

Section A. Introduction

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Section A. Introduction

This section describes the purpose of the San Luis Obispo County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (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 states how the plan meets the overall 2012 California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Guidelines (State Guidelines), and requirements for DWR approval specified in Appendix H of the State Guidelines, *The Final Plan Review Process*.

A.1 PURPOSE OF THE IRWM PLAN

The IRWM Plan presents a comprehensive water resources management approach to managing the region's water resources focused on strategies to better the sustainability of the 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 while balancing the needs of the participating agencies with the State's need to have a full, well thought-out plan to base implementation of future water resources projects/programs to provide the maximum benefit where and when needed.

A.1.1 Regions Included in the IRWM Plan

The larger region covered by the IRWM Plan is made up of the boundaries of the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) and is the same as the County of San Luis Obispo (see **Figure A-1**). The County's 3,304 square miles is broken down further 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 16 Water Planning Areas (WPAs) and 26 watersheds. Both sub-regions and WPAs are useful to differentiate local issues and allow for meaningful, focused stakeholder involvement. A detailed description of the IRWM region, WPAs, and watersheds are included in **Section C – Region Description**.

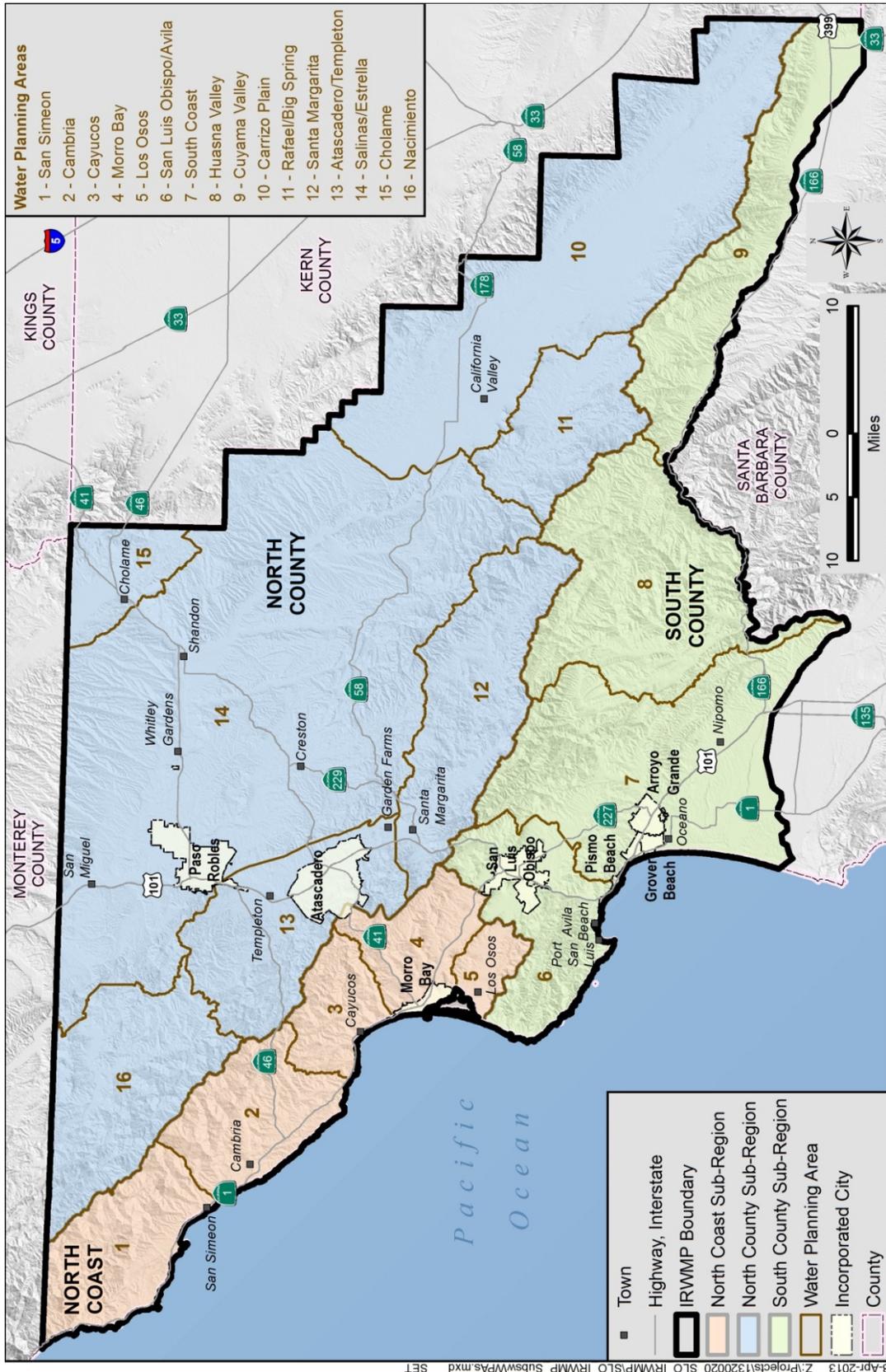


Figure A-1. IRWM Plan Region, Sub-Regions, and Water Planning Areas

A.1.2 IRWM Plan Financial Sponsorship

The San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan is being produced and sponsored by the District, funded in part through a Proposition 84 IRWM Plan Planning Grant from the California DWR. Additional information is available at the following Internet website:

<http://www.slocountywater.org/site/Frequent%20Downloads/Integrated%20Regional%20Water%20Management%20Plan/>

A.1.3 Point of Contact

Questions and comments on this IRWM Plan can be directed:

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A.1.4 IRWM Plan Adoption

The District Board of Supervisors adopted this IRWM Plan by resolution [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. A copy of the resolution can be found in **Appendix A – Resolution of Adoption**. Each individual participating member agency (see **Table A-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. 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 considered to be a living guidance document for all member agencies to support, and re-adopt, with each IRWM Plan update (approximately every 5 years).

The 2013/14 San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan was published as a draft document for public review on June 4, 2014. It was duly noticed in accordance with §6066 of the Government Code in the local media. The public was provided the opportunity to comment both in writing and during a public meeting and regular RWMG meeting. RWMG members were responsible for taking the document back to their respective stakeholder groups for review and comment, consolidating comments and bringing the information back to the RWMG. Public comments were reviewed and reconciled by the RWMG and a final IRWM Plan was produced for adoption by resolution. Once the RWMG adopted the IRWM Plan, the final document was taken to the

Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) for approval and recommendation for adoption by the County’s Board of Supervisors.

Table A-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	Land Conservancy
California Men’s Colony	Los Osos CSD
Cambria Community Services District (CSD)	Morro Bay National Estuary Program
City of Arroyo Grande	Nacimiento Regional Water Management Advisory Committee
City of Grover Beach	Nipomo CSD
City of Morro Bay	Oceano CSD
City of Paso Robles	Templeton CSD
City of Pismo Beach	San Miguel CSD
City of San Luis Obispo	San Simeon CSD
Central Coast Salmon Enhancement	S&T Mutual Water Company
Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District	Upper Salinas - Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

Note: Currently, there are 24 members to the RWMG; most are participating as project sponsors and intend to adopt this plan after adoption by the County Board of Supervisors.

A.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 that carry out those strategies
- Prioritizes and integrates those actions, programs, and capital projects
- Establishes metrics to measure and manages 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 makes adjustments when needed

It is a plan for near-term future 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 current update of the plan. The use of the phrase “near-term” is indicative of the fact that the plan is updated on a fairly regular cycle (typically five year intervals), and thus the plan of the future will evolve to address water management issues beyond the current planning horizon.

The current general process, procedures, and requirements of an IRWM Plan are spelled out in the California DWR IRWM Grant Program Guidelines (2012 IRWM Plan Guidelines or 2012 Guidelines). The 2012 Guidelines document establishes what DWR will use to implement the IRWM Implementation Grant Program authorized under Proposition 84 (the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006) and the related Storm Water Flood Management (SWFM) Grant Program funded under Proposition 1E (The Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Act of 2006). The 2012 Guidelines specify the standards that a plan should attain and includes a specific list of requirements that must be within the plan prior to the State’s acceptance and approval of the plan.

While IRWM Plans were governed by earlier Proposition 50 statutes for general items, a plan developed under the more recent Proposition 84 requirements has to address the following additional special items:

- Climate change
- Flood and storm water management
- Outreach to Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)
- Integration with Land Use planning

A.3 IRWM PLAN BENEFITS AND NEED FOR UPDATES

An IRWM Plan provides a number of benefits for the Region and its participants. An IRWM Plan:

- Provides an in-depth listing of regional water resource problems
- Helps focus resources on water resource priority goals
- Provides opportunities for diverse and integrated solutions to water resource problems
- Makes a concerted and documented effort to include the entire community in water planning, including disadvantaged communities (DACs)
- Provides opportunities to formulate integrated programs and projects that provide multiple benefits for the Region
- Allows the Region to apply for and accept State funding to solve 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
- Creates the foundation for “good” regional planning

A.3.1 Update to the IRWM Plan

The San Luis Obispo County IRWM Plan was originally adopted in December 2005 and amended in July 2007. The 2007 IRWM Plan was the first to provide a cornerstone document for future integrated efforts that lead to more collaboration among water resources agencies and efficiencies in water resources problem solving.

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. These projects included the following:

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

These planning efforts were included in the Proposition 50 Chapter 8 IRWM Planning Grant application that was awarded \$500,000 to complete the focused studies. These 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 better represent the existing conditions and priorities for the region.

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

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

A condition of the implementation grant was to update the IRWM 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 IRWM planners are capitalizing on the requirement to update the IRWM Plan by addressing the changed conditions and needs in the region as depicted in **Figure A-2**.

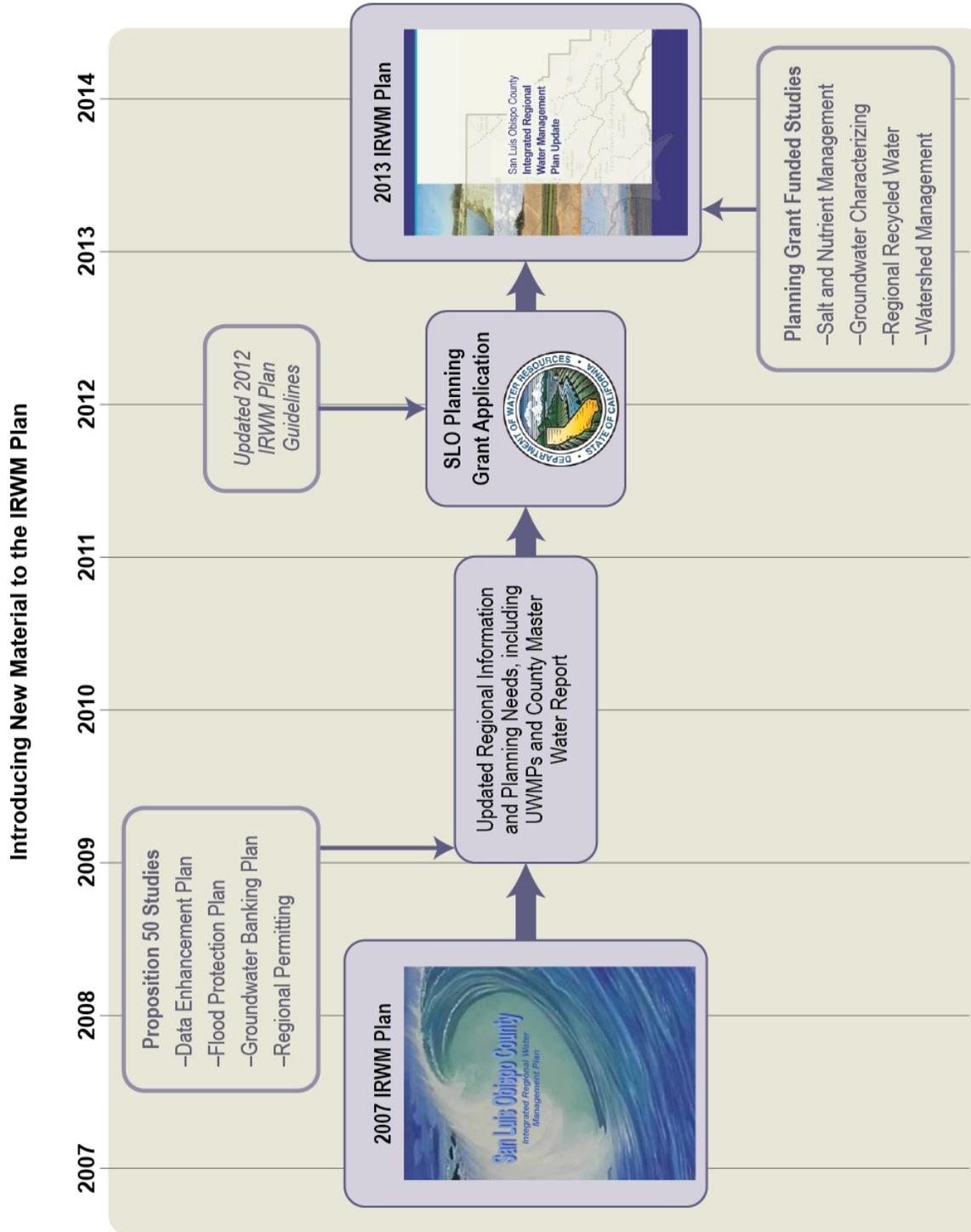


Figure A-2. Introducing New Material to the IRWM Plan

The objective of the 2014 IRWM Plan Update is directed at meeting the changes which have occurred since 2007, summarized as follows:

- Build on the successful collaboration and planning presented in the 2007 IRWM Plan
- Incorporate and consider the four Proposition 50 planning studies
- Address the enhanced IRWM planning standards
- Consider 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

A.4 IRWM PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Region's stakeholders have followed a systematic 8-Step process for developing project-level elements for inclusion in the plan as shown in **Figure A-3**.

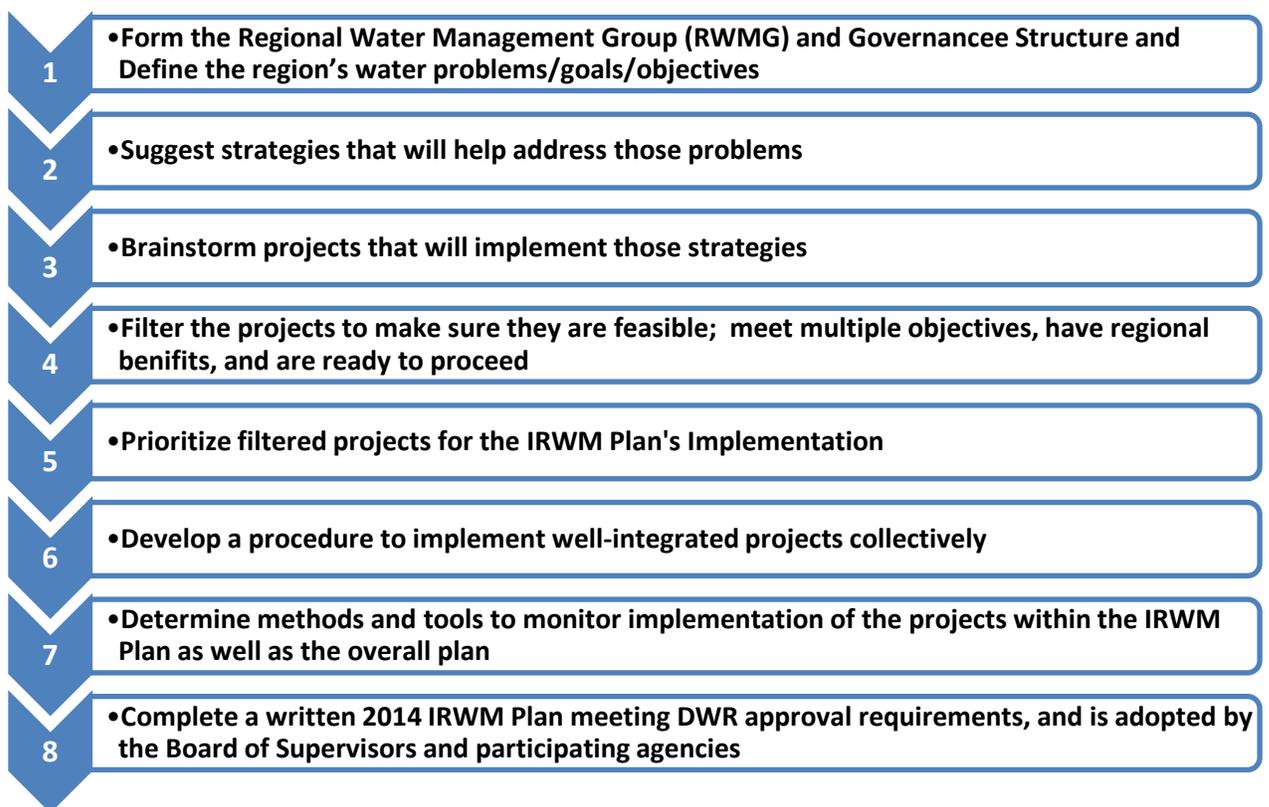


Figure A-3. Simplified 8-Step Approach to Updating the IRWM Plan

A.5 PRIORITIZED CHANGES

The IRWM Plan section deficiencies were categorized into three levels and listed in **Figure A-4**:

- **Tier 1** – Sections that require significant modification to address new standards that were not included in the previous guidelines (e.g., climate change) and the sections that need to reflect the revised governance approach for improved IRWM Planning
- **Tier 2** – Sections that require a moderate amount of modification to more fully address the plan standards and reflect current conditions
- **Tier 3** – Sections that require limited modification and the updates consist of additional information/modification to reflect current conditions in the IRWM planning area



Figure A-4. Tiered Improvements to IRWM Sections

All sections in Tiers 1 through 3 require updating; however, the most critical needs are in Tier 1 and include climate change, governance, and the standards most affected by the changes in governance.

A.6 MEETING THE 2012 IRWM PLAN GUIDELINE REQUIREMENTS

As the IRWM Plan was developed, the RWMG maintained the list of requirements developed using the November 2012 IRWM Plan Guidelines to ensure acceptance and approval by the State after completion of the IRWM Plan Update. **Table A-2** summarizes how the IRWM Plan

satisfies Appendix H of the 2012 Guidelines. Detailed tables addressing specific requirements of the 2012 Guidelines are compiled and incorporated as **Appendix Q – State Guideline Requirement Tables**. **Appendix Q** 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.

Table A-2. *IRWM Plan Update Standards Reference*

IRWM Plan Standard	Section
Governance	B
Region Description	C, D
Goals & Objectives	E
State Resource Management Strategy	F
Integration	H
Project Review Process	G
Impacts and Benefits	I
Plan Performance and Monitoring	J
Data Management	K
Finance	L
Technical Analysis	M
Relation to Local Water Planning	N
Relation to Local Land Use Planning	N
Stakeholder Involvement	B, E, F, G, K, Q
Coordination	O
Climate Change	P

