

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Purpose of the Santa Barbara Countywide Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

The effective management of water resources is one of the key challenges facing Santa Barbara County. Water resource planning within the county must address multiple factors, including limited local water supplies, variability of imported supplies, water quality issues, population changes and impacts from development, increasing regulatory requirements, aging infrastructure, the need to protect sensitive species and habitats, the loss of capacity in key reservoirs, existing and changing climatic conditions, and ongoing threats from droughts, floods, fires, and earthquakes.

Water resource managers in the Santa Barbara County region have a long history of working cooperatively to resolve multiple issues related to water and wastewater, including ensuring the adequacy of supplies and services, protecting and improving surface and groundwater quality, and protecting and enhancing ecosystems. Together they have planned and implemented significant water resources projects; developed integrated supplies and delivery systems; managed resources to meet the needs of urban users, agriculture, and ecosystems; and developed adaptive management strategies to respond to changing circumstances. Nonetheless, challenges remain, and the Santa Barbara Countywide Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) is intended to increase the level of coordination among all the agencies and districts responsible for water resources planning, nongovernmental organizations, and interested members of the public to facilitate the optimal management of water resources within the county over the next 20 years. The IRWMP also provides the foundation for grant applications needed to augment limited local financial resources.

The planning framework established by the IRWMP will be modified as needed to respond to changing conditions, including regulatory requirements, and will increase flexibility and efficiency by integrating multiple aspects of water resources management, such as water quality, local and imported water supplies, watershed protection, wastewater treatment and recycling, and protection of local ecosystems.

1.1.1 Consistency with State of California Planning Efforts

The IRWMP will allow regional needs to be met in a manner that is consistent with state of California planning efforts, including the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Bulletin 160 (California Water Plan Update 2005), the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Strategic Plan, Watershed Management Initiative, basin planning process, and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's (RWQCB) draft "Vision, Goals, and

Objectives.” The Santa Barbara Countywide IRWMP will help implement these planning efforts by developing an appropriate mix of resource management strategies and projects based on water management objectives and priorities that are specific to Santa Barbara County.

California Water Plan Update 2005

The California Water Plan Update 2005, a roadmap for meeting the state’s water demands through the year 2030, indicates that to attain reliable water supplies, water management must pursue two initiatives that incorporate the following actions:

- Promote and practice integrated regional water management
 - Foster regional partnerships
 - Develop integrated regional water management plans
 - Diversify regional water portfolios
- Maintain and improve statewide water management systems, which are the backbone of water management in California
 - Improve aging facilities
 - Improve flood management
 - Implement the CALFED program and sustain the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (which will help ensure that State Water Project water flows to Santa Barbara County)

The California Water Plan Update 2005 further indicates that California water management must be based on the following three foundational actions in order to achieve sustainable water uses and reliable water supplies.

- Use water efficiently
 - Increase levels of urban and agricultural water use efficiency
 - Increase recycled municipal water, and expand its uses
 - Change the way water facilities are operated to improve their operation and efficiency
 - Facilitate environmentally, economically, and socially sound transfers to avoid regional shortages
 - Reduce and eliminate groundwater overdraft
- Protect water quality
 - Protect surface waters and aquifers from contamination
 - Explore new treatment technologies for drinking water and groundwater remediation
 - Match water quality to its intended uses
 - Improve management of urban and agricultural runoff

- Improve watershed management
- Support environmental stewardship
 - Integrate ecosystem restoration with water planning and land use planning
 - Restore and maintain the structure and function of aquatic ecosystems
 - Minimize the alteration of ecosystems through water management actions
 - Improve watershed management
 - Protect public trust resources
 - Integrate flood management with water supply management

SWRCB Strategic Plan

In 2001, the SWRCB and RWQCBs developed a Strategic Plan that highlights new priorities to be addressed, along with specific objectives, key strategies, and strategic projects to be implemented. It identifies nonpoint source pollution from urban and agricultural runoff and other sources as the most significant water quality challenge facing California today; and the plan emphasizes the importance of (1) developing and implementing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs); (2) reducing storm water pollution; (3) addressing groundwater pollution; (4) permitting point source discharges; (5) increasing compliance assurance and enforcement; and (6) monitoring and assessing water quality (SWRCB and RWQCB, 2001). The SWRCB and RWQCBs have recently begun a process to revise the Strategic Plan.

SWRCB Watershed Management Initiative

The SWRCB and RWQCBs developed the Watershed Management Initiative to meet the goal of providing water resource protection, enhancement, and restoration, while balancing economic and environmental impacts. Potential water quality issues include impacts from agriculture, TMDLs, urban runoff, point source regulatory programs, basin planning, monitoring, and cleanup. Three targeted watersheds are located in Santa Barbara County, and the corresponding state agency concerns are (Central Coast RWQCB, 2002):

- Santa Maria River – Priority concerns include nitrate contamination of groundwater, sedimentation build up in Twitchell Reservoir, and habitat loss.
- Santa Ynez River – Priority concerns include effects of water rights decisions, erosion, sedimentation, flood control, and habitat loss (especially for steelhead); water quality impacts from urban development are another concern.
- South Coast – Priority concerns include creek and near shore water quality and beach closures.

Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin (Basin Plan)

The Central Coast RWQCB developed the Basin Plan in 1994 to show how the quality of the surface- and groundwaters in the Central Coast Region (which includes Santa Barbara County) should be managed to provide the highest water quality reasonably possible. The Basin Plan lists the various water uses in the region, describes the water quality that must be maintained to allow those uses, and describes the programs, projects, and other actions that

are necessary to achieve the standards established in the plan. The Regional Board implements the Basin Plan by issuing and enforcing waste discharge requirements to individuals, communities, or businesses whose waste discharges can affect water quality. These requirements can be either (1) State Waste Discharge Requirements for discharges to land, or (2) federally delegated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for discharges to surface water. The Regional Board also establishes prohibitions on types and locations of discharges through the Basin Plan. The Basin Plan is also implemented by encouraging water users to improve the quality of their water supplies, particularly where discharged wastewater is likely to be reused.

Central Coast RWQCB "Vision, Goals, and Objectives"

The Regional Board (2006) is in the process of developing measurable goals for its region. The proposed goals currently include:

- By 2025, 80 percent of the Aquatic Habitat is healthy, and the remaining 20 percent exhibits positive trends in key parameters.
- By 2025, 80 percent of lands within any watershed will be managed to maintain healthy watershed functions, and the remaining 20 percent will exhibit positive trends in key watershed parameters.
- By 2025, 80 percent of the groundwater will be clean, and the remaining 20 percent will exhibit positive trends in key parameters.

The staff is currently working on organizational objectives.

1.1.2 Related Legislation

Integrated regional planning is facilitated in California by the passage of several legislative acts. The IRWMP is intended to be a dynamic document and will be updated as needed to meet the requirements of changing legislative standards.

Proposition 50, the "Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002," amended the California Water Code to authorize the Legislature to appropriate \$500 million for integrated regional water management projects. The purpose of the integrated regional water management grant program is to "encourage integrated regional strategies for management of water resources and to provide funding, through competitive grants, for projects that protect communities from drought, protect and improve water quality, and improve local water security by reducing dependence on imported water." This IRWMP meets all requirements established by Proposition 50, Chapter 8, as specified in the November 2004 Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program Guidelines prepared by DWR and SWRCB, who jointly administer the program. The guidelines specify that an adopted IRWMP is a prerequisite to obtaining project implementation grant funding through Proposition 50.

In November 2006, voters passed Proposition 84, the "California Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006." This act includes \$1 billion in funding for integrated regional water management, including

\$52 million for the Central Coast hydrologic region¹, of which Santa Barbara is a part. These funds will provide grants on a regional level to increase water supply, reduce demand, and protect water quality.

Proposition 1E, the “Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act” also was passed in 2006. This act authorizes the state to sell \$4.09 billion in bonds to rebuild and repair California's most vulnerable flood control structures to protect homes and prevent loss of life from flood-related disasters, including levee failures, flash floods, and mudslides; the sale of bonds also is intended to protect California's drinking water supply system by rebuilding delta levees that are vulnerable to earthquakes and storms.

The IRWMP may serve as the basis for obtaining grant funding from these sources to facilitate the implementation of certain projects, and it may be used to obtain funding from other sources as well, such as the federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Implementation Program and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation’s (Reclamation) Title XVI Program.

1.2 Group Responsible for Developing the IRWMP

The IRWMP has been prepared by a broadly based group, referred to as the “Cooperating Partners,” comprising all but one of the entities responsible for managing water and wastewater in Santa Barbara County. The Cooperating Partners include the following 29 water districts, sanitary districts, community service districts, water conservation districts, private water companies, cities (large, medium, and small), Santa Barbara County, and joint powers agencies.

Cachuma Conservation and Release Board	Goleta Sanitary District
Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board	Goleta Water District
Carpinteria Sanitary District	Goleta West Sanitary District
Carpinteria Valley Water District	La Cumbre Mutual Water Company
Casmalia Community Services District	Los Alamos Community Services District
Central Coast Water Authority	Mission Hills Community Services District
City of Buellton	Montecito Sanitary District
City of Carpinteria	Montecito Water District
City of Guadalupe	Santa Barbara County
City of Lompoc	Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District
City of Santa Barbara	Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District
City of Santa Maria	Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District
City of Solvang	Improvement District No. 1
Cuyama Community Services District	Summerland Sanitary District
Golden State Water Company	Vandenberg Village Community Services District

¹ This region corresponds with the area under the jurisdiction of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, comprising all of Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and Santa Cruz counties, as well as the southern one-third of Santa Clara County and small portions of San Mateo, Kern, and Ventura counties.

Many of the Cooperating Partners have worked together since 2002 to develop the regional objectives, strategies, and priorities in the IRWMP, as well as projects to meet regional water needs.

Additionally, as described in detail in Section 4, a broad range of stakeholders participated in the development of the IRWMP, including agricultural, environmental, and academic interests, as well as members of the general public.

1.3 Governance Structure

For the purposes of developing the IRWMP, a Memorandum of Understanding was created and signed by the Cooperating Partners. During the Implementation Grant process, the Cooperating Partners and interested stakeholders will consider a variety of governance models that will lead to establishment of a long-term governance structure. A number of grant application and grant implementation tasks will be conducted as part of this ongoing process. Those tasks are listed at the end of this section.

Agreement will be reached on the steps to be taken to identify a long-term governance structure that will work best for the region. Those steps could include the following: (1) identify the objectives for the long-term governance structure; (2) set a schedule for the process; (3) find examples of governance structures that have led to successful implementation of major projects both within Santa Barbara County (Section 3.3 refers to the many successful interagency planning and integrated management agreements in place within the County) and around the country; (4) lay out the options for governance structures that exist within current state and local legislation; (5) make recommendations for legislation that may be required to enable implementation of governance structures; and (6) develop briefings and workshops to lead to agreement upon and implementation of a permanent governance structure. Examples of governance structures will include a narrative discussion of what has worked, either here in California or elsewhere, along with an appendix of legislation that enables such entities in this state. In addition, sample agreements, which can be a starting point for discussion among departments and agencies, will be included. The County of Santa Barbara will assume a leadership role in the coordination of this task.

Viable governance models should meet the following minimum needs: promote partnerships within the region; facilitate ongoing stakeholder involvement and decision-making; serve as a planning body charged with periodically updating the IRWMP; oversee IRWMP projects and manage data collection and data coordination with state systems.

There are a number of models that could meet the needs of the region. Models to be considered include:

- Memorandums of Understanding/Cooperative Agreements
- Commissions
- Joint Powers Authority

1.3.1 Memorandums of Understanding/Cooperative Agreements

At the simplest level, Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements are contracts between and among organizations that specify how work will be performed. They can be of indefinite length and general as to the nature performed or specific to projects. Typical language includes the purpose of the agreement and provisions for financing, indemnification, settlement of disputes, and length and termination of the agreement. They require only the signatures of the authorized representatives of the organizations; although depending on the organization, the agreements may have to go to the governing boards for approval.

1.3.2 Commissions

Commissions exist at every level of government and are often created for purposes of advice and oversight. Commissions can issue plans, award or receive funds, and enter into contracts.

A local example of a commission is the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, formerly the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project. According to the California Public Resources Code, "It is the intent of the Legislature that the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission be a non-regulatory, locally based state government entity that will monitor, assess, coordinate and advise all state programs, and oversee funding that affects the beneficial uses, restoration, and enhancement of Santa Monica Bay and its watershed." The governance structure of the Commission is delineated through a Memorandum of Understanding among the Secretaries for Environmental Protection, Resources Agency, and Chair of the Commission. The Memorandum of Understanding further prescribes the membership by federal, state, and local public agency officials and employees, as well as representatives of other stakeholder interests.

The enabling legislation allows the Commission to request and receive federal, state, local, and private funds, award and administer grants, and enter into and carry out joint powers authority agreements. A separate account was established in the state treasury for receipt and expenditure of funds.

1.3.3 Joint Powers Authority

Joint Powers Authorities are separate public entities created when two or more public agencies come together for a particular mission or purpose. In the pooling of powers, the new entity may have greater power than the parties to the agreement alone. For example, the ability to issue bonds may come from one agency, while eminent domain may come from another. The Joint Powers Authority may be able to act more quickly and efficiently in the hiring and management of staff, making land acquisitions, or carrying out projects.

Section 6500 et seq. of the California Government Code allows for the formation of joint powers authorities. As stated, "If authorized by their legislative or other governing bodies, two or more public agencies by agreement may jointly exercise any power common to the contracting parties, even though one or more of the contracting agencies may be located outside this state. The agreements shall state the purpose of the agreement or the power to be exercised. They shall provide for the method by which the purpose will be accomplished or the manner in which the power will be exercised."

1.3.4 Future Proposition 50 Tasks

Potential future Proposition 50 Grant Application tasks for the Cooperating Partners include:

1. Develop a new Memorandum of Understanding among Cooperating Partners for a Proposition 50 grant application and implementation process covering items such as schedule, process, funding, and key roles.
2. Develop a grant application by:
 - a. Managing a process for project evaluation and selection;
 - b. Preparing application and related materials, per state requirements; and
 - c. Coordinating Partners' and public review and revisions.
3. Submit single application on behalf of Partners with selected projects.
4. Negotiate with state, respond to comments, and revise application.

Potential Proposition 50 Grant Implementation tasks for the Cooperating Partners include:

1. Carry out fiduciary tasks such as tracking expenditures, compiling Cooperating Partners' invoices, preparing billing for submittal to state, and keeping appropriate records.
2. Carry out grant management tasks such as, tracking project status, compiling data, and preparing reports to state on performance and results.
3. Submit invoices, progress reports, and data to state.
4. Manage contracts and subcontracts with Cooperating Partners and consultants.