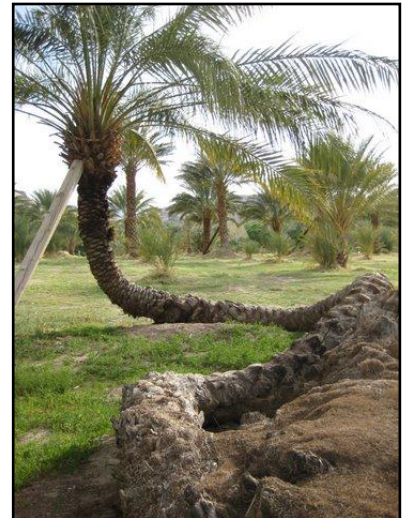


Chapter 7: Project Review Process

Introduction

For the initial Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan, a solicitation, review, ranking and proposal selection procedure was developed that addresses Prop. 84 Implementation requirements. A process involving several phases was established and approved by signatories to the Inyo-Mono IRWMP Memorandum of Understanding. The phases included:

Phase I: Establishing review and evaluation criteria: Criteria were established specific to Prop. 84 requirements, the California State Water Plan 2009 objectives, and approved Inyo-Mono regional objectives and strategies necessary to solicit, review, and rank project proposals to implement the Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan. To accomplish Phase I, a working group (Project Work Group) was convened comprising of Project Staff, members of the Coordinating Committee¹ and I-M RWMG participants with proposal writing and project review experience. To accomplish Phase I, extensive review of the relevant documents was completed, including project review criteria used by other IRWM regions. Once completed, the Project Work Group developed a series of questions that would guide the solicitation, review, and ranking process based on the outcome of Phase II.



Phase II: Procedure for soliciting, evaluating and ranking project proposals: The second phase consisted primarily of utilizing the outputs of Phase I to develop a procedure for soliciting, evaluating, and ranking project proposals. Emphasis in Phase II was placed on developing an iterative process which included enabling project proponents to submit pre-proposals, and based on initial eligibility criteria, determine next steps. If project proposals were deemed eligible, project proponents were asked for additional project information that would then be used to determine which project proposals would be approved by the RWMG and submitted to DWR. Phase II also included a procedure for members of the I-M RWMG to approve and rank project proposals, providing the basis for which projects were deemed highest priority.

Many criteria were considered in the project proposal review and ranking. These criteria included elements such as whether the project addresses Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan Objectives and Resources Management Strategies; adherence to Prop. 84 requirements; relationship to State Water Plan objectives; contribution to Disadvantaged Communities and Native American

¹ Phase I was completed prior to November 15, 2010, when the new MOU was adopted and in which the Coordinating Committee became the Administrative Committee.

Tribal entities; the project's relative readiness and technical feasibility, etc. These criteria were included as a means to ensure that projects meet minimum standards and align with state and regional priorities. Finally, a subjective criterion for ranking of projects was approved. The underlying rationale is that the Inyo-Mono RWMG is a strongly diverse group, and allowing the values represented in the Group to be reflected in the subjective ranking would thereby reflect the region (e.g., local water purveyors may prioritize infrastructure needs; conservation groups may prioritize watershed management projects).

Review and ranking of project proposals was open to any of the Inyo-Mono RWMG members with the caveat that if a member decides to rank one project proposal, they must rank them all. The final ranking order for all project proposals was then determined based on the averaged ranking per project by all project reviewers². Such an iterative procedure was deemed particularly important to avoid project proponents having to spend substantial amounts of time to develop a proposal that either did not meet minimal eligibility requirements and/or project ranking criteria. Phase II was led by Project Staff and members of the Project Work Group with guidance provided by the Administrative Committee.

Phase III: Request for Proposals packet: Phase III Consisted of integrating Phases I & II outputs into a single document to be used by prospective project proponents and reviewers as the basis for developing, submitting, reviewing, and ranking project proposals for Prop. 84 Round 1 Implementation funding. This document is known as the Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Plan 2010 Request for Proposals [RFP]: IRWM Program Implementation Round 1 Grants (Appendix D). The RFP was created by Project Staff. The various worksheets developed in the RFP were used by the project proponents and staff to facilitate proposal development, determination of eligibility, and ranking. Once the RFP packet was complete, signatories to the Inyo-Mono MOU ranked all eligible project proposals. The final ranking was agreed upon by consensus at a publicly-noticed RWMG meeting.

Phase IV: Implementation project submission: This final phase involved final submission of full project proposals that were in full compliance with both Prop. 84 Implementation PSP requirements and that conformed to the Objectives and Resource Management Strategies agreed upon by the Inyo-Mono RWMG. The RWMG decided that should it receive only partial funding, the Group shall use the final project ranking as a basis for allocating available funds. Phase IV was a collaborative effort: complete project proposals were prepared by the respective project proponents, and the Implementation Proposal was prepared and submitted by Project Staff.

The iterative nature of the project solicitation, review, selection, and ranking procedure adopted by the Inyo-Mono RWMG provided for communication with both project proponents and with the larger participant group. This resulted in a more fully developed project review and submission process that gained the support of those involved.

² For example, there were 25 project proposals submitted and 18 reviewers. The final ranking of projects consisted of all 25 projects with Project 1 receiving the highest average ranking and Project 25 receiving the lowest.

