

Chapter 1: Development Process for the Inyo-Mono IRWMP

History, purpose, and status of State of California IRWMP Program

History

State-level water managers in California began to recognize the need for integrated regional water planning in the late 1990s. Over the past decade, California has recognized the value of regional planning and made significant steps in implementing integrated regional water management. In 2002, voters passed Proposition 50, which developed the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Grant Program as a joint effort between the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Resources Control Board (hereafter State Water Board).



Proposition 50 provided competitive grant funding through the IRWM Program for projects that protected communities from drought, protected and improved water quality, and reduced dependence on imported water. Approximately \$380 million were made available through two rounds of funding.

Subsequently, voters passed Proposition 84 and Proposition 1E in 2006. These propositions created additional funding through the IRWM Grant Program for projects that assist local agencies to meet the long-term water needs of the State, including delivery of safe drinking water and protection of water quality and the environment. To be eligible for this funding, projects and project sponsors must be involved in a Regional Water Management Group that has adopted an IRWM Plan.

Purpose

The Integrated Regional Water Management Program is intended to promote and practice integrated regional water management to ensure sustainable water uses, reliable water supplies, better water quality, environmental stewardship, efficient urban development, sustainable agriculture, and a strong economy. This planning and implementation framework is intended to comprehensively address challenges of water supply, water quality, flood management, and ecosystem protection and to implement integrated solutions through a collaborative multi-partner process that includes water managers, Native American Tribes, non-

governmental organizations, federal, State and local government agencies, and disadvantaged communities. IRWM is a portfolio approach for determining the appropriate mix of water-related resource management strategies, water quality actions, and steps to enhance environmental stewardship for the planning region. The goal is to provide long-term, reliable water supplies for all users at the lowest reasonable cost and with highest possible benefits for economic development, environmental quality, and other societal objectives (CA Water Plan Update, 2009).

Status

Proposition 50 money allocated for the IRWM Program has already been expended through two funding rounds to RWMGs throughout the State. The next round of funding will come from Proposition 84 allocations. This funding has been delayed because of the State budget constraints, and it is expected that the first round of Prop. 84 implementation funding will be available in early 2011, with subsequent rounds to follow.

Eighty-two percent of California's land area is included in an IRWM effort, up from 54% during Prop. 50 funding. Similarly, 98% of California's population is now included in an IRWM region, slightly up from 94% during Proposition 50 funding. During the 2009 Region Acceptance Process, 46 regions submitted applications.

The Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) was conceived in early 2008. The Inyo-Mono Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) submitted a Region Acceptance Process application in April, 2009, and was unconditionally approved as a region in November, 2009.

Statewide Priorities for IRWMP

In the Implementation Plan of the California Water Plan Update 2009, the first objective listed is to “promote, improve, and expand integrated regional water management to create and build on partnerships that are essential for California water resources planning, sustainable watershed and floodplain management, and increasing regional self-sufficiency.”

DWR's IRWM Grant Program encourages development of integrated regional strategies for management of water resources by providing funding through competitive grants. Eligible projects must implement IRWM plans that meet the requirements of Section 75026 of Proposition 84. IRWM plans shall identify and address the major water related objectives and conflicts within the region, consider all of the resource management strategies identified in the California Water Plan Update, and use an integrated, multi-benefit approach for project selection and design. Plans



shall include performance measures and monitoring plans to document progress toward meeting Plan objectives. Projects that may be funded pursuant to this section must be consistent with an adopted IRWM plan or its functional equivalent as defined in the department's Proposition 84 Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Guidelines (hereafter "Guidelines"). Furthermore, funding preference will be given to projects that address one or more of the Statewide priorities as outlined in the Guidelines:

- Drought preparedness
- Use and reuse water more efficiently
- Climate change response actions
- Expand environmental stewardship
- Practice integrated flood management
- Protect surface water and groundwater quality
- Improve Tribal water and natural resources
- Ensure equitable distribution of benefits

The text of Proposition 84 specifically directs that projects funded under the IRWM Program include one or more of the following elements:

- 1) Water supply reliability, water conservation and water use efficiency.
- 2) Storm water capture, storage, clean-up, treatment, and management.
- 3) Removal of invasive non-native species, the creation and enhancement of wetlands, and the acquisition, protection, and restoration of open space and watershed lands.
- 4) Non-point source pollution reduction, management and monitoring.
- 5) Groundwater recharge and management projects.
- 6) Contaminant and salt removal through reclamation, desalting, and other treatment technologies and conveyance of reclaimed water for distribution to users.
- 7) Water banking, exchange, reclamation and improvement of water quality.
- 8) Planning and implementation of multipurpose flood management programs.
- 9) Watershed protection and management.
- 10) Drinking water treatment and distribution.
- 11) Ecosystem and fisheries restoration and protection.

Furthermore, Proposition 84 advises that the Department of Water Resources will give preference to IRWM project proposals that meet the following criteria:

- 1) Proposals that effectively integrate water management programs and projects within a hydrologic region identified in the California Water Plan;

the Regional Water Quality Control Board region or subdivision or other region or sub-region specifically identified by the department.

- 2) Proposals that effectively integrate water management with land use planning.
- 3) Proposals that effectively resolve significant water-related conflicts within or between regions.
- 4) Proposals that contribute to the attainment of one or more of the objectives of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.
- 5) Proposals that address statewide priorities.
- 6) Proposals that address critical water supply or water quality needs for disadvantaged communities within the region.

Inyo-Mono Regional Water Management Group

History

The Integrated Regional Water Management process was initiated in the eastern Sierra in early 2008 with about 15 initial stakeholders in response to funding opportunities provided by Proposition 84. At early stakeholder meetings, the group began to recognize the benefits of having a multiple-agency and multiple-purpose perspective, and that water resource needs in the eastern Sierra are highly interconnected and require a broad and integrated approach to be resolved.

During the pre-planning phase of the Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (I-M IRWMP) process, 28 I-M Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) participants signed a voluntary Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This initial MOU described the governance structure and provided "ground rules" that defined roles and responsibilities, stakeholder engagement, and decision-making for the RWMG. A revised MOU was developed in the first half of 2010 that will govern the group through the planning and implementation phases of the IRWMP process. This MOU took effect November 15, 2010.

Composition and Structure



The I-M RWMG is composed of a main group, an advisory committee, part-time staff, and ad hoc work groups. The RWMG is the largest and most inclusive group and is the main decision-making body for the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning and implementation processes (see Appendix A for a list of organizations that regularly participate in RWMG meetings). As of November 15, 2010, with the implementation of the planning/implementation MOU, only signatories to the

MOU are considered Members of the RWMG and can be a part of the decision-making process. At the end of 2010, there were 26 signatories to the new planning/implementation MOU. However, all organizations involved with the IRWMP, as well as members of the public, are welcome to attend RWMG meetings and provide input on decisions. The RWMG meets in-person at various locations within the planning area approximately once per month.

During the project launch phase, during which the primary objective was to complete a planning grant application (the objective then became completing the Region Acceptance Process), the Coordinating Committee was a subset of the RWMG (which was previously termed the Planning Committee) and served as an advisory or steering group for the Planning Committee, Project Staff, and work groups. Starting November 15, 2010, an Administrative Committee (“Admin Committee”) took over the roles and responsibilities of the Coordinating Committee. The Admin Committee is comprised of six RWMG Members (i.e., MOU signatories) that serve on a voluntary basis. Membership on the Admin Committee will rotate through the RWMG. Each year, three new Admin Committee members will be appointed, so that each Admin Committee member will serve for two years, thus providing continuity among years. The first Admin Committee consists of Inyo County, Mono County, Mammoth Community Water District, Bishop Paiute Tribe, Central Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council, and Mono Lake Committee.

Specialized work groups made up of representatives from the RWMG are established as needed to perform functions, develop programs, and create outputs. Work groups deliver products to the RWMG and the Administrative Committee for approval and/or adoption.

Finally, the Inyo-Mono IRWMP staff consists of a project manager (Mark Drew, Ph.D.) and a project assistant (Holly Alpert, Ph.D.), both of whom work part-time. Both Dr. Drew and Dr. Alpert are based in Mammoth Lakes, CA. IRWMP staff is tasked with the overall coordination and day-to-day operations of the I-M RWMG.

The I-M RWMG and associated MOU signatories are comprised of a broad array of stakeholders throughout Inyo and Mono counties as well as stakeholders from northern San Bernardino and Kern counties, including agencies with statutory authority over water (Appendix A). Currently there are approximately 40 public, private, and not-for-profit entities from the eastern Sierra actively working towards the goal of implementing the IRWM Plan for the region. Those involved represent interests ranging from federal, state, and local government; resource and water agencies; non-profit and conservation organizations; American Indian tribal organizations; educational organizations; business interests; agriculture and ranching groups; and individuals having vested interests in how water is managed in eastern California. There are a number of organizations and individuals that are involved in RWMG activities at a lower level but who maintain regular contact with Project Staff through phone calls and email and stay informed of IRWMP activities. Finally, there are many organizations that are kept on the RWMG contact list but that have not been in communication with Project Staff. These groups are seen as possible future collaborators (Table 1-1). In total, 190 individuals representing about 110

organizations are included in the RWMG contact list and receive emails about meetings, meeting summaries, and other IRWMP-related announcements.

Table 1-1. “Contact list only” RWMG stakeholders. These groups are on the I-M IRWMP email contact list but do not participate in meetings or other IRWMP activities. They are viewed as potential future stakeholders.

Agency/Organization Name	Stakeholder category
Advocates for Mammoth	Community organization
American Land Conservancy	Environmental Stewardship Organization
Bridgeport Paiute Tribe	Native American Tribe
California State Lands Commission	Land use authority
Chalfant Valley Community Service District	Local water agency
Desert Fishes Council	Environmental stewardship organization
Desert Research Institute	University
Eastern Sierra Cattleman's Association	Agriculture group
Eastern Sierra Institute for Collaborative Education	Community organization
Farm Service Agency (NV)	Federal agency
Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District	Special district
High Sierra Energy Foundation	Environmental stewardship organization
Hilton Creek Community Service District	Local water agency
Hot Creek Ranch	Local business
Inland Aquaculture Group	Fishing group
Inyo Mono Farm Bureau	Agriculture group
Lee Vining PUD	Local water agency
Mammoth Community Stakeholder Group	Community organization
San Bernardino County	County agency
Sierra Pacific Power	Electrical corporation
Snow Survey Associates	Local business
Southern Sierra IRWMP	IRWMP

Agency/Organization Name	Stakeholder category
SRVA Advocates for Smart Growth	Community organization
TEAM Engineering	Local business
The Wilderness Society	Environmental stewardship organization
UC Cooperative Extension - Inyo and Mono Counties	University

Purposes, mission, and vision

The purpose of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP is to foster coordination, collaboration, and communication among water-related stakeholders in the region for the purpose of developing water management strategies and projects that will benefit multiple entities and enhance water supply, water quality, and watershed health.

After a visioning exercise undertaken in early 2010, the following mission and vision statements were adopted by the Group:

Mission: *To research, identify, prioritize, and act on regional water issues, and related social and economic issues, so as to protect and enhance our environment and economy. Working together, we create and implement a regional water management plan that complies with applicable policies and regulations and promotes innovative solutions for our region's needs.*

Our vision is a landscape that is ecologically, socially, and economically resilient. As diverse stakeholders, we identify and work toward our common goals. We achieve a broad-based perspective that benefits our regional ecosystems and human communities by combining our interests, knowledge, expertise and approaches. We strive to have every voice heard within our region and our collective voice heard in the state and nation.

Communication, meetings, and workshops

Communication with the Group primarily takes place through email. Notices and agendas for upcoming RWMG meetings are sent to all people on the RWMG email contact list, as are meeting summaries and any other relevant information about the Inyo-Mono IRWM process. In addition, the Project Manager and Project Assistant make themselves available by phone and by email for questions and information requests. When warranted, Project Staff will travel within the region, or to Sacramento, to meet with stakeholders, members of the public, and DWR officials. The project website (www.inyomonowater.org) is another tool used for outreach throughout the I-M IRWM planning region. On this website, visitors can find topics such as

introductory information about the I-M IRWMP, member organizations, meeting summaries, and links to other IRWMP groups. It has become evident through various outreach activities, however, that email and the website are not always the best communication or outreach tools in this expansive and largely rural region. Many people in the I-M IRWMP planning region do not have adequate internet access; thus, Project Staff is working to identify the best means to keep everyone informed in the region, such as hardcopy newsletters that are sent via U.S. mail.

I-M RWMG meetings are held approximately once per month. Meetings take place throughout the region, although Project Staff has found that attendance is highest when meetings are held in Bishop or Mammoth Lakes. A call-in option is available during all RWMG meetings for those who cannot or prefer not to attend in person. Administrative Committee meetings are typically held via conference call, as are workgroup meetings. All meetings are open to the public, and as much as possible, meeting notices and agendas are posted to the I-M IRWMP website as well as in public locations and newspapers throughout the region.

Public involvement and outreach



Any member of the public who is interested in water issues within the Inyo-Mono IRWM region is welcome to participate in the Inyo-Mono IRWMP. Initial outreach in 2008 was primarily directed towards engaging stakeholders to be fully involved in the process. At all times, Inyo-Mono RWMG meetings have been open to the public, and notices of the meetings are publicly available on the website (www.inyomonowater.org) and in local media outlets. Throughout 2008, 2009, and 2010, Inyo-Mono Project Staff and other stakeholder volunteers attended

numerous public meetings throughout the planning region, with the dual purpose of identifying additional stakeholders for the RWMG as well as providing basic information about the Inyo-Mono IRWMP to members of the public. A primary goal of these outreach efforts has been to identify and reach out to the more remote and rural communities within the region as well as to economically disadvantaged communities (DACs). Many times these two types of communities overlap. Because of the size of the region, it has been difficult to reach every potentially affected stakeholder or community. However, it has been the priority of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP from the beginning to maintain an open, transparent, and inclusive process. The emphasis in these outreach efforts is to inform members of the public about the funding opportunities for local water projects and to stress that the IRWM Program can increase local participation in water management issues.

Disadvantaged Communities

From the beginning of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP process in early 2008, the RWMG made outreach to disadvantaged communities (DACs) a high priority. It was quickly recognized that due to the rural and remote nature of the region, there would likely be a large number of DACs. Indeed, it was discovered that all of Inyo County (the second largest county in California) is a DAC. As described below, the DACs in the I-M IRWMP planning region include unincorporated communities in Inyo, Mono, and Kern Counties, as well as federally-recognized and non-federally-recognized American Indian Tribes.

Throughout the pre-planning and planning phases, effort has been made to reach out to DACs, inform them of IRWMP activities and objectives, and more importantly, listen to their water-related needs and concerns. IRWMP staff has targeted outreach to DACs both with individual meetings/presentations and through the larger outreach campaign implemented in 2010. Of those identified as DACs in Table 1-2 below, all have received some level of outreach and information from the IRWMP, and many have signed the MOU or remain on the RWMG contact list. The Inyo-Mono RWMG is actively pursuing funding from DWR specifically for DAC outreach. Through this funding, additional individual and public meetings will be held throughout the region with the intention of fully integrating as many DACs in the area as possible into the planning process. The I-M RWMG has fully recognized that the success of the IRWMP effort in the region cannot be fully realized without the participation of DACs. Indeed, inclusion of DACs into the process helps to provide a stronger voice in support of the needs of rural communities.

A disadvantaged community is defined as a community with an annual median household income (MHI) that is less than 80% of the statewide annual MHI.¹ The statewide annual MHI in California in 1999 was \$47,493. Communities with annual MHIs that are below \$37,994 (2000 Census) are considered disadvantaged communities. To begin identifying disadvantaged areas in the I-M IRWMP planning region, the MHI was compared at the census tract level using 2000 Census data. Seventeen census tracts within the region, for which census data were available, qualify as disadvantaged communities (Table 1-2). Census data were not available for all communities as some are too small to provide information without identifying individual people. Identified disadvantaged communities are displayed in Figure 1-1.

In 1999, the MHI for the whole of Inyo County was \$35,006, which is below the statewide MHI. Eleven communities in Inyo County qualify as disadvantaged; two communities, Darwin and Tecopa, have MHI levels that are below the federal poverty level (\$16,600) (Table 1-2). All of the American Indian Reservations, excluding Fort Independence, qualify as disadvantaged communities. The population of the disadvantaged communities in Inyo County in 1999 was 9,496, representing 53% of the total county population. Population growth in Inyo County was slow relative to other counties in California (2.1% from 2000 to 2003), and ranked 41st of 58 California counties for population growth.

The MHI for Mono County in 1999 (\$44,992) was higher than Inyo County but still below the statewide MHI. Four of the communities in Mono County (for which census data are available)

¹ State of California legislation AB-1747 (2003).

qualify as disadvantaged, accounting for 15% (1,929) of the total population of Mono County. Two of these communities are American Indian Reservations or Colonies, which have MHIs below the poverty level (Benton Paiute Reservation [\$11,875] and Bridgeport Indian Colony [\$13,750]) (Table 1-2). The population of Mono County (2000) was 12,853; it is one of the slowest growing counties in the state (ranking 47th of 58 counties). Mammoth Lakes, located at the foot of Mammoth Mountain, is the only incorporated town in Mono County.

For both Kern and San Bernardino Counties, only one community within the planning region (Inyokern, of Kern County) qualifies as disadvantaged.

The Inyo-Mono RWMG DAC list and associated data will be updated when 2010 U.S. Census data are available.

Table 1-2. Identified disadvantaged communities in the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning region based on 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data.

<i>Community</i>	<i>Population²</i>	<i>Median household income</i>
<i>Inyo County</i>	<i>17,945</i>	<i>\$35,006</i>
<i>Big Pine</i>	<i>1,350</i>	<i>\$37,115</i>
<i>Big Pine Paiute Reservation</i>	<i>428</i>	<i>\$25,938</i>
<i>Bishop</i>	<i>3,575</i>	<i>\$27,338</i>
<i>Bishop Paiute Reservation</i>	<i>1,445</i>	<i>\$26,591</i>
<i>Cartago</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>\$34,375</i>
<i>Darwin</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>\$13,333</i>
<i>Furnace Creek</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>\$25,625</i>
<i>Independence (county seat)</i>	<i>574</i>	<i>\$37,500</i>
<i>Lone Pine</i>	<i>1,655</i>	<i>\$29,079</i>
<i>Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>\$18,500</i>
<i>Tecopa</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>\$12,344</i>
<i>Mono County</i>	<i>12,853</i>	<i>\$44, 992</i>
<i>Antelope Valley³</i>	<i>1,498</i>	<i>\$34,584</i>
<i>Benton</i>	<i>331</i>	<i>\$26,250</i>

² Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1. Data from the US Census Bureau was accessed using the American Factfinder feature on the Census website. Census data is reported by a variety of geographic units, including census tracts, block groups, blocks, and zip codes.

³ Antelope Valley is located at the northern end of Mono County and includes the communities of Walker, Coleville, and Topaz, the Marine housing complex at Coleville, and Camp Antelope at Walker.

Community	Population²	Median household income
<i>Benton Paiute Reservation</i>	53	\$11,875
<i>Bridgeport Indian Colony</i>	47	\$13,750
San Bernardino County	1,709,434	\$42,066
Kern County	661,645	\$35,446
<i>Inyokern</i>	984	\$35,046

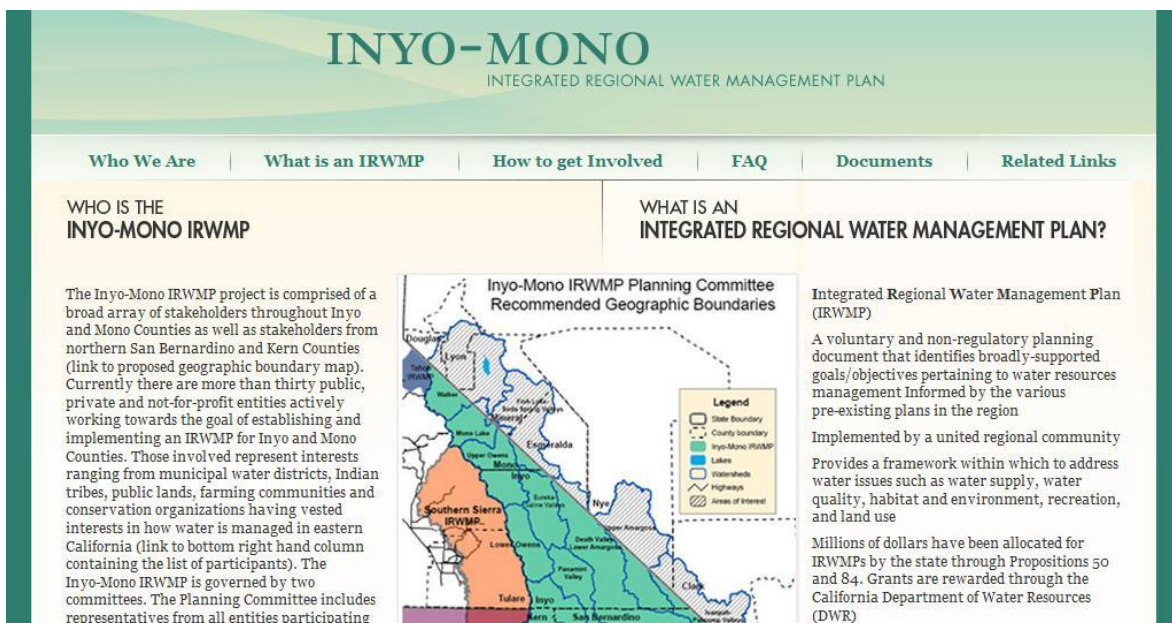


Figure 1-1. Disadvantaged communities in the Inyo-Mono planning region, as determined from 2000 U.S. Census data.

Website

In late 2008, California Trout contracted with a website development firm, using the initial Sierra Nevada Conservancy project launch grant, to create a website for the Inyo-Mono IRWMP. The resulting site, www.inyomonowater.org, is now used as one of the primary tools to communicate with both the RWMG and with the public (Figure 1-2). Currently, the website is maintained by Project Staff with the assistance of RWMG participants with website development experience (on an in-kind basis). On the website, users can find general information about the IRWM Program and also more specific information on the history, composition, and activities of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP. On the homepage of the website, the calendar section is kept updated with upcoming events (primarily RWMG meetings) and other relevant announcements. In the Documents page, users can access all RWMG meeting summaries to date, the Planning Grant and Region Acceptance Process applications, the MOU, and other relevant documents. All of these documents are made available in either Word or PDF formats. The website also has staff contact information for those who want to communicate with IRWMP staff directly. There are opportunities to improve the website, which will be undertaken in collaboration with RWMG participants as time permits.

Figure 1-2. Partial view of home page of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP website.



Principal water concerns and issues

Through the process of working with RWMG participants and doing extensive outreach to the communities of the I-M IRWM planning region, several principal water issues have been identified.

1. **Water Quality.** Many communities in the Inyo-Mono planning region primarily depend on groundwater as their potable water supply. Due to the chemical composition and weathering processes of the granitic bedrock that underlies much of the region, natural contaminants are commonly found in surface water and groundwater sources, including include arsenic and uranium. As a result, several communities within the planning region exceed state and federal maximum contaminant levels, yet because of the limited resources of many of these rural communities, they are unable to bring their potable water resources into compliance. Such water quality issues are truly region-wide, from Coleville in the north of the region to Keeler near the center and Tecopa in the southeast corner. Several communities rely on expensive bottled water as their primary source of drinking water.
2. **Water Infrastructure.** Several communities identified concerns about old, outdated, and/or poor-quality water infrastructure. This includes pipes, tanks, wells, diversion structures, and underground mainlines. Poor or failing water infrastructure results in substantial water loss and inadequate fire-fighting capabilities. Many of the smaller communities lack adequate water storage capacity to fight fires. Even though the planning region encompasses a wide variety of landscapes and ecosystems, both water infrastructure and fire water storage concerns are found throughout.
3. **Institutional/Human Capacity.** Although this is not directly a water issue, the RWMG has come to see this as a major obstacle to improving water quality, water supply, and watershed health in the region. Throughout the region, representatives from communities, particularly those that are small and/or disadvantaged, have expressed the need for both technical and financial resources to address water resources issues. Many of these communities lack the expertise necessary to develop engineering plans, go through environmental review, write grant proposals, and implement projects, nor do they have the financial resources to hire outside contractors for these activities. Furthermore, many communities have expressed concern that even after a project is built, they often cannot find the resources to maintain the project, and that quality and project longevity may be compromised as a result.

Mandatory documents (federal and state laws, ordinances, agreements, plans)

The Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan is not a legally binding document; however, many of the member organizations and other stakeholders must adhere to various plans, policies, and regulations

that govern water management in the region. Therefore, it is necessary to know of and understand these documents as the Inyo-Mono RWMG develops and implements water resource projects. During the launch phase of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP in 2008, Ecosystem Sciences Foundation staff began developing a list of mandatory documents, as well as collecting the documents themselves. Appendix F lists the names of these documents, a description of each document, whether staff has procured the document, and the location of the document. This list was subsequently updated and is current as of late 2010 and will continue to be updated as necessary to reflect the most recent plans and documents available. Incorporation of local water and land use planning efforts into the IRWM Plan and the Implementation process will be discussed further in Chapter 9 (Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan Implementation).

Approach and relation to other planning efforts

Planning documents that have been completed and/or implemented before the start of or during the process of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP effort are included in the mandatory documents table referenced in the previous section (Appendix F). The Group relies on the knowledge and community involvement of its members to stay informed about new or ongoing planning efforts. Not all planning efforts in the region are relevant to the activities of the IRWMP; however, Project Staff attempts to stay involved with all efforts that may intersect with the interests of the IRWMP. If possible, IRWMP staff attends stakeholder meetings or otherwise communicates with the planning entity to (1) stay updated about the planning effort and (2) to provide input on behalf of the IRWMP, if warranted. For example, in 2010, the Bishop Paiute Tribe Environmental Department received funding to develop a Bishop Creek Watershed Management Plan. IRWMP staff and other RWMG participants have been attending meetings related to the development of the plan and will be providing input to drafts of the plan. The relationship of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP to other planning efforts in the region is further discussed in Chapter 9.

Coordination with other IRWMPs

RWMG participants and Project Staff have communicated and coordinated with other IRWMP regions throughout the State throughout the Inyo-Mono process. During the launch phase, coordination with adjacent and neighboring IRWMP regions was essential to ensure agreement regarding potential common boundaries, overlapping boundaries between proposed IRWMPs, and gaps between existing and proposed IRWMPs. 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.

An initial meeting among neighboring IRWMP regions took place in 2008 to begin a focused dialogue amongst the various IRWMP RWMGs specific to boundary related issues. During the initial meeting it was agreed by those participating that further coordination would take place. A

number of meetings, emails, and phone calls followed in pursuit of formal agreements regarding shared boundaries between regions. These agreements were formalized through signing Letters of Agreement ahead of the 2009 Region Acceptance Process application deadline. The entities included in these letters of agreement were: Tahoe-Sierra IRWMP, Southern Sierra IRWMP, Antelope Valley IRWMP, Mojave IRWMP, and Kern County. At times, Madera and Mariposa Counties were also included in these boundary discussions, although the formation of a RWMG in their area was not finalized.

These meetings with neighboring IRWMP groups allowed the Inyo-Mono IRWMP region to learn how other IRWMP regions formed, invited and involved stakeholders, wrote IRWM Plans, and implemented projects. Inyo-Mono staff has used contacts from other IRWMP regions throughout California, particularly those at advanced stages of IRWM planning, for advice and input throughout the launch and planning phases. The Inyo-Mono RWMG has also begun to look for possibilities of collaborative projects with neighboring IRWMP regions. For example, the Inyo-Mono RWMG co-manages several “areas of interest” with adjacent IRWMPs, such as a portion of northwestern San Bernardino County (with Mojave IRWMP) and two portions of Madera County (part of Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and Devils Postpile National Monument). As funding becomes available for interregional projects, the Inyo-Mono RWMG will seek to increase the strength of these partnerships.

More information on collaboration with neighboring IRWMP regions can be found in Chapter 10 (Coordination) and in Table 10-1.

Integration of stakeholders and institutions

Integration of stakeholders and institutions within the IRWM planning process has been formalized through the monthly RWMG meetings that have been held since February, 2008. At these meetings, representatives from disparate organizations, often with conflicting opinions on water resources topics or representing very different regions, come together to discuss the RWMG and the future of water management in the IRWM region. It is expected that meetings and dialogue that takes place at the meeting will be transparent, open, and respectful. As a result of these ongoing meetings, water-related stakeholders that had not previously known each other now communicate about their needs and seek assistance from one another. For example, smaller water districts in the planning region have recognized that they can learn and draw experience from larger districts, such as the Mammoth Community Water District, and in turn, larger districts have been willing to lend assistance. Another result of these ongoing meetings is that RWMG participants, while recognizing differences, have found that they share many common interests and concerns with respect to water and challenges that stem from living in a rural, remote region. This has created a larger sense of obligation and commitment among the members, which will undoubtedly be manifest in the projects that move forward for funding and in other implementation practices of the group.

Process for Plan development

Phase I vs. Phase II Plan

When the Inyo-Mono IRWMP was initiated in early 2008, it was the intention of the group that it would submit a Prop. 84 Planning Grant application to DWR in late 2008 or early 2009. Because of the budget constraints and the bond freeze in late 2008, the RWMG was not able to fulfill that goal. Instead, the group decided to begin work on an initial Plan, without planning grant funds, so that it could be eligible for the first round of Prop. 84 Implementation grants. Work on the Plan began in earnest in the summer of 2009. This included the development of an outline for the document that reflected the region's specific needs and characteristics as well as the Statewide priorities as set forth in Proposition 84 and the California Water Plan Update 2009. The outline, as well as the initial drafts of several of the chapters, was written with the provision that the release of Proposition 84 Plan Guidelines might require changes in structure and content. When the final Guidelines were circulated, IRWMP staff modified the Plan outline from 2009 to ensure that all Plan standards and other requirements are reflected in the outline and are thus addressed in the document. The Inyo-Mono RWMG has applied for a Round 1 Prop. 84 Planning Grant with the intention of revising the Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan and more fully developing certain sections, such as the objectives and strategies as well as the project review process. It is expected that the Phase II Plan will be completed in 2012.

Incorporation of statewide priorities

Statewide priorities as developed through the IRWM Program as well as those discussed in the California Water Plan Updates have been and continue to be considered by the RWMG. The Group has recognized that the major water-related issues in the Inyo-Mono planning region fall well within several of the State Water Plan and Prop. 84 priorities, and this statewide guidance was used in the development of the group's objectives and strategies. More information on the connection between Statewide strategies and Inyo-Mono objectives and strategies is presented in Chapter 6 (Goals, Objectives, and Resource Management Strategies).

Regional and local issue analysis

Chapters 5 (Outreach and Engagement) and 6 (Goals, Objectives, and Resource Management Strategies) will discuss in more detail the process of learning about and documenting region-wide and local water issues through several focused outreach efforts. These outreach and planning activities provided the ability to delineate the three principal water concerns and issues, as presented earlier in this chapter: water quality, water infrastructure, and institutional/human capacity.

Identification of information gaps

The outreach and engagement process has allowed IRWMP staff and RWMG participants to begin to identify the more obvious information gaps in the region, such as groundwater levels, groundwater flow, and temporal and spatial trends in surface flow (discharge). Through

subsequent rounds of project submittals and review, and through additional outreach, it will be possible to further identify and address information gaps, and perhaps more importantly, to identify common information gaps throughout the region. This information will then allow the RWMG to better evaluate projects and target them to specific rounds of IRWM implementation funding and to other funding sources.

Project proposals: submittal, evaluation, screening, and ranking

An initial process for submitting, evaluating, and ranking project proposals was developed for this Plan and for the first round of Implementation funding and is described in detail in Chapter 7 (Project Review Process). This process will be revisited and perhaps revised during the Plan updating/revision process in 2011 and 2012, based upon an evaluation of the process by the RWMG.

Project selection, funding, implementation, and monitoring

The process of selecting and implementing projects is discussed in Chapters 7 and 9.

Adaptive management

Adaptive management in relation to the Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan is discussed in Chapter 9.

Plan revision and future projects

The Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan will be revised as necessary every two years, beginning two years after the Phase II Plan is completed in 2012. The project proposal review process will begin at least six months before the expected deadline for implementation grant submissions. The full process for revising and adding projects to the Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

