using information contained in the Los Angeles RWQCB *Basin Plan* and its amendments. Habitat, species, and resource stewardship issues were examined based on general plans, the *Business Plan for the Angeles National Forest*, planning documents prepared by VCWPD, including the *Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan* and documents of, and discussions with, the VCRPD.

Based on the issues identified, Stakeholders were then asked to develop IRWMP objectives.

As described in Section 3, in developing objectives for the IRWMP, Stakeholders determined that it was important that objectives not only be measurable, but also that the existing condition of the resources at issue be quantified so that change/progress could be reasonably ascertained at a later date. The existing condition was evaluated and summarized using a variety of reports and studies and provided to the Stakeholders for review and comment. These reports, and Stakeholder comments, contained valuable insight about how change or progress towards a given objective could be measured. Local planning references used to develop measurable objectives are identified in Section 3.

- Outreach. Because the County and City of Santa Clarita general plans, along with the *Business Plan for the Angeles National Forest*, provide a comprehensive overview of the Region, these plans were reviewed to assist with identifying potential Stakeholders and interests for participation in the IRWMP.
- Project Prioritization Process. One of the criteria used to sort Candidate Projects is the project's compatibility with other planning documents for the Region (see Section 5).

8.1.2 Participation by Local Planning Entities

Local planning entities, including City of Santa Clarita and County planning staff, local US Forest Service personnel, and Resource Conservation District staff participated in development of the IRWMP and will participate in continuing IRWMP implementation. These local planning entities participated in Stakeholder meetings, provided updated data (as described above), reviewed and commented on IRWMP sections, sponsored Candidate Projects, and participated in the initial sorting of Candidate Projects. As described in Section 5.5.1, these planning agencies, along with the general Stakeholder group, will be asked to participate in all updates of the IRWMP, by participating in meetings, providing information and data necessary to revise objectives, by making recommendations regarding project ranking, and by sponsoring projects.

8.2 Coordination with State and Federal Agencies

8.2.1 Participation in IRWMP Development

RWMP members have a long history of working with State and Federal agencies to address water management issues. Local agency staff and elected officials have worked closely over the years with the Los Angeles RWQCB, CDFG, DWR, Resource Conservation districts, DPH, the US ACE, the US FWS, and the US Forest Service.

The Los Angeles RWQCB, CDFG, and US Forest Service were active participants in development of the IRWMP. These agencies regularly attended Stakeholder meetings and participated in the group discussions. These agencies also provided up-to-date information related to the resources they are tasked with managing and protecting. The US ACE provided a special presentation on their local activities. In general, State and Federal agency Stakeholders:

- Participated in Stakeholder meetings
- Reviewed and commented on IRWMP sections

- Provided guidance on project sorting
- Submitted Candidate Projects

In addition, several agencies, including CDFG, US Forest Service, and the Resource Conservation districts participated in subgroups to assist with the refinement of objectives. At key milestones in plan development, the RWMG sought input on the plan from DWR. On multiple occasions, DWR participated in Stakeholder meetings and reviewed IRWMP sections.

8.2.2 Participation in IRWMP Implementation

As described in Section 5.5.1, the RWMG intends to continue coordination with State and Federal agencies as the IRWMP is updated through time. It is anticipated that State and Federal agencies will continue to participate in the IRWMP as Stakeholders and Local Project Sponsors. Ongoing participation by these entities will enhance the technical data and knowledge in the IRWMP. These agencies will also be able to identify and recommend funding sources for IRWMP implementation.

In addition, implementation of Plan Projects will require coordination with multiple Federal and State agencies, such as:

- CDFG and US FWS. CDFG and US FWS oversee implementation of the California and Federal Endangered Species Act and regulate activities that may impact endangered species and their habitats (Fish and Game Code, Sections 2050 et seq.). Any Plan Projects with potential impacts to sensitive species will require coordination with these agencies. CDFG also oversees any activity that will substantially modify a river, stream, or lake (Fish and Game Code Sections 1600 et seq.). Before undertaking any activity that would result in modification of a river, stream, or lake, it will be necessary to obtain a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFG.
- DPH. DPH regulates public water systems, including allowable treatment technologies for drinking water and the treatment and distribution of recycled water. Any Plan Projects that involve treatment of drinking water or recycled water will require coordination with DPH.
- Los Angeles RWQCB. The Los Angeles RWQCB sets goals for groundwater and surface water quality in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Based on these goals, the Los Angeles RWQCB regulates discharges to groundwater and surface water, including storm water runoff. Any Plan Projects that could result in storm water runoff or which could result in a change in discharges to surface or groundwater may have to coordinate with the Los Angeles RWQCB. Under the federal Clean Water Act Section 401, every applicant for a federal permit or license for any activity which may result in a discharge to a water body must obtain State Water Quality Certification (called a 401 Certification) to ensure that the proposed project will not violate state water quality standards. Most 401 Certifications are issued in connection with US ACE permits for dredge and fill discharges. The Los Angeles RWQCB reviews projects for 401 Certification.
- US ACE. US ACE has regulatory authority over all discharges of dredge and fill materials within navigable waters and waters (such as intermittent streams and wetlands) with significant connection to navigable waters. The US ACE regulates such projects through

the issuance of permits. Any Plan Projects that could result in discharge of dredge and fill material to a water body may have to coordinate with the US ACE.

8.3 Disadvantaged Community Outreach

As defined by the *Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Guidelines*, a disadvantaged community (DAC) is a municipality, including, but not limited to a city, town or county, or a reasonably isolated and divisible segment of a larger municipality, that has an average MHI that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income. In 2000, 80 percent of the State of California’s MHI was \$37,994. As described in Section 2.5.3, no communities that meet the strict State definition of a DAC were identified within the Region. However, because cost of living varies from place to place, a statewide income measure may not be entirely applicable to a specific area. This fact is illustrated by the City of Santa Clarita housing assistance guidelines. The City of Santa Clarita housing assistance guidelines were used as a proxy measure of what income levels could be characterized as disadvantaged within the Region. By these proxy standards, a household of 4 persons would be considered disadvantaged if household income were less than \$59,200.

In the spirit of providing “a safe, clean, affordable, and sufficient water supply to meet the needs of California residents, farms, and businesses” (CWC §79501(b)), an outreach effort directed at DAC members was developed. A DAC Outreach Subcommittee was formed, consisting of the City of Santa Clarita, LACDPW, and RMC, which was assisted by the facilitator.

Initially the DAC Outreach Subcommittee focused on identifying specific “pockets” of DACs in the Region. As part of this effort, the Subcommittee contacted SCE to try to get information on households in the Region participating in the SCE California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) program. The CARE program offers income-qualified customers a discount of 20 percent or more off their monthly electric bill. The intent is to survey these households with regard to their concerns related to water and water related resources in the Region. SCE is considering this request. The Subcommittee is hopeful that this data will be available to inform updates of this IRWMP.

Because no specific pockets of DACs were identified, the DAC Outreach Subcommittee decided the best way to contact DAC members was to undertake opinion surveys and to advertise public workshops for the IRWMP in

areas where economically disadvantaged people are likely to seek services. The surveys and advertisements were prepared in both Spanish and English; samples of the survey and public workshop advertisements are included in Appendix D.

Identified areas for opinion survey distribution and public workshop advertisement are:

Upper Santa Clara River IRWMP Survey

- Santa Clarita Valley Senior Center
- Santa Clarita Community Center
- Val Verde Community Center

In addition, it was decided to both undertake the survey and to advertise the IRWMP public workshop during community events. Identified community events include:

- National Hispanic Environmental Council Career Day (April 4, 2008)
- Arbor Day (April 12, 2008)
- Emergency Expo (April 19, 2008)

The survey is still ongoing, but some initial results are available. When asked to “Rate the following issues based on their importance to you”:

- 1) Access to clean drinking water
- 2) Open space and recreational opportunities
- 3) Flood protection
- 4) Water quality of local rivers, lakes, and streams

The majority of respondents selected all four issues for as having “high” importance. Of the four issues, responses show a slight preference for water quality of local rivers, lakes and streams and access to clean drinking water.

Advertisement of the public workshop for this IRWMP took place several weeks ahead of the date of the workshop. Surveys were conducted before and as a part of public comment on the public draft IRWMP.

8.3.1 Environmental Justice

Concerns for environmental justice will need to be addressed as part of IRWMP implementation. As the Region continues to develop, care will need to be taken to prevent creating environmental justice issues that unfairly affect certain communities. The IRWMP objectives of reducing water demand, improving operational efficiency, increasing water supply, improving water quality, and promoting resource stewardship, must be consistently applied to future projects so as to ensure greatest regional benefits without placing an undue burden on a specific community.

8.4 Public Outreach

Public outreach was an on-going effort during the IRWMP planning effort. Public outreach was accomplished through a variety of means including:

- Advertisement of the public hearing to initiate the preparation of the IRWMP
- Maintaining a website to facilitate public and Stakeholder outreach

- Advertising the IRWMP and its development on agency websites
- Inclusion of a public comment period on the agenda at each Stakeholder meeting
- Using email to inform Stakeholders about upcoming meetings
- Using email to facilitate distribution, review, and comment on the IRWMP by Stakeholders
- Using mail, newspaper notices, and flyers posted in community venues to encourage public and DAC participation in the IRWMP process
- Holding a public workshop to review the draft IRWMP
- Regularly providing information to local media

The RWMG hosted a public hearing on May 15, 2007, to receive public input as to whether or not issues of the Region necessitated preparation of an IRWMP. This public hearing was noticed consistent with CWC §10541; notice of the public hearing was published twice (May 1 and May 8) in the *Santa Clarita Valley Signal*. This meeting marked the official start of the IRWMP process and the public outreach process. In order to develop a Stakeholder Group for the IRWMP the RWMG sent letters to potentially interested entities (this letter is contained in Appendix C).

All four town councils within the Region were given an introductory presentation about the IRWMP prior to the first meeting. The town councils consist of West Ranch, Castaic, Acton, and Agua Dulce. Each town council was invited to send an official representative to the Stakeholder meetings. Other town council members were also welcome to attend.

To enhance outreach and coordination with the public and the Stakeholder group, a website was established for the IRWMP (www.scrwaterplan.org). This website advertises the time and place of each of the upcoming Stakeholder meetings; the website also provides the handouts, agenda, and minutes for each of the past meetings. A visitor to the website can get maps of the Region, download sections of the draft IRWMP, and get the necessary forms and guidance for submitting a project concept. Links to the IRWMP website are provided on the websites of agencies participating in the RWMG.

Each of the Stakeholder meetings was open to the public and each meeting included a period reserved for public comment. A specific public workshop will be held to solicit public input on the draft IRWMP. This public meeting has been broadly noticed. As described in Section 8.3, advertisements for the public workshop have been provided at multiple community events and posted at multiple community venues. These public notices are in both English and Spanish. Notice of the public workshop was also published in the local newspaper.

The RWMG provided the public with regular updates on the IRWMP. These updates were contained in agency newsletters and local newspaper articles (see Appendix D). Members of the RWMG also made an effort to provide IRWMP updates in other public forums, including the regular WCVV meeting and at the West Ranch Town Council.

At the conclusion of the public draft IRWMP review period, public comments were incorporated, with guidance from the RWMG, so as to create the final IRWMP.