

# FACT SHEET

## Integrated Regional Water Management Plan for Greater Monterey County

### BACKGROUND

In November of 2002, Proposition 50 (the “Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act”) was passed by California voters, approving Chapter 8 and the Integrated Regional Water Management Program. The purpose of the IRWM Program is to “encourage integrated regional strategies for management of water resources and to provide funding, through competitive grants, for projects that protect communities from drought, protect and improve water quality, and improve local water security by reducing dependence on imported water.” Proposition 50 amended the California Water Code to authorize the Legislature to appropriate \$500 million for integrated regional water management projects.

In November 2006, California voters passed Proposition 84, the “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006.” Administered by the Department of Water Resources, Proposition 84 includes an additional \$1 billion in funding for the IRWM Grant Program, including \$52 million for the Central Coast region. Proposition 1E, the “Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006,” was also passed in 2006, authorizing the State to sell \$4.09 billion in bonds to rebuild and repair California’s most vulnerable flood control structures, and to protect California’s drinking water supply system by rebuilding delta levees that are vulnerable to earthquakes and storms.

In order to be eligible for Proposition 84 or Proposition 1E grant funds through the IRWM Grant Program, a project must be contained within an adopted IRWM Plan developed in accordance with guidelines set forth by the State. Three IRWMPs covering geographic areas within Monterey County were developed under Proposition 50:

- Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP (May 2007), including portions of San Benito and Santa Clara Counties
- Monterey Peninsula, Carmel Bay and South Monterey Bay IRWMP (November 2007, amended March 2009)
- Salinas Valley IRWM Functionally Equivalent Plan (May 2006, amended October 2008)

Together these plans covered most of the Salinas Valley, all of the Pajaro River watershed, all of the Carmel River and San Jose Creek watersheds, and the Monterey Peninsula. However, many key areas of Monterey County were not represented within any of these plans, leaving significant coverage voids for the purposes of IRWM planning and project implementation. These areas include, specifically: the Big Sur coastal watersheds and communities on the western side of the Santa Lucia Range, from Pt. Lobos south to the San Luis Obispo County line; the larger Salinas River watershed from the Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge at the Pacific Ocean south to the San Luis Obispo County line and including the east and west ranges of the valley; the Gabilan watershed; and portions of western San Benito County.

Representatives of the Central Coast IRWM Regions (including the three noted above plus Northern Santa Cruz County, San Luis Obispo County, and Santa Barbara County Regions) agreed during a meeting in February 2008 that the Salinas Valley plan should be expanded to include those

areas of Monterey County that had not been represented in previous plans. A Regional Water Management Group was formed in 2009 to lead the effort in developing a new IRWM Plan for an expanded IRWM region. The new Region eliminates all previous IRWM area coverage voids within Monterey County, and is called the “Greater Monterey County” Region.

## **WHAT ARE THE REGIONAL BOUNDARIES?**

The Greater Monterey County region includes all of the Salinas River watershed north of the San Luis Obispo County line (encompassing a small portion of San Benito County where the Salinas River watershed extends outside of Monterey County), and includes the entirety of Monterey County exclusive of the Pajaro River Watershed IRWM region (which covers the Pajaro River watershed) and Monterey Peninsula, Carmel Bay, and South Monterey Bay IRWM region (which covers all of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District jurisdiction, plus all of the Carmel River and San Jose Creek watersheds, plus all of the Seaside Groundwater Basin) established under Proposition 50.

## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT GROUP?**

The main purpose of the Regional Water Management Group is to develop a plan for the region (the IRWM Plan) that outlines the region’s priorities in terms of water resource management, and that contains a prioritized list of projects which the Group will submit to the California Department of Water Resources for possible funding through the IRWM Grant Program (i.e., Proposition 84 and Proposition 1E grant funds). The Regional Water Management Group does not necessarily create project proposals themselves, but identifies projects in the region and develops those projects in such a way as to make them stronger and more attractive to the State for grant funding. The Regional Water Management Group as a group has no special legal authority or regulatory power; it is simply a group of local agencies and organizations that have volunteered to identify water resource management projects in our region and submit grant applications to the State on behalf of the region.

Members of the Regional Water Management Group have been chosen to ensure balanced representation of the various resource areas, interests, and geographic areas in the Greater Monterey County region, and include the following 18 entities:

- Big Sur Land Trust
- California State University Monterey Bay
- California Water Service Company
- Castroville Community Services District
- Central Coast Wetlands Group at Moss Landing Marine Laboratories
- City of Salinas
- City of Soledad
- Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
- Garrapata Creek Watershed Council
- Marina Coast Water District
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
- Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office
- Monterey County Water Resources Agency
- Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency

- Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Monterey County
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation
- San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.

To ensure that the needs and priorities of the diverse array of water management interests within the planning region are included in the Greater Monterey County IRWM Plan, a list of potential stakeholders has been compiled encompassing all known agencies, organizations, groups, and individuals with interest or active involvement in water resource management, environmental resources, flood protection, land use planning, or related areas. Stakeholders are invited to attend meetings of the Regional Water Management Group, participate in workshops, and provide comment on drafts of the IRWM Plan. The current stakeholder list includes approximately 250 individuals representing over 150 organizations in the region.

## **WHAT EXACTLY IS THE IRWM PLAN?**

IRWM Plans must be developed according to certain guidelines set forth by the State. The Proposition 84 IRWM Program Guidelines ensure that the Regional Water Management Group:

- Considers the major water-related issues and conflicts within its region;
- Identifies goals and objectives for the region in relation to IRWM planning;
- Considers a broad variety of water management strategies for water resource management within the region;
- Identifies disadvantaged communities in the region and takes the water-related needs of those communities into consideration;
- Considers greenhouse gas emissions of programs and projects included in the plan;
- Evaluates the adaptability to climate change of water management systems in the region; and
- Identifies the appropriate mix of water demand and supply management alternatives, water quality protections, and environmental stewardship actions to provide long-term, reliable, and high quality water supply and protect the environment.

An IRWM Plan for the Greater Monterey County region was completed and formally adopted by the Regional Water Management Group in April 2013. At the “core” of the IRWM Plan is a prioritized list of projects that can be submitted to the Department of Water Resources in application for IRWM Grant Program funds. In 2011, the Regional Water Management Group applied for, and received, approximately \$4.1 million in Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant funds to fund seven water resource-related projects within the Greater Monterey County IRWM region.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information about the Greater Monterey County IRWM process, please contact:

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