

Item No. 5 Governance Structure

A description of the RWMG governance structure and how it will facilitate the sustained development of regional water management and the IRWM process, both now and beyond the state grant IRWM funding programs.

Discuss how decisions are made. Identify the steps in which RWMG arrives at decisions and how RWMG members participate in the decision-making process. Examples of RWMG decisions to consider in discussion:

- Establishing IRWM plan goals and objectives
- Prioritizing projects
- Financing RWMG and IRWMP activities
- Implementing plan activities
- Making future revisions to the IRWM plan
- Hiring & managing consultants

Requirement

Describe how the RWMG will incorporate new members into the governance structure. Explain the manner in which a balance of interested persons or entities representing different sectors and interests have been or will be engaged in the process, regardless of their ability to contribute financially to the plan.

Describe how the governance structure facilitates development of a single collaborative water management portfolio, prioritized on the regional goals and objectives of the IRWM region.

Are the roles and responsibilities of the RWMG clearly supportive of regional planning?

Does the RWMG operate in a collaborative manner? Is it clear how decisions are made, including establishing plan goals and objectives, prioritizing projects, financing RWMG activities, implementing plan activities, and making future revisions to the IRWM plan?

Who participates in the decision making process? Are all of the RWMG members involved or are there designated committees? Does the governance structure allow only certain members to vote on decisions? Does the decision making process allow for the participation of stakeholders and smaller entities? Do members have to contribute financially to the RWMG to be allowed to vote?

Review Criteria

Can the RWMG governance structure facilitate the sustained development of the IRWM region now and beyond the current IRWM funding programs? Does the group require members to contribute to the group's expenses, and if not, how will the group identify a budget for its operations, such as plan updates.

Will the governance structure facilitates development of a single collaborative water management portfolio, prioritized on the regional goals and objectives of the IRWM region?

RWMG Governance Structure

Development and implementation of the Region's IRWMP is a collaborative effort undertaken by the San Luis Obispo Regional Water Management Group (RWMG). The governance structure of the RWMG is established in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed by each of the members (Attachments 1.A,1.B, and 1.C). The San Luis Obispo RWMG currently includes the following three agencies, each of which have statutory authority over water supply or water management in the region:

- San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District/County (District)
- Los Osos Community Services District (Los Osos)
- Nipomo Community Services District (Nipomo)

Lead Agency. The District has the lead role in facilitating the RWMG governance process. The District has boundaries that are coterminous with the region (see Item 6), has the broadest responsibility for regional water management in the region, and is staff to the RWMG's main advisor, the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC – described below). The District will be ultimately responsible for the final production of the Region's IRWMP, presentations to stakeholders, submittal of IRWM grant applications, execution of grant agreements with the State, and execution of agreements with RWMG members responsible for the implementation of projects that are awarded grants.

The District will gather data, project descriptions and feedback from all RWMG members and stakeholders to produce draft IRWM plan goals and objectives, project priorities, and implementation plans for review by the RWMG and the WRAC. The District will facilitate meetings of the RWMG and the WRAC, ensure all stakeholders are invited to WRAC meetings during which IRWM items will be discussed, and hold sub-regional meetings to gather input on IRWM items if stakeholders, such as remote disadvantaged communities in the northern part of the District, are unable to attend WRAC meetings. The District will then produce a final draft of the IRWM Plan for approval by the RWMG and the WRAC, and adoption by the governing bodies of the RWMG members. The District will convey to the RWMG and the WRAC what revisions may be needed to determine whether those changes are substantive and require RWMG, WRAC and stakeholder input prior to revising the IRWM plan. The District is the main contact for the RWMG on IRWM issues.

Since the District has boundaries that are coterminous with the region, has the broadest responsibility for regional water management in the region, and has an adequate annual revenue source, it will finance IRWM Plan document development and, if outside labor assistance is required, will hire and manage those consultants. This will facilitate the sustained development of the IRWM region now and beyond the current IRWM funding programs. RWMG members and stakeholders will finance their own review of materials and attendance at meetings.

RWMG Member Responsibilities. Signatories to the MOU, or RWMG members, are responsible for reviewing IRWM materials and attending meetings, providing feedback, working toward consensus with other RWMG members on decisions, and providing data, information and project descriptions to the District as lead agency. RWMG members are responsible for

providing information sufficient to meet State guidelines for their regional projects and programs to be included in the IRWMP and participate in the review of the IRWMP. All members will participate in the process to select IRWMP regional projects and programs for grant applications. Members responsible for the implementation of regional projects and programs awarded grant funding will be responsible, through contract with the District, for complying with the provisions of the District's grant agreement with the State.

RWMG members participate in the IRWM plan development process by communication with the District and review of draft IRWM items, such as goals and objectives, project priorities, and implementation plans, by way of presentations to the WRAC. At WRAC meetings, RWMG members will provide feedback to District staff and vote as a member of the WRAC on recommendations to the RWMG on IRWM Plan items. Members will take the IRWM Plan to their governing bodies for adoption. Members provide data and information on projects and programs for which their agency is responsible for inclusion in the IRWM Plan. Members will provide the District with their designated representative's contact information.

Decision Making Process and Stakeholder Involvement: The WRAC represents a majority of the water management authorities and stakeholders within the region boundary and is an appointed advisory body that advises the District's Board of Supervisors on water resource projects and policies in the region. For over 50 years, WRAC hearings have been the primary forum for the regional review of water resource issues and details. The member agencies of the WRAC are identified in Item 2. As demonstrated by the membership, the stakeholders represent a diversity of water management issues, geography, and interests. Consequently, meetings of the WRAC have been and will continue to be the main forum for IRWM stakeholder involvement and decision making, facilitating development of a single collaborative water management portfolio, prioritized on the regional goals and objectives of the IRWM region. 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 issues. RWMG members vote on IRWM issues, such as IRWM plan goals and objectives, project prioritization, who the District hires and their scope of work, financing RWMG and IRWMP activities, implementing plan activities and revisions to the IRWM Plan, as members of the WRAC.

Draft IRWM documents and recommendations are developed by the District as lead agency. The Region's IRWMP that was adopted by the District, developed in coordination with and approved by stakeholders in 2005, and updated in 2007, will be the basis for the next and subsequent adopted IRWMP's for the Region. The District will work with the RWMG to make modifications, if necessary, prior to presentation to the WRAC for consideration. During the development of the current IRWMP, the WRAC developed an IRWM subcommittee with representatives of municipalities, private water purveyors, agricultural and environmental stakeholders. The WRAC IRWM Subcommittee consists 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.

Since a key element of the IRWM Program is integration, the RWMG will work with other WRAC Members to identify water management strategies for the region and the priority projects that demonstrate how these strategies work together to protect and improve water quality; improve regional water supply reliability and security; protect, enhance and restore the region's natural resources; monitor, protect, and improve the region's groundwater; and develop, fund, and implement an integrated, watershed approach to flood management. Regional projects and programs would be categorized and opportunities to identify regional benefits of linkages between multiple water management strategies among projects and programs of separate service functions and to see where projects and programs of separate service functions may further interrelate, e.g. wastewater treatment and water recycling or habitat restoration. This governance structure facilitates development of a single collaborative water management portfolio, prioritized on the regional goals and objectives of the IRWM region

Finally, the recommendations are taken to the full WRAC for final approval. RWMG Members vote as members of the WRAC. While RWMG members that are not WRAC members will not be able to vote on IRWM decisions, their input will be sought and may also be represented by District and at-Large WRAC member votes. Written consensus will be sought between the representatives of RWMG members in the event the need for a decision arises that cannot be brought forth to the WRAC before a decision needs to be made.

IRWMP approval and adoption will occur by the governing bodies of RWMG Members. IRWMP updates to meet new State guidelines, add new RWMG Members, add or remove regional projects and programs, or other updates to information do not require IRWMP re-adoption. Significant changes to the IRWMP, including revised goals and objectives, revised regional boundaries, or other changes deemed significant by the RWMG, will require re-adoption of the IRWMP.

RWMG Members and other stakeholders participate in the IRWMP development process by way of presentations to the WRAC. 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. Sub-regional meetings may be required to ensure all stakeholders, including disadvantaged communities, who may not necessarily be able to attend WRAC meetings, can participate in IRWMP development. The District will take the lead in gathering input and conveying it to the WRAC and RWMG for consideration.

New RWMG Members: The current San Luis Obispo County RWMG satisfies the state requirement that the group include three or more local agencies, at least two of which have statutory authority over water supply or water management, as well as those other persons who may be necessary for the development and implementation of an IRWMP. The current RWMG also consists of the agencies involved in developing high-priority regional water management projects. It does not yet, however, represent the majority of the water management authorities and stakeholders within the region boundary. The next sections describe how the current RWMG will be working toward expanding its membership to include WRAC members and other participants so it represents the majority of the water management authorities and stakeholders within the region boundary.

The District has asked the members of the WRAC, since they do represent the majority of the water management authorities and stakeholders in the region (see Item 2), to consider taking the MOU to their governing bodies to become a member of the RWMG (see Attachment 2.D). The WRAC is a committee comprised of water purveyors, resource conservation districts, environmental and agricultural representatives that was originally established in the 1940's to advise the Board of Supervisors for the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District on water resource issues. The District will be taking the lead on working with each WRAC member's agency to execute MOUs by June 2010.

In case each WRAC member's governing body does not enter into an MOU and become a RWMG member, and in order to ensure that the majority of the water management authorities and stakeholders in the region have a say in the development of the IRWM Plan for the region and RWMG decisions, the MOU establishes the WRAC as the main advisor to the RWMG. The WRAC meets monthly, with the exception of July and August, and is subject to the Brown Act (meetings are open to the public), making it the logical forum for facilitating stakeholder involvement in IRWM. Therefore, even though a majority of the water management authorities and stakeholders in the region may not be RWMG members, the RWMG will be guided by their input via the WRAC.

Other IRWM participants 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 potential participants, meeting with them to explain the IRWM Program and RWMG efforts, and requesting their indication of their level of involvement by September 2009. 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. 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.

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