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Map 1-1: San Luis Obispo County IRWM Region

1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the purpose of the San Luis Obispo County Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan and the regulatory guidelines and requirements driving much of the content and material included in the plan. In addition, this section serves as a roadmap for the IRWM Plan and includes brief descriptions and references to those portions of the plan where topic-related information is located. This section describes how the IRWM Plan meets the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) requirements specified in the 2016 IRWM Grant Program Guidelines including the related IRWM Plan Standards.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE IRWM PLAN

This IRWM Plan presents a comprehensive water resources management approach to managing the region's water resources, focusing on strategies to improve the sustainability of current and future needs of San Luis Obispo County. It is built on the existing foundation of the region's longstanding inter-agency cooperation and stakeholder collaboration.

This plan was written to meet the latest IRWM requirements, balancing the needs of the participating agencies with the State's need to have a full, well thought-out plan on which to base implementation of future water resources projects/programs and provide the maximum benefit wherever and whenever needed.

1.1.1 Regions and Sub-Regions Included in the IRWM Plan

The region covered by this IRWM Plan is the whole of San Luis Obispo County, whose boundary is concurrent with that of the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) (see **Map 1-1**). The County's 3,304 square mile area is further divided into three sub-regions: the North Coast Sub-Region, the North County Sub-Region, and the South County Sub-Region. Within the sub-regions, there are 6 Water Planning Areas (WPAs) and 25 watersheds. Sub-regions and WPAs are both useful in differentiating among local issues and allowing for meaningful, focused stakeholder involvement. A detailed description of the IRWM region, Sub-Regions, WPAs, and watersheds are included in **Section 3 – Region Description**.

1.1.2 IRWM Plan Financial Sponsorship

The San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan is being produced and sponsored in significant part by the District. The update is also funded in part through a Proposition 1 IRWM Planning Grant from the California DWR. RWMG member agencies and organizations provided in-kind services associated with contributions of information, meeting attendance and document review.

Additional information is available at the following website:

<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/IRWM>

1.1.3 IRWM Plan Adoption

The District Board of Supervisors will adopt this Plan upon completion of a public comment period, recommendation of the RWMG and recommendation of the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC). Once adopted, a copy of the resolution can be found in **Appendix A – Resolution of Adoption**. Each individual participating member agency (see **Table 1-1**) of the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) is required by the State Guidelines to also adopt the DWR-approved plan to be eligible to receive future state grant funding. Member adoption will follow adoption by the District. Plan adoption by a member agency also ensures regional support for locally-sponsored water resources projects funded through all state, federal, and local grant and loan programs. The IRWM Plan is a living guidance document for all member agencies to support, and re-adopt, with each IRWM Plan update approx. every five (5) years.

Table 1-1: List of Participating Member Agencies

Regional Water Management Group	
San Luis Obispo County	Heritage Ranch CSD
San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	Los Osos CSD
Avila Beach Community Services District	Morro Bay National Estuary Program
California Men’s Colony*	Nipomo CSD
Cambria Community Services District (CSD)	Oceano CSD
Cayucos Sanitary District	S&T Mutual Water Company
Central Coast Salmon Enhancement	San Miguel CSD
City of Arroyo Grande	San Miguelito Mutual Water Company
City of Grover Beach	San Simeon CSD
City of Morro Bay	Shandon-San Juan Water District
City of Paso Robles	South San Luis Obispo County Sanitation District
City of Pismo Beach	Templeton Community Services District
City of San Luis Obispo	The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County
Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District	Upper Salinas - Las Tablas Resource Conservation District
Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District	

* Note: The California Men’s Colony has signed the RWMG MOU (see appendix B) but did not adopt the 2014 IRWM Plan.

1.2 AN IRWM PLAN FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

IRWM is a collaborative effort to manage all aspects of water resources in a region. IRWM crosses jurisdictional, watershed, and political boundaries; involves multiple agencies, stakeholders, individuals, and groups; and attempts to address the issues and differing perspectives of all entities involved through mutually beneficial solutions. An IRWM Plan is a significant document that:

- Describes the Region and its water management strategies
- Reviews the Region's water issues (e.g., supply, quality, storage, conveyance, etc.)
- Puts forward strategies to address solutions for those issues
- Suggests actions, programs, and capital projects to carry out those strategies
- Prioritizes and integrates those actions, programs, and capital projects
- Establishes metrics to measure and manage collected data to show the potential improvements, benefits, and impacts of the plan
- Provides a methodology to carry out those actions, programs and capital projects
- Monitors the plan's progress and adjusts when needed

It is a plan for near-term water management in a region that includes a stakeholder-driven short list of the best integrated water projects for the region as identified within this update of the plan. The use of the phrase “near-term” is indicative of the fact that the plan is updated on a regular cycle (typically five year intervals), and thus the plan of the future will continue to evolve while addressing water management issues beyond the current planning horizon.

The process, procedures, and requirements of an IRWM Plan are provided in the 2016 IRWM Guidelines. The guidelines establish what DWR will use to implement the Proposition 1 (The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014) IRWM Grant Program. The 2016 Guidelines specify the standards of review and includes a specific list of requirements that must be included in the plan prior to the State's acceptance and approval of the plan.

1.3 IRWM PLAN BENEFITS AND NEED FOR UPDATES

An IRWM Plan provides several benefits for the Region and its participants, including the following:

- Provides an in-depth listing of regional water resources problems
- Helps focus funding priorities and estimate staffing requirements
- Provides opportunities for diverse and integrated solutions to water resource problems
- Makes a concerted and documented effort to include the entire community in water resources planning, including disadvantaged communities (DACs)
- Provides opportunities to formulate integrated programs and projects for multiple benefits for the Region
- Allows the Region to apply for and accept State funding to address water issues
- Makes the Region participants eligible for planning and implementation grants
- Provides a consolidated and inclusive planning process
- Aligns participants to support projects that benefit the region as a whole
- Presents a more economic approach to tackle regional problems by combining administrative and planning costs of several agencies for some regional issues
- Enhances the foundation for “good” regional planning

1.4 HISTORY OF IRWM IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

The San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan was originally adopted in December 2005, updated in July 2007, and most recently in July 2014. The 2005 IRWM Plan identified planning efforts to fill data gaps in four areas to support the overall plan goals, objectives, and strategies, and improve the IRWM Plan itself:

- Data Enhancement Plan
- Flood Management Plan
- Groundwater Banking Plan
- Regional Permitting Plan

The 2007 IRWM Plan was the first to provide a cornerstone document for future integrated planning efforts that lead to more collaboration among water resources agencies and efficiencies in water resources problem-solving. These planning efforts were awarded \$500,000 to complete the focused studies included in the Proposition 50 Chapter 8 IRWM Planning Grant application. The resulting plans were completed in 2008 and thus, were not incorporated into the 2007 IRWM Plan update. The 2007 IRWM Plan updated regional and project information to represent the existing conditions and priorities for the region.

In 2011, the IRWM Region was awarded an implementation grant to construct three projects, including:

- Los Osos Community Wastewater Project
- Flood Control Zone 1/1A Waterway Management Program, 1st Year Vegetation and Sediment Management Project
- Nipomo Waterline Intertie Project

A condition of the implementation grant was to update the 2007 IRWM Plan to meet ongoing updates to the 2012 IRWM Plan Guidelines eventually published by the State in November 2012. Given the seven-year period since the last update, the District is capitalizing on the requirement to update the IRWM Plan by addressing the changed conditions and needs in the region.

The objectives of the 2014 IRWM Plan Update were to incorporate changes that occurred since 2007 were as follows:

- Build on the successful collaboration and planning presented in the 2007 IRWM Plan
- Incorporate the four Proposition 50 planning studies
- Address the enhanced IRWM planning standards
- Include changed regional conditions (i.e., groundwater/surface water availability and increased agricultural and urban water demands) and enhanced planning approaches, including a revised governance approach
- Address the highest priority data gaps and planning needs as determined through a public solicitation and review process

The 2014 Plan update included an exhaustive public outreach program that included meeting with stakeholders in the sub-regions, taking surveys and conducting public meetings throughout the County. This plan update created opportunities for the following projects to receive funding and support from DWR:

- Prop 84 Expedited Drought Grant:
 - CSA 23-AMWC-Garden Farms Emergency Intertie
 - Heritage Ranch CSD Emergency Turnout
 - Cambria CSD Emergency Water Supply
- Prop 84 Implementation Grant (2015)
 - Templeton CSD Upper Salinas River Basin Conjunctive Use
 - San Simeon CSD Well Head Treatment
 - Oceano CSD Water Resources and Reliability Program – Planning Study

Once the 2016 Standards were released, which were created in response to Proposition 1 (2014), work on this plan update began. The focus of these standards was on creating a more robust discussion and understanding of climate change and integration mitigation and adaptation to climate change throughout the document.

1.5 MEETING THE 2016 IRWM PLAN STANDARDS

As the IRWM Plan was developed, the RWMG maintained the list of requirements developed using the 2016 IRWM Plan Guidelines to ensure acceptance and approval by the State after completion of the IRWM Plan Update. Detailed tables addressing specific requirements of the 2016 Guidelines are compiled and incorporated as **Appendix L – State Guidelines Requirements Tables**. **Appendix L** also provides a short narrative on how each requirement is met, along with the various sub-sections where information can be found in the IRWM Plan.