



**Strategic Plan for the Future
of Integrated Regional Water Management in California**

Stakeholder Outreach and Communication Plan

March 2013



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACWA	Association of California Water Agencies
CWP	California Water Plan
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
FAN	Federal Agency Network
IRWM	Integrated Regional Water Management
RWVG	Regional Water Management Group

Introduction and Purpose

Integrated regional water management (IRWM) was officially recognized by the California Legislature in 2002 with the passage of the Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Act (SB 1672), although it had been practiced in many forms throughout the state prior to that. Thanks to voter-approved bond funds, California has since made profound improvements in water resource management. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has supported IRWM with grants, facilitation services, and technical support to Regional Water Management Groups (RWMGs) for the last ten years.

DWR is facilitating the development of the *Strategic Plan for the Future of IRWM in California (Strategic Plan)* with assistance and participation from IRWM stakeholders. The *Strategic Plan* will describe the future for IRWM in California and identify measures needed to

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achieve that future. These measures will include actions that can be taken by the state to assist and improve integrated regional water management, as well as actions that can be taken for IRWM by stakeholders independent of the state's programs. This *Strategic Plan* will also include approaches for monitoring successes and adapting to challenges and changes. This will be the first-ever statewide strategic planning effort focused on IRWM.

Active involvement and engagement of IRWM stakeholders is essential for the development of the *Strategic Plan*. Obtaining a wide diversity of perspectives will be a primary ingredient for ensuring the plan will be robust and will receive broad support, acceptance, and ownership by IRWM stakeholders.

This Stakeholder Outreach and Communication Plan (Plan) documents outreach and communication methods that will be used during the development of the *Strategic Plan*. It will be used to guide all stakeholder involvement and engagement efforts to ensure an accessible, transparent, collaborative, and inclusive planning process.

Strategic Plan Development Approach

The *Development Approach* for the *Strategic Plan* was first published in Fall 2012 and is available at the Strategic Plan website (<http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/stratplan/>). The *Development Approach* was formulated with early stakeholder input from the 2011 IRWM Conference, 2011 California Water Plan (CWP) Plenary, CWP Tribal Caucus, DWR Regional Forums, and input from various water leaders. As stated in the *Development Approach*, the *Strategic Plan* will address the three fundamental questions related to strategic planning:

- What is the present condition? (Where we are),
- What is the vision for the future? (Where we want to be), and
- How is the future vision achieved? (How we get there).

DWR has identified a series of activities needed to answer these questions and develop the *Strategic Plan*. These activities are described in the *Development Approach*.

Development efforts for the *Strategic Plan* began in August 2012. The goal is to complete development efforts and publish the draft *Strategic Plan* for public review in 2014.

IRWM Stakeholders

IRWM in California is remarkable for many reasons including the diversity of stakeholders who participate in planning and implementation phases of IRWM throughout the state. IRWM stakeholders can be considered to belong to one of the following three groups:

- **IRWM Practitioners** – members of RWMGs and prospective members of formative RWMGs, who are planning or implementing IRWM in California.
- **IRWM Partners** – Federal and state agencies that currently support, or could potentially support IRWM, or otherwise have an interest in IRWM.
- **Other IRWM Stakeholders** – parties other than practitioners and partners, who have an interest in IRWM (including those who may be affected by IRWM), and the general public.

Participation by all three groups will be important in the development of the *Strategic Plan*, and their involvement will be encouraged.

Stakeholder Focus Group

DWR facilitated the formation of a stakeholder focus group to assist DWR in the development of the *Strategic Plan* by:

- reviewing and commenting on DWR's planned approach for stakeholder outreach and engagement

- validating DWR's efforts to collect, document, and assimilate stakeholder input, including efforts related to vision and goal-setting workshops and strategy-development workshops
- providing preliminary review and feedback on *Strategic Plan* documents to ensure stakeholder input is adequately portrayed

The Focus Group consists of volunteer members from selected IRWM stakeholder groups, as follows:

- Five (5) Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) representatives nominated by/through the IRWM Roundtable of Regions.
- One (1) California Water Plan (CWP) Disadvantaged Communities/Environmental Justice Caucus member
- One (1) CWP Tribal Advisory Committee member
- One (1) CWP Public Advisory Committee member
- One (1) CWP State Agency Steering Committee member
- One (1) Association of California Water Agencies member
- One (1) Floodplain Management Association member
- One (1) representative from the Basin Study Program of the US Bureau of Reclamation.
- One (1) representative from the US Forest Service.

The formation of the Focus Group was completed in early February, 2013. The list of the Focus Group members with their contact information will be published on the Strategic Plan website so that IRWM stakeholders can contact Focus Group members to share perspectives, as desired.

The Focus Group will meet on a periodic basis throughout the duration of the project. DWR will provide a facilitator for Focus Group meetings.

Outreach and Communication Methods and Tools

The size of the state, diversity of IRWM stakeholders, and the need to attain wide buy-in and acceptance of the *Strategic Plan* requires that extra care be taken in reaching out to, and engaging, stakeholders in the development of the *Strategic Plan*. Consideration must also be given to ensure that stakeholder participation is not overly burdensome in terms of engagement timing, time spent, and travel costs incurred by stakeholders.

DWR will facilitate multiple means and opportunities for stakeholder participation at varying scales. The stakeholder Focus Group will also play an important role as a

conduit of communication to encourage participation by IRWM stakeholders and solicit their input. The outreach and communication methods and tools are described below.

Dedicated Website

DWR has launched a dedicated website for the *Strategic Plan* development project. The website address is <http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/stratplan/>. This website will be used for announcements and the dissemination of information related to the project, such as public documents, workshop handouts, presentations, etc. A frequently-asked-questions (FAQ) page is posted on the website and will be updated periodically to help address general stakeholder questions.

Dedicated E-mail and Phone Number

DWR's Strategic Plan Development Team's dedicated e-mail address is IRWM_StrategicPlan@water.ca.gov. A dedicated toll-free telephone number has also been established for the project: (855) 397-4796. The e-mail address and toll-free number will serve as a means for stakeholders to contact DWR directly with any questions or concerns during the development of the *Strategic Plan*.

Mailing List

DWR has created a specific mailing list for the *Strategic Plan* development project. Interested stakeholders can subscribe to the mailing list by visiting <http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/stratplan/>. Announcements related to this project will be sent to subscribers of this mailing list. In addition, subscribers to the following mailing lists will also receive announcements related to the *Strategic Plan* project:

- IRWM Grant Program (e-mail list)
- California Water Plan (Water Plan eNews)
- Flood Futures Report (e-mail list)

Regional Workshops

DWR will host a series of public stakeholder workshops throughout the state during the development of the *Strategic Plan* to obtain stakeholder input. Five day-long regional stakeholder workshops will be held in Spring 2013 on vision and goal setting for the *Strategic Plan*. They will be followed by at least one more set of five day-long regional workshops in late summer or early fall, 2013. The various workshops will be the primary means by which the strategic vision, goals, objectives, and strategies for the future of IRWM will be developed.

DWR will use its four administrative regions as a basis for determining the locations for the workshops. One regional workshop will be held in each administrative region, except for Southern California, where two regional workshops are recommended to accommodate the large number of interested parties.

The dates and locations of the workshops will be announced in advance through the Strategic Plan website and mailing lists mentioned above. Before the workshops, the stakeholder Focus Group will provide feedback on the workshops' design and assist in publicizing and promoting attendance. After the workshops, the Focus Group will review the input received and assist DWR in understanding and assimilating stakeholder input.

Stakeholder Interviews

DWR may conduct interviews of selected stakeholders to gain further understanding of stakeholder input from the workshops, or from other means of stakeholder input, such as comments received on draft documents. Interviews may also be conducted if gaps or omissions in stakeholder input or perspectives are determined to exist.

Any stakeholder may request an interview with the DWR project team. However, adequate justification on underrepresentation or missing perspectives must be provided by the requesting stakeholder in order for the interview to occur.

The DWR project team will review all interview requests and will either (a) accommodate the request within the constraints of project schedule and budget; or (b) suggest participation in regional public workshops organized under this project and/or suggest communicating through other public forums, such as RWMG meetings, CWP caucuses, IRWM Roundtable of Regions, as appropriate.

Stakeholder Surveys

DWR will use web-based surveys and data requests to obtain input from IRWM stakeholders on specific topic areas where such input is not conducive to workshop processes due to timing, level of detail needed, or the technical nature of input required. At present, the following stakeholder surveys and data requests are planned:

- General survey on the vision and goal workshop schedule (completed in November, 2012);
- Regulatory alignment survey to obtain input on alignment needs between IRWM and current statutes, regulations, and policies related to water management;
- IRWM Region Fact Sheet input requests to obtain summary level information from each RWMG and the state of their IRWM planning and implementation activities (these fact sheets will be used to develop an "IRWM Atlas" for the state)

- Program assessment survey to obtain input on further improvement of IRWM program delivery by DWR; and
- Data and tools survey to obtain input on data and tools being used by different RWMGs and their member agencies for water management planning.

Additional surveys may be conducted, as needed, during the course of the project. DWR will use web-based systems to conduct surveys and data requests in the interest of efficiency and conserving stakeholder time. The Focus Group will assist, as needed, in interpreting and incorporating survey input into the *Strategic Plan*.

The surveys and data requests for this project will be coordinated with other major water management planning initiatives at DWR. DWR's planning initiatives include California Water Plan Update 2013, Flood Future Report, Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, and Bay Delta Conservation Plan.

Web-Based Meetings

As appropriate, DWR will use web-based meeting participation techniques, such as webcasts and webinars, for the dissemination of information related to draft documents, or other project information. Webcast and webinar announcements will be sent to stakeholder groups using the e-mail lists and project website mentioned earlier.

Conference/Forums

Where possible, DWR will use existing conferences and forums, such as Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) conferences, and meetings such as IRWM Roundtable of Regions, CWP Plenary, CWP Caucuses, Federal Agency Network (FAN), and Regional Forums to present strategic planning progress and results.

Document Review and Online Comment Submission Tool

During the course of the project, DWR will publish documents summarizing the results and findings from various project activities. These documents will be announced through e-mail lists and the project website. Information provided will include any deadlines for the submission of comments. Comments and responses will be posted on the project website.

An online comment submission tool will be developed and made available to IRWM stakeholders.

Revisions

The methods and tools described in this outreach and communication plan are intended to facilitate sharing of project-related information with IRWM stakeholders, and to offer multiple opportunities to stakeholders to provide input to DWR in the development of the *Strategic Plan*. This outreach and communication plan will be modified in the future if changes in communication methods and tools are necessary. Any changes will be vetted with the Stakeholder Focus Group and will be announced on the Strategic Plan website.