

**Item No. 3 Stakeholders and Stakeholder Participation**

A description of how stakeholders, including DACs, are identified and invited to participate. List the procedures, processes, or structures that promote access to and collaboration with people or agencies with diverse views within the region. Discuss how the outreach efforts address the diversity of water management issues, geographical representation, and stakeholder interests in the region.

**Requirement**

Explain how the IRWM region is inclusive and utilizes a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process that provides mechanisms to assist DAC; address water management issues; and develop integrated, multi-benefit, regional solutions that incorporate environmental stewardship to implement future IRWM plans.

Does the list of stakeholders appear to be inclusive? Are DACs given an opportunity to participate? Does it appear that the RWMG includes stakeholders, including DACs, in its planning process and implementation?

Do stakeholder outreach efforts promote participation of broad-based water planning and management interests in the region? Do the listed stakeholders provide a balanced representation of the water issues in the region?

**Review Criteria**

Does the submittal describe how stakeholders, including DACs, are identified and invited to participate? Are the procedures, processes, or structures that promote access to and collaboration with people or agencies with diverse views within the region listed and discussed?

Does it appear that the IRWM region is inclusive and utilizes a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process that provides mechanisms to assist DAC and address water management issues? Will this result in the development of integrated, multi-benefit, regional solutions that incorporate environmental stewardship to implement the IRWM plan?

Stakeholder involvement is critical to the success of the San Luis Obispo IRWMP process. Numerous stakeholders were identified, contacted, and invited to participate in the IRWMP process. Special consideration was given to disadvantaged communities (DACs) and actions were taken to ensure their participation and representation in the process. Stakeholder outreach, coordination and participation will continue during implementation of the IRWMP.

**Stakeholders and Stakeholder Participation**

The IRWM planning process has created a forum for many of these stakeholders to come together to work collaboratively on their shared and/or overlapping issues. In order to make this forum most effective, steps have been taken to identify as many of the potential stakeholders with water management interests in region as possible, and to make them aware of and participants in the IRWMP process.

The Water Resources Advisory Committee represents a majority of the water management authorities and stakeholders within the region boundary. Consequently, meetings of the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) have been and will continue to be the main forum for public participation in IRWM. The RWMG's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (provided in Item 1) designates the WRAC as the RWMG's main advisor and the forum through which the RWMG will consider IRWM items.

The WRAC is an appointed advisory body made up of citizens and governmental representatives, including elected officials that advise the District's Board of Supervisors on water resource projects and policies in the region. District staff is secretary for the WRAC, and consequently, the RWMG's MOU establishes the District as lead agency for IRWMP. For over 50 years, WRAC hearings have been the primary forum for the regional review of water resource issues and details. WRAC's many purposes include developing recommendations to the District's Board - thereby making WRAC the most obvious stakeholder group for IRWM planning. The table below identifies the member agencies of the WRAC. As demonstrated by the membership, the stakeholders represent a diversity of water management issues, geography, and interests.

### WRAC Members

Bold = Includes Disadvantaged Community Census Blocks

Agency/Organization Represented	Agency/Organization Interests
Atascadero Mutual Water Company	Water Purveyor
Golden State Water	Water Purveyor
California Mens Colony	Water and Wastewater
Cambria CSD	Municipal water and wastewater
Camp San Luis Obispo	Water and wastewater
City of Arroyo Grande	Municipal water and wastewater
City of Atascadero	Municipal water and wastewater
City of Grover Beach	Municipal water and wastewater
<b>City of Morro Bay</b>	Municipal water and wastewater
City of Paso Robles	Municipal water and wastewater
City of Pismo Beach	Municipal water and wastewater
City of San Luis Obispo	Municipal water and wastewater
County Farm Bureau	Agriculture
Cuesta Community College	Water and wastewater
County Board of Supervisors District 1	Water Resources
County Board of Supervisors District 2	Water Resources
County Board of Supervisors District 3	Water Resources
County Board of Supervisors District 4	Water Resources
County Board of Supervisors District 5	Water Resources
Environmental at Large	Environmental
Heritage Ranch CSD	Municipal water and wastewater
<b>Los Osos CSD</b>	Municipal water and wastewater
Nipomo CSD	Municipal water and wastewater
<b>Oceano CSD</b>	Municipal water and wastewater
San Luis Coastal RCD	Natural Resources Conservation
<b>San Miguel CSD</b>	Municipal water and wastewater
San Simeon CSD	Municipal water and wastewater
Templeton CSD	Municipal water and wastewater
Upper Salinas RCD	Natural Resources Conservation
Agriculture at Large	Agriculture

Other IRWM stakeholders include smaller water purveyors; non-governmental organizations such as Surfrider, SLO Greenbuild, and Central Coast Salmon Enhancement; regional and sub-regional cooperative groups, such as the Coast and Ocean Regional Roundtable and San Luis Obispo Council of Governments; non-profit programs, such as the Morro Bay National Estuary Program; agricultural groups such as Cattlemen's and Growers and Vintners Associations; State agencies such as the Central Coast RWQCB, DWR, and Fish and Game; Tribal Representatives; and bordering IRWM regions.

The District will take the lead in gathering contact information for each of the stakeholders, meeting with them to explain the IRWM Program and RWMG efforts, and requesting their indication of their level of involvement by September 2009. District staff will query existing RWMG members, IRWM participants and contacts to ensure all stakeholders are contacted. While they will be offered the opportunity, these other participants may or may not be able or desire to enter into MOUs to become RWMG members. Other levels of involvement in developing the IRWM Plan are to attend WRAC meetings and speak at public comment, attend sub-regional IRWM meetings, meet with District staff to provide input, submit projects and programs for consideration of sponsorship by a RWMG member and review of IRWM materials. Each participant and stakeholder will be asked to submit a letter of support or provide feedback if they do not support the IRWM Plan. The District will continue taking the lead in coordinating with its neighboring IRWM regions both independently and via meetings of the Central Coast IRWM Funding Area Regions.

District staff will also perform census tract evaluations to ensure all DACs are identified by September 2009. Participation by the DACs will be ensured by contacting them and setting up local meetings if they are unable to attend regional (i.e. WRAC) meetings. The District will facilitate review by DACs by first understanding DAC priorities and focusing review of IRWM materials on those priorities. The District will collect and distribute input from DACs for consideration by the WRAC and RWMG at WRAC meetings.

The WRAC is a "Brown Act Committee." Consequently, its meetings are public hearings with agendas and public noticing. A wide variety of stakeholders receive electronic mail notices of WRAC agendas, including the media and non-governmental agencies, so the contact list is used to notify stakeholders of IRWM workshops. Its preeminent role in water resource management is known throughout the region by stakeholders who are interested in maintaining involvement in regional water resource issues. As a result, the WRAC provides a direct link to the majority of the water management authorities and stakeholders within the region boundary and also provides a link to the public and other stakeholders interested in water resource management. Communication regarding meeting notices, agendas and minutes, have been accomplished via written letters, phone calls, and electronic mail. An effective communication and educational tool has been the IRWM website. The website is used for communication and posting of the IRWMP. If stakeholders do not have access to the website or prefer hardcopies, the documents are provided at no cost to ensure equal access to all interested stakeholders.

The following specific outreach needs have been identified, based both on the development and adoption of the IRWM Plan, as well as on implementation of the policies, concepts and projects identified in the Plan:

***Additional outreach to the non-English speaking community.*** Several communities within the region are composed of substantial numbers of Spanish speaking individuals. Additional work to ensure that these community members are fully engaged in the development of the Plan should be conducted. Production of the IRWM materials in both Spanish and English will be considered.

**Consideration of issues specific to economically disadvantaged communities.** Several areas within the region, including whole communities in the north County, have been identified as economically disadvantaged. A review of IRWM Plan policies from the perspective of these communities needs to be conducted to ensure that the balance between resource provision, resource protection, and overall cost appropriately considers the economic conditions found in these communities.

**Cost Subsidies.** A strategy to help pay for identified improvements needed in economically disadvantaged areas needs to be developed. Concepts from initial infrastructure grants to utility bill assistance should be included.

Currently, the agencies involved in the development and implementation of the IRWMP have not adopted formal Environmental Justice programs. Therefore, a program that mirrors that of the State Water Resources Control Board should be implemented. That program's goals include:

1. Integrating Environmental Justice considerations into the development, adoption, implementation and enforcement of Board decisions, regulations and policies.
2. Promoting meaningful public participation and community capacity building to allow communities to be effective participants in Board decision-making processes.
3. Working with the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment to improve research and data collection in communities of color and low-income populations.
4. Ensuring effective cross-media coordination and accountability when addressing environmental justice issues.

The first step to addressing environmental justice (EJ) issues has been taken. The regional decision makers recognize the importance of addressing EJ issues and have incorporated it into the IRWMP goals, objectives and projects. The IRWMP vision and each of the IRWMP goals addresses the importance of implementing water related projects without unfairly burdening communities, neighborhoods or individuals into each of the five water management goals.

All communities in the region, whether disadvantaged or not, currently enjoy good access to public policy decision-makers. Because incorporated Cities in the region have smaller populations, access to elected officials, agency staff and public forums is excellent. In the unincorporated area, containing roughly half the region's population, a system of Board of Supervisor's Advisory Councils, together with numerous self-governing Community Services Districts, provides the average citizen, regardless of their race, color, national origin, or income, broad access to public agency decision making.

#### History of Identifying Stakeholders and Stakeholder Participation

The following describes the history of stakeholder outreach and participation in the development of the region's IRWMP.

In 2004, the County of San Luis Obispo's Public Works Department (District) took the lead in initiating the IRWM Plan development. In order to start the stakeholder participation process, an IRWM Team consisting of the following District staff was formed:

- Deputy Director
- Environmental Division Manager

- Utilities Division Water Resource Engineer
- Environmental Resource Specialist
- Utilities Staff Engineer
- Other support staff

The Team then worked with the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) as the appropriate structure to promote access to and collaboration with people or agencies with diverse views within the region. The WRAC developed an IRWM subcommittee with representatives of municipalities, private water purveyors, agricultural and environmental stakeholders. A WRAC IRWM Subcommittee was formed consisting of members representing the following interests:

- Environmental
- Environmental and Coastal
- South County
- Agriculture
- North County
- Non-governmental Water Purveyor

The Subcommittee's purpose was threefold:

1. Review IRWM Plan Objectives & Strategies
2. Identify & review IRWM projects
3. Review & recommend project prioritization.

The subcommittee involvement occurred through workshops and meetings. In addition to the Subcommittee members, workshops were also open to any WRAC member and the public. Also, the City of San Luis Obispo's Utilities Conservation Coordinator was nominated to serve as an ex-officio member along with County staff. The WRAC members chosen for the Subcommittee resulted in a balanced representation of water interests.

The IRWM stakeholder process was initiated in 2004. The District sent a letter to the stakeholders requesting water-related documents. These documents were collected and reviewed to begin developing IRWM objectives and begin IRWM planning in the five areas of water management: water supply, groundwater management, ecosystem restoration, water quality, and flood management. Public workshops, noticed through the WRAC email and mail distribution lists and the District website, were then conducted identifying IRWM objectives and projects. Public workshops were open to any WRAC member and the public. Several workshops were held to review and solicit input on the IRWM objectives, identify IRWM projects, and evaluate IRWM project priorities. The IRWM objectives, projects, and priorities were modified to reflect stakeholder comments and recommendations.

Upon receipt of feedback from the State on the San Luis Region's IRWM Plan, the Director of Public Works implemented the first step of the five-year update plan: "Review the plan's goals, objectives, strategies, and priorities with stakeholders. Amend Plan." To implement the first item in the 5-year update plan, the District held a public workshop to review the proposed amendments to the IRWM Plan. Feedback at the workshop and via email from stakeholders included recommended changes to the high-ranking, immediate-term projects for grant proposal consideration. Based on the feedback, the IRWM Plan was amended and supported by the WRAC at a follow-up workshop.

Additional stakeholders invited to participate in plan development include State agencies including the Regional Water Quality Control Board and Department of Health Services; local Resource Conservation Districts; Central Coast Salmon Enhancement; the Planning and Conservation League; other governmental entities including the County of Santa Barbara; and land trusts and other non-governmental environmental organizations in the region.

The IRWMP process has focused on identifying as broad a range of stakeholders as possible. Traditionally, stakeholders coordinated on narrowly focused projects or specific water management strategies. There is increasing awareness that it is beneficial to integrate the efforts of these stakeholders groups. Furthermore, stakeholders recognize the need to work together given their shared dependence on limited local water supplies in the region and to develop programs that provide multiple benefits to the region.

#### Disadvantaged Community Involvement

Disadvantaged communities were involved in the preparation of the IRWMP through their involvement with the WRAC and the commitment by District staff to represent their interests. All of the region's communities are represented on WRAC through one of the 30 appointees.

In most instances, the disadvantaged populations do not occupy distinct, separate neighborhoods. As a result, they tend to share in both the benefits and impacts associated with community development and resource delivery issues. However, four distinct economically disadvantaged areas can be identified in different portions of the region, with two of those consisting of substantial portions of their communities. In the south County, portions of Oceano and Nipomo, both unincorporated communities, are economically disadvantaged, with both communities consisting of predominately Hispanic residents. However, these neighborhoods are contained within larger communities that are clearly not economically disadvantaged. As result, both areas have the advantages of equal treatment because of their location within the larger community, but are both distinct enough to qualify for various forms of financial assistance to ensure that both basic community infrastructure improvements and community amenities are provided.

Major needs of the disadvantaged communities within Nipomo and Oceano can be met through implementation of the regional water management programs. The continuing IRWMP process will take into account and be responsive to the needs of disadvantaged communities. Continued improvement and subsequent adoption of the IRWMP will require additional efforts to ensure that the disadvantaged communities' needs are fully considered.