

Chapter 10: Coordination



Introduction

Beginning with the formal launch of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP effort, Project Staff has made a concerted effort to coordinate with entities directly involved with the planning effort as well as regional neighbors and state and federal agencies. A brief description of the main coordinating activities that have taken place thus far and plans for future coordination among stakeholders directly involved in the planning effort, neighboring IRWM regions, and state and

federal agencies is provided below.

Coordination of activities within the IRWM region

As noted in Chapter 1, the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning effort was launched in early 2008 with the intent of bringing together as many interested stakeholders involved with water as possible and to facilitate coordination amongst these stakeholders throughout the region. The goal in establishing broad-based coordination amongst participating agencies and stakeholders was to ensure issues and concerns pertaining to water are addressed during the planning process. Moreover, a significant amount of time amongst those involved with the Inyo-Mono RWMG has been invested to create an environment of transparency, respect, and equality for all participants “at the table”. Such an upfront investment in the Inyo-Mono planning process has contributed to the avoidance of conflicts and a desire to productively collaborate in a manner necessary to achieve stated objectives. Coordination of these efforts, in addition to water management projects and activities of involved stakeholders, has primarily been via direct communications with representatives of stakeholder groups. These have included, but are certainly not limited to:

- Coordination of regularly convened RWMG meetings, to a lesser degree meetings of the Coordinating Committee/Administrative Committee, and as needed, ad-hoc workgroups. To date, the Inyo-Mono Regional Water Management Group has convened more than 25 meetings.
- Coordination and convening of more than 20 outreach meetings convened within the region with target audiences including such entities as County Supervisors, Regional Planning Advisory Committees, specific stakeholder groups, Central Nevada Regional Water Forum, etc.

- Coordination of the completion and approval of the Inyo-Mono Region Acceptance Process.
- Coordination and the completion of both the initial Launch Phase MOU and subsequently the Planning and Implementation MOU.
- Coordination of the completion and submission of, and subsequent recommended awarding of, the Inyo-Mono Planning Grant Application.
- Coordination of the completion, approval and submission of the Phase I Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.
- Coordination of drafting Prop. 84 draft guideline comments on behalf of the Inyo Mono RWMG.
- Coordination of proposal development pursuant to funding opportunities supporting regional natural resources management (e.g., Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator opportunity).

Future activities requiring coordination within the Inyo-Mono IRWM region comprise primarily:

- Implementation of projects receiving Prop. 84 Implementation funding
- Revising the initial Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan per the Planning Grant application
- Revising the Inyo-Mono MOU
- Preparation of Round 2 Prop. 84 Project Implementation proposals

It is the intent of the Inyo-Mono RWMG and Project Staff to complete the future coordination tasks listed above prior to August, 2012, funding permitting. Moving forward, Project Staff will also consider past, current, and future projects implemented by members of the Inyo-Mono RWMG when revisiting goals, strategies, objectives, and actions necessary to address regional water needs. To do so, Project Staff intends to maintain similar coordination strategies that have already been employed and proven successful while adhering to an adaptive management strategy as needed. In all cases, it is anticipated that the Inyo-Mono RWMG will work together to leverage water-related expertise within the region and maximize the opportunity to coordinate water management projects and the needs of all involved.

Identification of and coordination with neighboring IRWM regions

In July, 2008, Inyo-Mono IRWMP staff met in Sacramento with DWR-IRWMP staff to initiate formal communications between the two parties. During the same meeting, it was recommended that a coordinated effort with other IRWM planning efforts in the Sierra region be pursued. In particular, coordinating efforts with all other adjacent IRWM planning efforts in order to ensure agreement regarding potential common boundaries, overlapping of boundaries between proposed IRWMPs, and gaps between existing and proposed IRWMPs was important. Since the initial meeting with DWR, the Inyo-Mono RWMG has made a concerted effort to reach out and collaboratively approach issues associated with boundaries, gaps, and overlap with the several other existing and emerging IRWMP efforts in the region as well as lay the groundwork for future collaboration on shared water resource issues (Figure 3-1).

The initial effort began with a meeting of representatives from several existing or beginning IRWM planning efforts in the region (Table 10-1). The purpose of this meeting was to initiate a dialogue amongst the various IRWMP RWMGs and to begin focusing a discussion specific to boundary related issues. During the initial meeting it was also agreed by those participating that further coordination would take place. Moreover, it was determined that the Inyo-Mono IRWMP RWMG would take the lead in coordinating such efforts. As noted in Table 10-1, numerous meetings have been formally convened. In addition to formal meetings, a plethora of email and phone communications with representatives from other IRWMP regions has taken place. As a result of the actions taken, agreements between the Inyo-Mono RWMG and all other IRWMP RWMGs having a common boundary, or an overlap, have been formalized through Letters of Agreement.

Table 10-1. Meetings between Inyo-Mono RWMG and other Regional Water Management Groups to ensure regional coordination.

| Date | IRWMP/Agency | Meeting Type |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------|
| August, 2008 | Inyo-Mono, Tahoe-Sierra, Southern Sierra, Antelope Valley, Mojave, Lahontan RWQCB Rep. | In person- Mammoth Lakes |
| September, 2008 | Inyo-Mono, Kern, Southern Sierra, Antelope Valley, Mojave and Lahontan RWQCB Rep. | Conference call |
| October, 2008 | Inyo-Mono, Antelope Valley, Sierra Nevada Alliance | Conference call |
| October, 2008 | Inyo-Mono, Kern, Antelope Valley, Southern Sierra | Conference call |
| November, 2008 | Inyo-Mono, Kern, Antelope Valley, Southern Sierra | In person- Sacramento |
| December, 2008 | Inyo-Mono, Madera, National Park Service- Devils Post Pile, Sierra Nevada Alliance | Conference call |
| February, 2009 | Inyo-Mono, Antelope Valley, Mojave | Conference call |
| March, 2009 | Inyo-Mono, Antelope Valley, Mojave, Southern Sierra, DWR(phone) | In person- Ridgecrest |
| March, 2009 | Inyo-Mono, Southern Sierra, Madera, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area | Conference call |
| April, 2009 | Inyo-Mono, Antelope Valley, Mojave, Lahontan | Conference call |

Formal agreements now exist between the following IRWM planning efforts:

Inyo-Mono: Tahoe-Sierra IRWM: This boundary is based on watershed delineation which also coincides very closely to county jurisdictional lines. There were no outstanding issues needing to be resolved to reach agreement.

Inyo-Mono: Tuolumne/Stanslaus IRWM: This boundary is based on watershed delineation (the Sierra crest) which also coincides with county lines. There were no outstanding issues needing to be resolved to reach agreement.

Inyo-Mono: Madera IRWM: This boundary is based on watershed delineation (the Sierra crest). It also coincides with county lines with the exception of the National Park Service (NPS) Devils Post Pile National Monument (DEPO). DEPO is located within Madera County and therefore has been included in their IRWM planning boundaries. However, access to DEPO originates from and all staff working for the NPS resides within Mono County. For this reason, discussions with staff from Inyo-Mono and Madera IRWMPs as well as DEPO were convened on two occasions to develop a strategy to address this situation. The outcome of these discussions is that both Inyo-Mono and Madera IRWMPs will collaboratively work together to address water-related issues as both programs advance. It may be that eventually a Memorandum of Understanding is established between the two regions.

Inyo-Mono: Mammoth Mountain Ski Area: Southern Sierra IRWM: Madera IRWM: Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA) operates under a Special Use Permit administered by the Inyo National Forest. The permit area encompasses 3,500 acres within Mono and Madera Counties. These areas include portions of the Inyo-Mono, Madera and Southern Sierra IRWM regional boundaries. As with the DEPO arrangement, the permitted use area belonging to the MMSA will be considered an area of shared interest and all parties have agreed to collaboratively work together to address water-related issues in the future.

Inyo-Mono: Southern Sierra: This boundary is based on watershed delineation (the Sierra crest) which also coincides with county lines. However, as with the Madera IRWMP, a small portion of DEPO is found within the South Sierra's proposed boundary. The approach employed with Madera regarding the issue of DEPO was also employed between the Inyo-Mono and Southern Sierra regions.

Inyo-Mono: Kern IRWM: This boundary is based on watershed delineation (the south Sierra crest). Although a small portion of the Inyo-Mono planning area includes the northeast portion of Kern County, based on this area being within the larger watershed comprising the southern portion of the Inyo-Mono planning region, it has been agreed this portion of Kern County will be included in the Inyo-Mono planning area.

Inyo-Mono: Mojave IRWM: This boundary is based on watershed delineation and does not follow county jurisdictional boundaries. However, the proposed boundary does overlap with the northern portion of Mojave's. Mojave's northern boundary is based on the Mojave Municipal Water District's jurisdictional boundaries. In acknowledging this overlap, both the Mojave and Inyo-Mono RWMPs have agreed to work collaboratively to address issues of common interests in this area as both regions advance their respective efforts. This agreement is confirmed by the signed Letter of Agreement between the Inyo-Mono and Mojave representatives.

Central Nevada Regional Water Authority:

The Central Nevada Regional Water Authority (CNRWA) is an eight-county unit of local government in the State of Nevada that collaboratively and proactively addresses water resource issues common to the nine counties. The CNRWA exists under Nevada's Interlocal Cooperation Act and has delegated authority separate and apart from its member counties. The Authority has a 21-member board of directors appointed by the county commissions of the eight counties involved. The CNRWA members are Churchill, Elko, Esmeralda, Eureka, Lander, Nye, Pershing and White Pine Counties. These counties cover approximately 65 percent of Nevada's land area. Within California three counties are involved, two of which, Mono and Inyo, border Nevada and are actively engaged in the Inyo-Mono IRWM process (Lassen County is the third county). Inyo-Mono IRWMP staff attended both 2009 and 2010 annual meetings: during the 2010 Inyo-Mono Project Staff participated in a panel discussion in which the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning effort was presented. The intent of participating in these meetings primarily centers on developing relationships with relevant Nevada Counties and in the future, coordinating with such counties on issues of mutual interest. A secondary objective of participating in the annual meetings is to continually broaden our network of interested stakeholders and engage them in pertinent planning related issues. It is anticipated that the Inyo-Mono RWMG will continue to be actively involved in future annual meetings.

IRWMP Roundtable of Regions:

The IRWMP Roundtable of Regions is comprised of representatives from other planning regions throughout the state, some of which are representatives of neighboring planning regions. The goal of the Roundtable of Regions is to provide a forum of interested stakeholders involved with IRWM efforts to discuss issues of concern, provide assistance to one another, and more basically provide facilitation and coordination among state-wide planning efforts. Conference calls are the primary form of communication among participants of the Roundtable of Regions with calls occurring approximately on a quarterly basis. From the beginning of the Roundtable of Regions, Inyo-Mono Project Staff have regularly participated in scheduled calls, providing information on the regional planning efforts and soliciting input from representatives from other planning regions.

Existing Gaps

The only gap that now exists between the Inyo-Mono and other IRWM planning regions is that of Fremont Valley and northern portions of San Bernardino County. A brief description of how the Inyo-Mono RWMG proposes to address these gaps is found below.

Fremont Valley:

The proposed southwestern boundary of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP follows the watershed boundary of the Indian Wells Valley and the Fremont Valley. Additionally, the Fremont Valley is situated within Kern County, bordered by the Antelope Valley IRWMP, the Mojave IRWMP and the Southern Sierra IRWMP. Currently, the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning region is significant in size, mostly rural, with issues unique to the areas within the proposed boundaries. Therefore, based upon the watershed boundaries, political considerations, common interests, and capacity, there is little logic for the Fremont

Valley to be included within the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning region. It is the recommendation of the I-M RWMG that interested parties from the Fremont Valley pursue inclusion in the Antelope, Kern, Mojave or Southern Sierra IRWMPs.

Northern San Bernardino County:

The currently proposed Inyo-Mono southern boundary is based on a watershed delineation and does include a small portion of northern San Bernardino County. Because of this limited inclusion of San Bernardino County, attempts have been made to reach out to representatives of San Bernardino. Contacts for San Bernardino have been included in our electronic mailing lists for quite some time and are believed to be receiving all information distributed. However, there has been very little response to our communications to date. Based on limited information, it is the understanding of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP staff that plans to launch an IRWMP effort in San Bernardino are being considered. At this time, very little detail about this effort is known. It is the intent of the Inyo-Mono RWMG to continue to reach out to representatives of San Bernardino County and fully expect that if and when they decide to launch an IRWM planning effort, a collaborative approach will be established and implemented.

At present, there are no known ongoing water management conflicts with neighboring IRWM regions. Moving forward, coordination with neighboring IRWM planning regions is expected to continue per the commitments made thus far. Future coordination will be achieved through direct communications amongst the various planning regions as well as communicating via several efforts in which Inyo-Mono Project Staff are currently involved as discussed in the next section.

Coordination with agencies

A concerted effort has been made to reach out to relevant agencies involved in water planning activities, particularly the California Department of Water Resources and the Lahontan Regional Water Control Board. To this end, Project Staff communicate on a regular basis with these agencies' staff regarding Inyo-Mono's regional needs and planning efforts. Developing communications with these entities has facilitated an opportunity for productive dialogue between the Inyo-Mono Project Staff and agency staff tasked with implementing Proposition 84 IRWMP requirements. Establishing rapport with DWR agency staff in particular has provided opportunities for Project Staff to seek guidance and issue specific clarifications when needed. Doing so has been of critical importance given the limited resources of the Inyo-Mono planning region. DWR personnel who have attended I-M RWMG meetings have been most beneficial for guidance and support. In turn, the Inyo-Mono RWMG has raised its profile with DWR and has worked to make the region-specific issues and challenges apparent to DWR staff.

The Inyo-Mono planning region is the second largest planning region in the state, comprising of more than 10% of the state of California and more than 50% of the Lahontan region. Comprised of numerous small and rural communities, the planning region is constrained by very small water agencies and community service districts as well as numerous small non/not-for profit

organizations (NFPOs) having limited financial and human resources. In many cases the limited size of the communities, local agencies, and NFPOs has proven to be extremely challenging in meeting the requirements of state agencies and in particular, CA DWR's Prop. 84 requirements, which are largely based on circumstances associated with regions more heavily populated or with large infrastructure. Project Staff and Inyo-Mono RWMG participants have taken a proactive role in trying to address the local needs specific to the Prop. 84 IRWMP program through such activities as submitting comments to draft Prop. 84 Guidelines, participating in State-sponsored public workshops, and as noted above, developing direct communications with DWR staff. Project Staff is intent on enhancing the capacity of the planning region to address our local conditions and specific needs. However, to do so adequately, working more closely with agencies such as DWR and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is necessary. With respect to implementing the Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan and more specifically addressing future project needs, there are three areas of support which could prove beneficial.

First, within the context of addressing potential regulatory requirements, many of the entities involved in the Inyo-Mono IRWM effort do not have extensive experience (in some cases none at all) with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or the National Environmental Quality Act (NEPA). At a minimum, some level of CEQA compliance is required for any projects receiving CA state funding. Given this requirement, specific assistance enabling participating entities to identify specific levels of CEQA required and the processes to complete the determined CEQA requirements would be beneficial. Moreover, given the extent of federally managed lands in the Inyo-Mono planning region, assistance specific to identifying and addressing NEPA requirements would also be beneficial to potential project proponents.

Second, there is relatively limited capacity on the part of smaller water districts, community service districts, disadvantaged communities, and NPOs to adequately complete the economic feasibility analysis requirements as presented in the Prop. 84 Implementation Project Solicitation Package. Specific economic-related guidance and supporting materials provided by agencies such as DWR would enable such entities to develop more complete and more competitive proposals in future funding rounds.

Third, as the Inyo-Mono RWMG begins to revise its Phase I plan and additional needs to address climate change related issues are required, direct assistance in terms of data requirements, data sources, and methods for analyses will be important.

For the types of assistance noted above to be effective, it is important for State agency personnel to implement a strategy that includes providing expertise remotely, such as being available for webinars, phone and email communications, as well as traveling to specific regions to better understand the context of a given setting and the stakeholders involved. An underlying principle that should be adhered to by agencies and regional planning efforts is to not assume a template approach to coordination with each region. Each region has unique needs and constraints. Building regional capacity to address future needs is of critical importance to ultimately have longer-lasting impacts on livelihoods and natural resources within the region.

Lastly, a challenge that has been realized by the Inyo-Mono Project Staff and involved stakeholders is the timing related to the preparation and implementation of Prop. 84 IRWMP guidelines and associated funding to support IRWM efforts throughout the State. In the case of the Inyo-Mono IRWM effort, resources necessary to complete the Region Acceptance Process, the Planning Grant application, and the initial IRWM Plan have been extremely limited. Such limited resources in turn have hindered certain aspects of the planning effort from being completed as desired. To avoid such challenges in the future, and to assist limited-resource planning regions, closer coordination amongst various State agencies and divisions within certain agencies such as DWR could be improved to ensure schedules and associated funding support is available. In a related manner, improved coordination between the California legislature and agencies required to implement legislation (e.g. DWR) is necessary to more effectively and efficiently realize intended outcomes that ultimately become the responsibility of local and/or regional entities. More specifically, coordination involving required actions and dates in which actions are to be adhered to at the regional and county levels need to be improved in order for local agencies to be able to adequately respond to new mandates.