



Appendix C.

IRWM Communications and Outreach Plan

C – IRWM Communications and Outreach Plan



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH PLAN – IRWM Plan Update 2013-2014

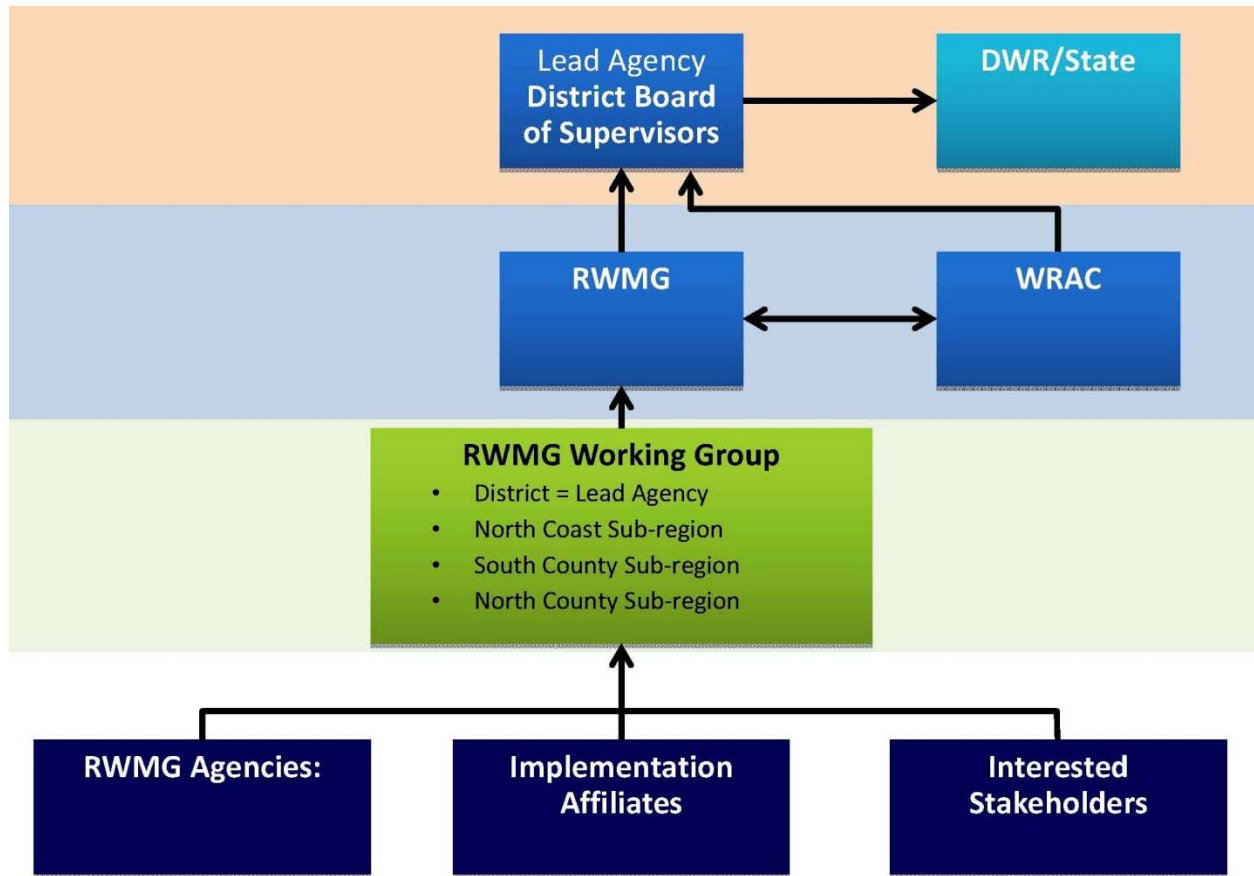
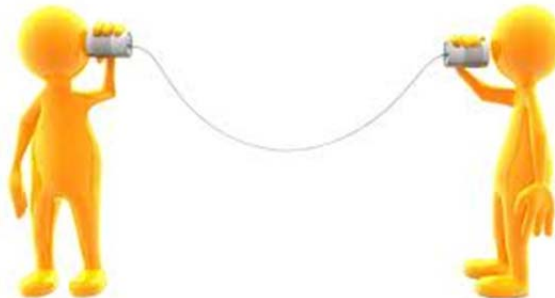


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PREFACE AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this Communications and Outreach Plan is to establish how communication will flow and be managed throughout the life of the San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan Update project. The purpose of the Outreach Plan is to satisfy DWR outreach requirements and build a solid, inclusive and representative agency, stakeholder and DAC base that is supportive of the aims of the IRWM Plan.

This Communication Plan and Outreach Plan builds upon the SLO County MOU that identifies the IRWM Program Participants (Regional Water Management Group [RWMG], the WRAC, the RWMG Working Group, Implementation Affiliates and Stakeholders) involved in the Update and describes the planned and periodic communications that will occur between the entities. The Communications Plan is not intended to prescribe new protocol for the entities, i.e. the Plan does not establish communication guidelines for the WRAC, but instead characterizes what types of communication will be used and how communication will proceed to facilitate the overall goals of the Update.

The Communications Plan also discusses:

- scheduled written and oral communications and forums;
- responses to requests for information;
- open questions to the IRWM entities and questions that come up in the work groups;
- frequency of scheduled communications;
- responsible person(s) for providing information.

The Communications Plan identifies the procedures used to manage communication for the project. The Communication Plan focuses on formal communication elements. Other communication channels exist on informal levels and enhance those discussed within this Plan. This Plan is not intended to limit, but to enhance communication. **Open, ongoing communication actively engaging stakeholders is critical to the success of the project.**

This Communications Plan is an integral part of the overall project management plan and will be used as guidance for the San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan Update and Program stakeholder engagement.

It is DWR's expressed interest that the outreach strategy employed engages a balance of the interest groups listed below in the IRWM process regardless of their ability to contribute financially to the IRWM Plan's development or implementation. Stakeholders are necessary to address the objectives and resource management strategies of the IRWM Plan. Furthermore, a robust and broad stakeholder and public outreach strategy will lay a solid foundation for regional (and sub-regional) involvement as well as

What's the IRWM MOU?

Updated in 2012, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes mutual understandings among the San Luis Obispo County IRWM Program Participants. It designates roles for developing and implementing the IRWM Plan and Program over time, and establishes the IRWM decision making process. By signing the MOU, eligible agencies and organizations become "Regional Water Management Group" members.

build overall regional (and sub-regional) capacity. It will also set forth a framework and provide guidance for implementing projects and carrying on the goals of IRWM Program throughout future years. The Communications Plan aims to knit together a core group of active and engaged regional and sub-regional representatives who are motivated and equipped to meet the formidable challenges involved in planning for increased water quality, groundwater protection, stormwater management, water reliability, flood management, water quality, water supply, and equitable environmental benefits.

I. PARTICIPANT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section describes the roles and responsibilities of the entities involved in the San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan Update. This section briefly describes the project organization, as it pertains to the flow of communication internally and relationships between the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG), the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC), the RWMG Working Group, Implementation Affiliates and Interested Stakeholders. This section will also identify the control agencies and other stakeholders that will be involved in managing communications.

1. The **Regional Water Management Group (RWMG)** is responsible for the IRWM Plan development and implementation. The RWMG members are signatories to the most recent MOU and commit to adopting the 2014 IRWM Plan once finalized. The RWMG members must be either a Local Agency (as defined in the MOU) or an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
 - a. The **Lead Agency** (currently, SLO Flood Control and Water Conservation District) leads the IRWM Plan development, submittal of the grant applications on behalf of the Region, and act as a liaison with DWR.

Specifically, the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency are:

- Final review and approval of IRWMP
- Re-adopt IRWM Plan as needed
- Execute MOU
- Act as Lead Agency for Region
- Make final decisions on IRWM activities¹
- Authorize grant applications
- Enter into agreements with DWR
- Approve implementation agreements
- Approve funding for IRWM planning
- Approve contracts with consultant(s)

¹ See MOU discussion on Decision-Making. Should discrepancies arise between recommended District Board of Supervisors action and RWMG agencies' recommended action (written consensus of majority), the District Board will hold a public hearing to allow agencies to appear and address the District Board – see MOU Section 4.5.

2. The **Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC)** advises the District Board of Supervisors (which is also the County Board of Supervisors) on water resource issues and represents 30+ agencies, organizations, and stakeholder groups.

Specifically, the roles and responsibilities of the WRAC are:

- Consider RWMG recommendations for the District Board
- Provide IRWM updates to stakeholders

3. **RWMG Working Group** engages stakeholders at the sub-regional level (North County, North Coast, South County) in order to understand the specific water resources needs and priorities of that sub-region. The RWMG Working Group includes members with local knowledge and technical expertise.

Specifically, the roles and responsibilities of the RWMG include the following:

- Adopt IRWM Plan
- Execute MOU
- Designate representative with clear authority to represent agency/organization (for RWMG WG)
- Submit planning/implementation projects/programs for IRWMP and grant funding
- Submit planning/implementation projects/programs data as needed (maintain IRWMP and meet DWR requirements for grant; adhering to project deadlines and schedule)
- Attend public meetings/ workshops
- Update and make recommendations to WRAC on IRWM program
- Seek WRAC support of IRWM program recommendations to District Board

4. **Implementation Affiliates** commit to adopting the 2014 IRWM Plan (once finalized) by resolution, but they are not signatories to the MOU. The Implementation Affiliates may include entities that may be project proponents or sponsors for implementation grant projects identified in the 2014 IRWM Plan.

In specific, the roles and responsibilities of the Implementation Affiliates are:

- Adopt IRWMP
- Provide required information and data in a timely manner (adhering to project deadlines and schedule)
- Designate representative with clear authority to represent agency/organization (for RWMG WG)
- Submit planning/implementation projects/programs for IRWMP and grant funding

- Attend public meetings/ workshops
5. **Interested Stakeholders** provide valuable input into the planning process and inform potential project opportunities.

In specific, the roles and responsibilities of the Interested Stakeholders are:

- Provide input into development of IRWMP
- Attend public meetings/ workshops

II. KEY ASSUMPTIONS OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN AND THE OUTREACH PLAN

- Communication and Outreach are two pillars upon which a successful, technically competent and inclusive IRWM Plan rest.
- The IRWM Plan process is an open and transparent process and engages all entities in the dialogue on water management in the SLO County IRWM Region.
- The Plan must conform to DWR IRWM Guidelines.
- The Public and Stakeholders will review and comment at key times in the update and on the compiled Draft IRWM Plan. Ample time will be given in advance of the request for comments.
- This Communication and Outreach Plan is being developed and implemented in accordance with the Scope of Work and Tasks approved by DWR.

III. DECISION MAKING

Decisions will be made by a simple majority vote of RWMG member representatives (either agency's primary or secondary) present at a meeting. Proxy voting will not be allowed, however, those who will not be able to attend meetings may provide input on the topic that will be discussed in advance of the meeting. This may be in the form of written comments, but no vote. Consensus is the goal and is to be achieved whenever possible. The RWMG agrees that quorum is constituted as a simple majority of the RWMG representatives (no more than one vote per member agency) attending any meeting. Decision-making will deal with such topics as coordination with other related planning activities, access to resources (human resources and informational resources), interpretation of work and work tasks, defining and prioritizing IRWM Plan Objective, defining the Project Review Process, and approval of draft and final documents.



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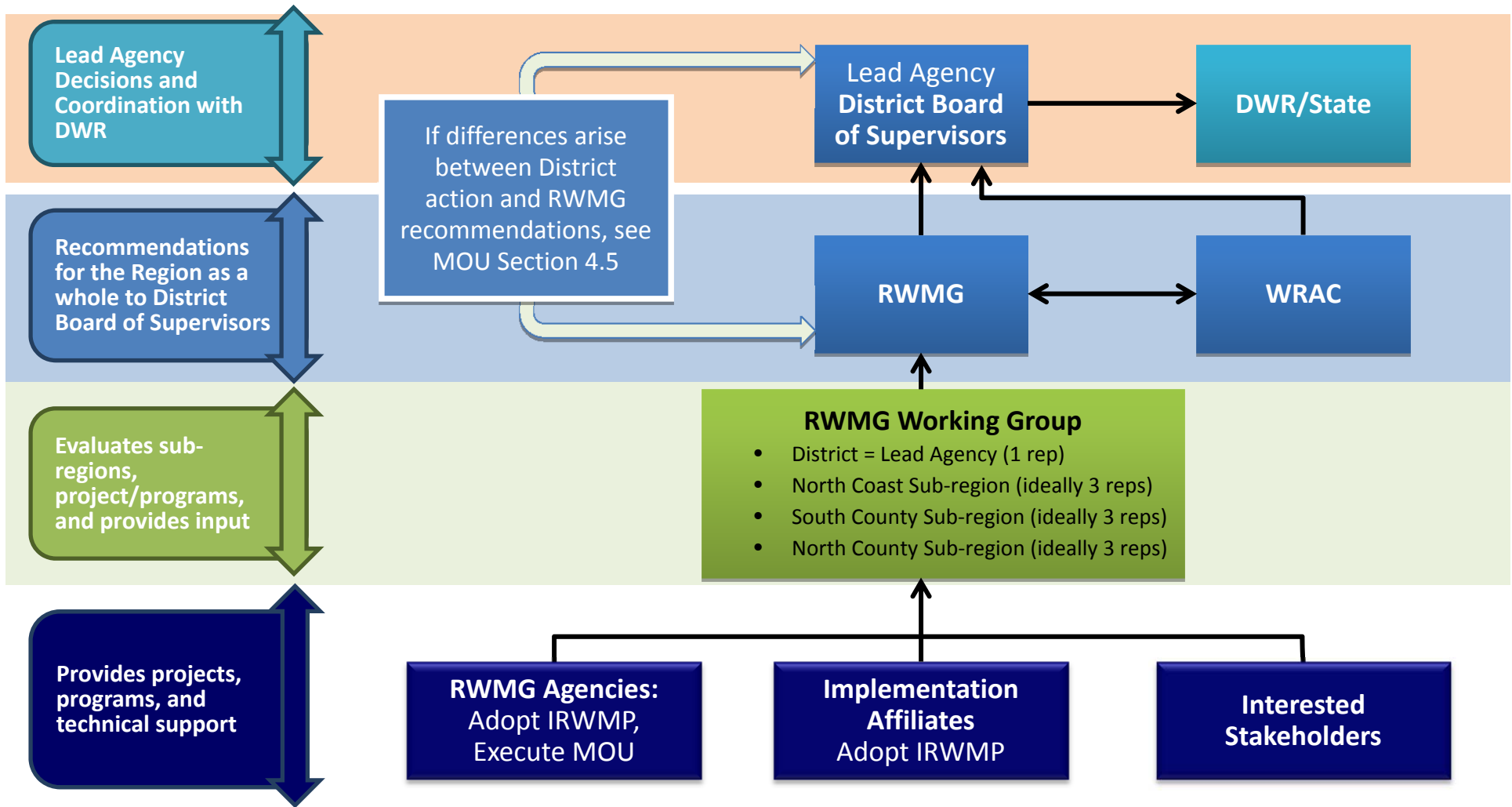
Implementation Affiliates and Interested Stakeholders may attend all meetings but are not voting members. Implementation Affiliates and Interested Stakeholders will have the opportunity to speak for

three minutes during public comment at the RWMG meetings. Implementation Affiliates and Interested Stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on this Plan at appropriate and designated intervals.

Decisions may be appealed through the following process:

- If a participant does not agree with a decision or action, the member will submit a short written memo providing background and a summary of the decision and nature of their objection to the RWMG.
- This memo will be reviewed by the RWMG with the intent of resolving the objection.
- If resolution is not possible within the workgroup structure, the memo may be submitted to the WRAC or the SLO District Board (Board of Supervisors) depending on the level decision needed.

Decision Making Structure



IV. COMMUNICATION PROCESSES

1. **Informal** - Informal communications consist of e-mail, conversations or phone calls and serve to supplement and enhance formal communications. Due to the varied types and ad-hoc nature of informal communications, which will occur among and between all the entities, they are not discussed in this plan.

2. **Formal** - San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan Update will engage in various types of formal communications. The types and purposes are described below:
 - a) **Notice of Intent**– A formal “Notice of Intent” (NOI) to update the San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan will be prepared and will be distributed to all entities. The NOI will also be publically noticed in media publications throughout the County. The NOI will be posted on the SLO County website (www.slocountywater.org) for public access.
 - b) **Public Meeting Notices** – Adoption Hearings on the Plan and certain meetings will be publically noticed to allow for public and stakeholder input. Meeting Notices will be posted on the SLO County website (www.slocountywater.org) for public access.
 - c) **RWMG Meeting Notices** – Will be generated and sent out by email to the RWMG two (2) weeks in advance of the actual meeting. The WRAC will be copied on RWMG meeting notices to ensure the WRAC is kept abreast of the progression on the Plan. Meeting Notices, Agendas and Meeting Minutes will be posted on the SLO County website (www.slocountywater.org) for public access.
 - d) **WRAC** meeting notices have been generated and will continue to be generated and sent via email to all entities and individuals that request to be added to the email distribution list. Meeting Notices, Agendas and Meeting Minutes will be posted on the SLO County website (www.slocountywater.org) for public access.
 - e) **RWMG Working Group** meeting notices will be generated and sent out by email two (2) weeks in advance of the actual meeting. The WRAC and the RWMG will be copied on Working Group meeting notices to ensure that the RWMG is abreast of the progression on the Plan and the progress on issue areas. Interested Stakeholders will also be copied on RWMG Working Group meetings. Meeting Notices, Agendas and Meeting Minutes will be posted on the SLO County website (www.slocountywater.org) for public access.

3. **Critical Success Factors**
 - Meeting attendance.
 - Compliance with information/data requests.
 - Review of TMs, draft, and final drafts of plan according to schedule and workplan (based on Scope of Work).

- Agency participants have decision-making authority and communicate frequently with agency boards and councils to ensure information about the Plan is current and accurate.

4. Individual Responsibility

- Agency/entity participants must possess clear authority to represent the agency or organization, provide expertise, provide required information in a timely manner (adhering to project deadlines and schedule), participate in all meetings, attend IRWM Plan Update Public Meetings, review and approve technical memorandums (TMs) as necessary and appropriate and review the draft and final IRWM Plan.
- Public members and stakeholders may provide input on the scope of work and participate in general IRWM public meetings, i.e. meetings on the Plan to give input on draft and final versions as well as RWMG meetings.

5. Operating Guidelines

Operating Guidelines deal with the following: the team’s formal authority and what it may do without permission and what do with permission and with areas of shared responsibilities or areas in which team members are expected to initiate action to support others. Operating guidelines are intended to make the operations of the workgroup as open and fair as possible.

6. Meeting Protocol

- Meeting agendas will be prepared distributed prior to the meeting.
- Meetings will be coordinated by and facilitated by SLO District staff and/or its designated agent.
- Progress toward completing work plan tasks will be assured by strict adherence to time frames identified on meeting agendas.
- Meeting materials will be coordinated and distributed ahead of the meeting time.
- Public participants’ comments will be scheduled at the beginning of meetings and comment will be limited to 3 minutes.

IV.A Status Reports

Status reports will be produced during the project. The status reports will be produced on regular intervals to provide all entities, including the stakeholders, project information on the status and progress of the Plan update. At a minimum, these reports will contain:

- Project Status on major activities;
- Project Schedule;
- Status of Action Items, if applicable; and
- Future or planned activities



V. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

V.A Public Inquiries

The public is encouraged to participate in the IRWM Plan Update. The NOI, as described above, will be publically distributed and hearings on the Plan will be publically noticed. In between, all meeting information will be posted on the website and available for public viewing and comments. Public comments will be received via an exclusive email address posted on the website and will be answered by designated SLO District staff or their authorized agents.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT

VI. A. Communication Protocol

This section describes the protocols for the dissemination of project information necessary to manage the amount and type of information that is communicated.

Communication protocols are necessary to properly manage the amount and type of information that will be communicated. Communication protocols are advantageous for a variety of reasons, including, better managing and controlling the flow of project-related information, to minimize misinformation and maximize the sharing of accurate information across the appropriate communication channels, and to provide structure to the formal and informal communications that are shared with external stakeholders.

All IRWM Plan communications related to project-wide status is directed to the SLO District staff and its authorized agents, unless otherwise specified. Because of the broad scope of this project, only those individuals at the project management level will be able to provide a comprehensive and accurate status update on the project as a whole. Project status updates will be disseminated in a monthly basis to all entities and all meeting agendas, materials and action items will be posted on the IRWM website for public viewing and comment.

VI.A.1 Email

This section describes the key rules for use of e-mail, including types of information that can be transmitted via e-mail and level of formality in e-mail.

Electronic mail (E-mail) is used as a means for informal, ad hoc communication between project team members and stakeholders as well as formal communications. Formal e-mails will be limited to meeting announcements and major project milestones.

Appropriate uses of e-mail include alerting entities to meetings, meeting changes, alerting entities to key documents that have been posted on the SLO County website (www.slocountywater.org). General questions and answers from the public should be directed to the dedicated email for information on the Plan Update.

VI.A.2 Communications Tracking and Storage

Written communications received or generated by the project are retained and stored in the project SLO County website (www.slocountywater.org) library and/or document management tool, depending on the format in which they were received. Project e-mail that document decisions or have pertinent value to the project will be stored in the project SLO County website (www.slocountywater.org) library and/or document management tool and retained for historical purposes.

VI.A.3 Communications Changes

Changes to the communication process may be proposed by any of the IRWM Program Participants for consideration and a decision will be made by the SLO District staff or its authorized agents.

VII. OUTREACH PLAN

Effective public involvement and integration is one of the touchstones of a successful IRWM plan. Building trust, developing relationships, and cultivating communication channels is critical for ensuring regional and sub-regional participation and growing multi-benefit, fundable projects.

Every meeting and workshop is an opportunity to increase transparency and inclusivity as well as build partnership, and in that spirit, the stakeholder list will always be open to new stakeholders.



The Outreach Plan will utilize existing groups and communication systems to disseminate information about the IRWM plan, in part relying on groups that have dedicated memberships and similar concerns and/or issues as those addressed in the IRWM plan. Public involvement will be sustained throughout the development of the plan with the intention of forming alliances that further the goals and sustainability of the plan and projects. The paradigm of IRWM meetings and workshops provide a forum in which objectives, targets and goals can be presented, thoroughly vetted and developed. It is also a forum to discuss which projects can be developed to realize IRWMP goals and objectives.

Public involvement will be enhanced and facilitated by the data management system and the other forms of communication discussed in this Plan.

VII.A Stakeholder List

Prior to the March 6, 2013 meeting, reconnaissance will be conducted within the SLO IRWM region to compile a list of all relevant agencies and interest groups, including those statutorily required stakeholders and compare that list with the list that the SLO District maintains. The stakeholder outreach list will inform the public outreach process and serve as a tool moving forward. Stakeholders will also receive updates on the project and plan milestones, funding information, and other appropriate and relevant information. The stakeholders will include (as applicable to the Region):

- Wholesale and retail water purveyors
- Wastewater agencies
- Flood control agencies
- Municipal and county governments and special districts
- Electrical corporations
- Native American tribes
- Self-supplied water users
- Environmental stewardship organizations
- Community organizations
- Industry organizations
- State, federal, and regional agencies or universities
- Disadvantaged community members
- Any other interested group appropriate to the region.

Some agencies or entities that are critical to plan development may be logistically challenged, such as community or neighborhood organizations and disadvantaged communities. As such, a targeted disadvantaged community outreach process is discussed below.

VII.A.I Public and Stakeholder Involvement

The Outreach Plan will lay a solid foundation for regional (and sub-regional) involvement and strategy as well as build overall regional (and sub-regional) capacity. It will also set forth a framework and provide guidance for implementing projects and carrying on the goals of IRWM throughout future years. It is the expressed aim to knit together a core group of active and engaged regional and sub-regional representatives who are motivated and equipped to meet the formidable challenges involved in planning for increased water quality, groundwater protection, stormwater management, water reliability, flood management, water quality, water supply, and equitable environmental benefits.

Apart from building public and institutional capacity, the public and stakeholder involvement will build extra-institutional capacity for overall assimilation into a larger, more water-aware culture that moves beyond traditional alliances to envision a more comprehensive and realistic relationship with the watersheds that the residents of San Luis Obispo County live and play in. The plan will empower those involved by providing self-determination in the future of their water resources and watersheds.



The on-going RWMG Meetings, WRAC meetings and RWMG Working Groups in the sub-regions are the primary way that Interested Stakeholder and public involvement will be solicited and all information will be made available on the SLO County’s website.

Further, throughout the update of the Plan at key points, the public and stakeholders will be invited to comment on draft items.

VII.A.II DAC Outreach Plan

DWR requires an outreach process that includes disadvantaged community (DAC) outreach. As such, the SLO County IRWM Plan Update will incorporate the input and priorities of the DACs in the region and funnel these into need, priorities, actionable water management strategies, and potentially fundable projects. DACs will be called and invited to participate in the DAC Visioning Workshop/Focus Group discussions detailed below. After initial contact is made, it will be determined by the DAC how they would like to be communicated to, i.e. calls, email. It is understood that there may be technical barriers to communication, so it is important to define what these are and/or may be and plan for alternate ways for communication to flow.

VII.A.II.a Sub-Regional DAC Visioning Workshop/Focus Group

To determine the “Vision” of the project, we need to ask: What is the larger purpose of this project? Why does this project exist? What is the future state that will exist as a result of the actions we take?

The purpose of the workshops and focus groups is to coordinate outreach efforts in a manner that is appropriate for disadvantaged community participants who will be engaged in the planning process. The meetings are intended to provide information and tools to these stakeholders that will allow them to develop projects with the IRWM plan framework that address their specific community priorities and needs. Each of the 3 sub-regional DAC visioning workshop/focus groups will be geographically distributed throughout the sub-region to ensure maximum coverage and participation.

The first step in effective outreach is to identify DACs that have an interest and stake in the planning outcome. This will be accomplished by developing and maintaining a comprehensive listing of

disadvantaged community representatives, and as applicable, community organizations, environmental stewardships organizations, and advocacy groups as part of the overall project stakeholder list. We will build on the existing list of environmental and community stakeholders and identify additional stakeholders for inclusion on the list. Ongoing updates to the list will be made to ensure accurate information is maintained throughout the planning process.

Visioning workshop/focus group in each sub-region for a total of five (5) DAC workshops will be organized in March to promote the active and sustained participation of representatives from disadvantaged communities in project design and formulation. Typical barriers to DAC participation in the IRWM plan process are different from that of other communities and extend well beyond technical issues to involve economic, cultural, and social considerations. Each workshop/focus group will be geographically distributed within the sub-region to ensure the ability of the largest number of DAC stakeholders to participate. The sub-regional meetings will be conducted in a manner consistent with the cultural and language practices of the sub-region. This will include, as necessary and appropriate, bilingual meeting materials and translation, meetings in community centers and other locations frequented by local groups, and meeting scheduling and arrangements designed to maximize participation. We will work with trusted community partners, including community organizations and advocacy groups that can assist with the grassroots participation in the workshops and focus groups.

The five (5) Disadvantaged Community Visioning Workshops and Focus Groups will be publicly noticed. At the outset, these will give specific information on how the IRWM process works is and what is needed for the DAC to actively participate. The visioning workshop will serve both an educational and strategic purpose by giving disadvantaged community representatives the information they need to incorporate their issues and ideas into the overall planning framework and provide them access to the planning process. Meeting attendees will be asked to identify the key water related opportunities and constraints facing their communities and the region as a whole. Participants will be able to discuss any topic they feel is relevant and important to the planning process. The visioning workshop will provide the opportunity to identify disadvantaged community representatives who are interested in participating to a greater degree and who will be best able to represent the DACs' needs. Further the focus group will assist in charting a path forward for streamlined and enhanced DAC communication and involvement.

