

# Water Resources Division Strategic Plan

The Water Resources Division (WRD) of the San Luis Obispo County Public Works Department is committed to partnering with communities throughout the county to help achieve sustainable water resources for their area. Funded primarily by the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) 0.525% share of the 1% county-wide tax, this strategic plan outlines the areas of the overall mission that relate to the role of the WRD as a partner, in accordance with District Resolution 2016-281 and the District Act.

## Mission

The Water Resources Division will be an effective partner in achieving sustainable water resources for all areas of the county.

## Mission Areas and Goals

Mission Area 1: Be an effective partner

Leadership. Pathfinding, Aligning, Empowering

Demonstrate leadership skills by helping to define the path for achieving goals, align resources and identify the tools needed to achieve goals.

Collaboration. Communication, Relationship Management, Self-Management

Demonstrate collaborative skills by seeking to improve communication, being aware of relationships and how to nurture and grow them, and by understanding yourself, your behaviors and your impacts.

Accountability. Service, Teamwork, Integrity

Demonstrate accountability by maintaining a high commitment to quality service, working with and supporting your team and always doing the right thing.

## Mission Area 2: Achieve sustainable water resources for all areas of the county

Goal 1: Develop a common understanding of conditions in each area (map under development)

In order to achieve county-wide water resources sustainability, a common understanding of historic, current and projected future water resource conditions in each Integrated Water Planning Area (IWPA)<sup>1</sup> is essential to effective conflict resolution and decision making. This involves collecting the right data, in the right manner, on the right time scale to establish a comprehensive and defensible foundation upon which to build detailed technical studies of groundwater, watershed, subregional and regional conditions.

### a. Collection of Groundwater Data

This involves collecting and/or cataloging well logs and level data of adequate temporal/spatial scale and in a useable format to inform evaluations of long term and seasonal trends and basin-wide technical studies.

### b. Collection of Watershed Data

This involves collecting and/or cataloging rain, reservoir, evaporation and stream data of adequate temporal/spatial scale and in a useable format to inform evaluations of long term and seasonal trends and watershed-wide technical studies.

### c. Developing integrated watershed/groundwater models

This involves utilizing data collected above, and historical water and land use information, to develop and calibrate an integrated watershed/groundwater model that can be used as a tool to analyze a range of projected future conditions and management strategies to achieve sustainable water resources in the given watershed/groundwater system.

Goal 2: Define sustainability goals for each area

To be successful, it is also necessary to establish broad support for specific sustainability goals in each area and county-wide. This can be memorialized via the development of integrated watershed and groundwater sustainability plans and the Integrated Regional Water Management Program. Each plan will need to identify a desired future state for its

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<sup>1</sup> An IWPA is defined as an integrated watershed/groundwater system, including all those who depend on it and external contributions to the system (e.g. imported water)

area in terms of minimum thresholds for undesirable conditions, level of resiliency and future water needs.

a. Integrated Watershed Goals

This involves helping to develop goals for watershed health that address human and ecosystem needs and regulatory requirements associated with flood, stormwater and waterway conditions.

b. Sustainable Groundwater Goals

This involves helping to develop goals for groundwater health that address human and ecosystem needs and regulatory requirements associated with groundwater and interconnected surface water conditions.

c. Integrated Regional Water Management Goals

This involves combining the plans for each area into a county-wide plan that results in an integrated picture of what sustainability looks like for the region.

Goal 3: Identify feasible solutions to meet goals

Feasible solutions that achieve sustainable water resources are socially equitable, and environmentally and economically sound. The process for determining feasibility and identifying solutions involves partnering with stakeholders to 1) understand resource management strategy options, including regulatory requirements and socioeconomic considerations; 2) develop integrated solutions to meet goals and 3) establish an implementation roadmap.

a. Understand Resource Management Strategies (RMSs)

This involves understanding and vetting best management practices, and technological and infrastructure options available to meet sustainability goals; understanding the regulatory standards, processes and objectives that must be addressed and/or met with any given solution; and understanding the social and economic impact of any given solution.

b. Develop Integrated Solutions

This involves comparing and integrating the most feasible RMSs to achieve watershed, groundwater and/or integrated goals.

c. Establish Implementation Roadmaps

This involves identifying the necessary institutional and financial steps to implement the integrated solutions.

#### Goal 4: Facilitate the initial implementation of identified solutions

To ensure water resources can be sustained into the future, adequate structures need to be in place to address ongoing operations and management decisions and financial needs. In cases of emergency, institutional and/or physical structures that facilitate the sharing of resources are also needed.

##### a. Institutional Structures

This involves facilitating the establishment of independent or cooperative management structures to oversee the implementation and maintenance of sustainability solutions.

##### b. Financial Structures

This involves facilitating the establishment of independent or cooperative financial structures to fund the implementation and maintenance of sustainability solutions.

##### c. Emergency Structures

This involves facilitating the establishment of a cooperative structure, and any necessary infrastructure, to facilitate transfers of resources in a water related emergency in any area of the county.