

## Section P: Stakeholder Involvement

The intent of the Stakeholder Involvement standard in the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program Guidelines is to ensure that Regional Water Management Groups (RWMGs) give the opportunity to all stakeholders to actively participate in the IRWM decision-making process on an ongoing basis. California Water Code (CWC) §10539 defines a RWMG as “a group in which three or more local agencies, at least two of which have statutory authority over water supply or water management, as well as those other persons who may be necessary for development and implementation of a [IRWM] Plan...” This definition recognizes the collaborative nature of IRWM planning. The IRWM planning process relies on stakeholder involvement to gather regional information and make regional decisions. This section describes the protocols used for stakeholder involvement in the Greater Monterey County IRWM region.

### P.1 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

#### P.1.1 Process Used to Identify Stakeholders

Outreach efforts to include stakeholders in the development of the IRWM Plan have targeted specific audiences and constituencies as well as the general public. An initial stakeholder email list, with about 175 names, was developed by the RWMG through brainstorming every known organization that might be affected by and/or interested in the IRWM Plan process. An invitation to participate in the IRWM planning process was sent to each of those stakeholders. The current list includes about 250 individuals representing over 150 agencies, organizations, and interest groups. The list includes all of those stakeholders who were initially invited (except those who specifically requested to be removed from the list), plus many others who have asked to join or who have been invited to join since.

Stakeholders have played an important role in the decision-making process throughout the development of this IRWM Plan. Together, stakeholders and the RWMG represent all of the major water resource management authorities in the region—as well as water resource management authorities and stakeholders from neighboring IRWM regions—and provide broad and fair representation of water supply, water quality, wastewater, storm water, flood control, watershed, municipal, environmental, agricultural, and regulatory interests throughout all geographic areas of the planning region. Stakeholder organizations include such entities as the following:

- Water suppliers and water service districts
- Wastewater agencies
- Water quality regulatory entities
- Watershed groups
- Flood control agencies
- Federal, state, county and municipal governments
- Environmental non-profit organizations
- Agricultural organizations
- Business organizations
- Disadvantaged communities
- Other community organizations
- Universities and research institutions
- Elected officials
- Other interested individuals

All of the stakeholder groups necessary to meet the objectives of the IRWM Plan are included on the stakeholder list. The list continues to expand and evolve as new stakeholders are introduced to the process. New stakeholders are introduced through sign-in sheets at public workshops, recommendations from those already involved, and targeted outreach to underrepresented groups (see process for including disadvantaged communities below). At the end of every email communication sent to stakeholders, the IRWM Plan Coordinator provides an opportunity for stakeholders to either remove themselves from the email list or to make recommendations for additional stakeholders. Please see Appendix D for the full list of stakeholder organizations in the Greater Monterey County IRWM region (this list is occasionally updated on the IRWM website at: <http://www.greatermontereyirwmp.org/>).

### **P.1.2 Process Used to Communicate with Stakeholders**

A website has been developed to facilitate communication with stakeholders about the Greater Monterey County IRWM Plan process (see website address above). The website is a good source of information, containing documents produced during the course of Plan development, news and events (such as public workshops), maps of the region, current project lists, contact information, other resources related to IRWM planning, and a downloadable version of the IRWM Plan. The website will also contain a portal for data related to IRWM Plan projects.

Stakeholders are informed of IRWM Plan developments through website postings, email notices, and where email capability is lacking, personal communication. All email communications to stakeholders, as well as the website, include clear contact information for the IRWM Plan Coordinator (email and phone number). Stakeholders are encouraged to contact the Coordinator at any time (not just during the public comment periods) with questions or comments on the process.

Public workshops are held on occasion to encourage broad and diverse stakeholder participation in the IRWM planning process. The workshops are widely advertised through brochures, newspapers, email, website announcements, and word of mouth. Special efforts are made to ensure broad participation at the public workshops. For example, workshops are held in different locations throughout the region, at different times of day (during the workday and in the evening); workshops are held in locations that have handicap access, near public transportation; and Spanish language translation is made available at (at least) one of the locations. In the course of IRWM Plan development thus far, four public workshops have been conducted:

- *Workshop #1:* A public workshop was held in September 2009 in two different locations (Big Sur and Soledad) to introduce stakeholders to the Greater Monterey County IRWM planning process. The regional boundaries, RWMG composition, and strategy for developing the IRWM Plan were explained. A summary of regional issues and conflicts (as identified by the RWMG, with substantial input from local experts) was then presented, and small breakout sessions were held to encourage discussion. The facilitator documented the participants' comments and input regarding issues and conflicts.
- *Workshop #2:* A second public workshop was held in March 2010. The purpose of this workshop was to solicit projects for inclusion in the IRWM Plan, describe the project submission process, answer questions about the IRWM Grant Program, and explain exactly what the RWMG was looking for in a project. The workshops were held in three different locations (Big Sur, Salinas, and King City) on different days and different times of day in order to encourage participation by as many stakeholders as possible.
- *Workshop #3:* A public workshop was held in August 2011 to coincide with the second annual project solicitation. The project submission process was described and questions about

both the project solicitation and the IRWM planning process were answered. The workshop was held in two different locations, King City and Salinas.

- *Workshop #4:* A public workshop was held in July 2012 to present the Draft IRWM Plan to stakeholders and to explain the process for public comment. The Draft IRWM Plan was presented in sections, the process for submitting comments was explained, and stakeholders' questions were answered by the facilitator (a RWMG member). This workshop was conducted in two different locations, Salinas and King City.

## **P.2 OUTREACH TO DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

### **P.2.1 Disadvantaged Communities in the Greater Monterey County Region**

Special effort has been made to encourage the participation of disadvantaged communities in the Greater Monterey County IRWM planning process and to ensure that their water resource needs are considered and addressed. Disadvantaged communities are defined as communities with annual median household incomes (MHI) that are less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. "Severely" disadvantaged communities are defined as communities with annual MHIs that are less than 60 percent of the statewide MHI. Using 2015 US Census data, the statewide annual MHI is \$61,818 (in 2015 inflation-adjusted dollars). All US Census places, census tracts, and block groups with an annual MHI of \$49,454 or less are therefore considered disadvantaged, and those with an annual MHI of \$37,091 or less are considered severely disadvantaged. Note that new income data is released each year by the US Census through the American Community Survey (ACS), and therefore, the threshold for "disadvantaged community" changes each year. This Plan reflects the most current data at the time of writing (in 2017), utilizing 2015 ACS five-year estimates.

With the release of the Proposition 1 IRWM Program Guidelines, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) also recognizes, in addition to disadvantaged communities, "economically distressed areas." An economically distressed area (EDA) is defined as: "a municipality with a population of 20,000 persons or less, a rural county, or a reasonably isolated and divisible segment of a larger municipality where the segment of the population is 20,000 persons or less, with an annual median household income that is less than 85 percent of the statewide median household income, and with one or more of the following conditions as determined by the department: (1) financial hardship, (2) unemployment rate at least 2 percent higher than the statewide average, or (3) low population density (Water Code §79702(k))." For the Proposition 1 IRWM Disadvantaged Community Involvement Grant Program, DWR includes not only disadvantaged communities but also EDAs and "underrepresented communities" (which is not defined) as being eligible for grant funds, referring to all three collectively as "disadvantaged communities."

Based on the 2015 ACS data, eight US Census places within the Greater Monterey County IRWM region are defined as disadvantaged. Table P-1 shows the population and MHI for each of these places, and also illustrates how disadvantaged community status has changed for US Census places in the Greater Monterey County IRWM region over the three years of this planning effort. The community of Castroville and the City of Salinas are included in the table to show how consistently close their MHIs have been to the "disadvantaged community" threshold. An income survey was performed for Castroville in 2017 by the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), demonstrating the community to qualify as "severely disadvantaged" with an MHI of \$35,000.

**Table P-1: Disadvantaged Community Status of US Census “Places” in the Greater Monterey County IRWM Region from 2013 – 2015 (ACS Five-Year Estimates)**

	Estimate; Total Population	Estimate; Median household income in the past 12 months (in Inflation-adjusted dollars)		
	2015	2015	2014	2013
<i>Disadvantaged Community</i>		49,454	49,191	48,875
<i>Severely Disadvantaged Community</i>		37,091	35,149	36,656
Moss Landing CDP	153	31,500	30,500	28,750
Boronda CDP	1,271	34,009	42,333	41,094
King City city	13,389	40,238	40,500	45,905
San Ardo CDP	746	40,375	42,333	40,781
San Lucas CDP	384	43,750	45,417	47,500
Gonzales city	8,378	48,865	51,178	50,168
Greenfield city	16,869	49,263	52,374	53,805
Soledad city	25,826	51,161	46,010	49,570
Castroville CDP	6,707	49,654	50,000	53,580
Salinas city	155,366	49,840	49,728	49,264
Pine Canyon CDP	2,243	57,424	46,683	55,125
Lockwood CDP	446	46,538	94,615	94,607

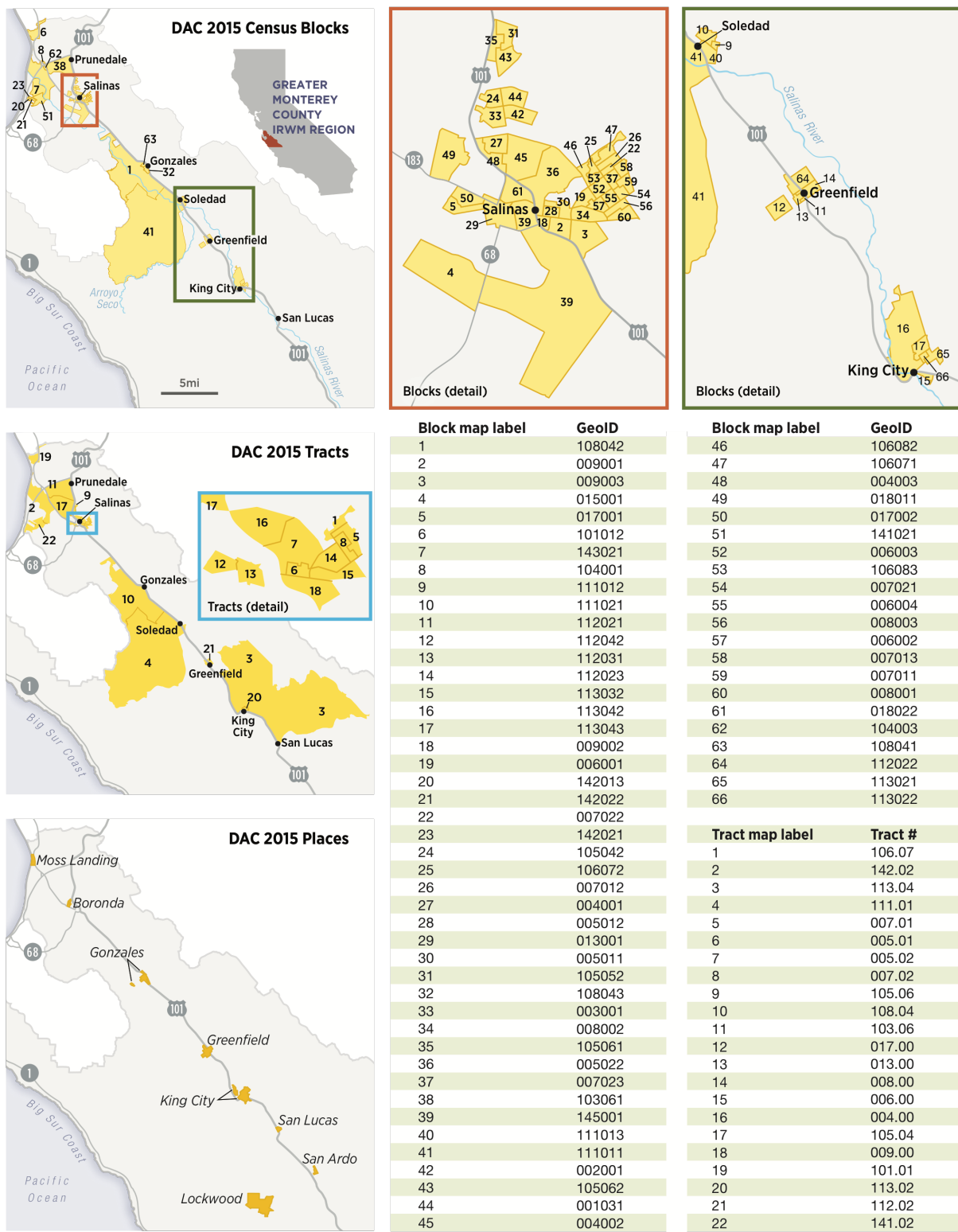
Source: American Community Survey five-year estimates.

Numerous census tracts and block groups also fall within the definition of “disadvantaged community,” including 26 census tracts and 77 block groups (six of the census tracts and 25 of the block groups are severely disadvantaged). In all, 36 percent of the population within the Greater Monterey County IRWM region is defined as being disadvantaged, according to 2015 ACS data at the block group level. Figure P-1 illustrates disadvantaged communities in the Greater Monterey County IRWM Region according to 2015 ACS data, showing the distinctions between US Census places, tracts, and block groups and identifying those regions by the US Census geographic identification number.

Many small low-income communities that face drinking water and wastewater issues are located in neighborhoods or communities that are not identified as being “disadvantaged” by large-scale income survey efforts such as the US Census. The scale of census tract or even block group data, particularly in rural areas, may not be fine enough to identify very small disadvantaged communities. Recognizing that US Census data alone would likely fail to account for all disadvantaged communities located within the region, the RWMG also searched for “hidden” (or “suspected”) disadvantaged communities using alternative methods to help identify geographic areas where such communities are likely to exist.

**Figure P-1: Disadvantaged Community Places, Tracts, and Block Groups in the Greater Monterey County IRWM Region**

**2015 Disadvantaged Community Block Groups, Census Tracts, and Places**



### P.2.2 Environmental Justice Communities

In addition to ensuring that critical water needs of disadvantaged communities are met through the IRWM Plan process, the RWMG remains vigilant to environmental justice concerns. Environmental justice concerns exist where water resource problems disproportionately impact communities that lack the capacity to address those problems themselves, due to financial, language, or other constraints. Environmental justice is also relevant where water resource projects meant to convey “general” public benefit do not in fact benefit poor or otherwise disadvantaged communities proportionately (e.g., conservation programs that feature rebates for high efficiency washing machines may benefit middle and upper class communities more than poorer communities, which cannot afford the initial purchase).

Environmental justice communities are often low-income or non-English-speaking communities. According to ACS 2006-2010 data the population of Monterey County is 55.4 percent Hispanic/Latino. Several communities within the Greater Monterey County IRWM region have very high Hispanic/Latino populations. Many people in these communities are first-generation and are monolingual in Spanish. Other languages may be represented within specific disadvantaged communities as well. For example, the City of Greenfield has a large number of households from the Oaxaca region of Mexico, where the primary language is an indigenous dialect unrelated to Spanish. Table P-2 below shows the Hispanic/Latino populations for selected communities within the Greater Monterey County IRWM region, as well as the percentage of people within those communities that speak a language other than English at home.

**Table P-2: Hispanic/Latino Populations and Non-English Language Spoken at Home**

<b>Community</b>	<b>% Hispanic/Latino Population</b>	<b>% of Population that Speaks Language Other than English at Home</b>
Boronda CDP	85.2	76.2
Castroville CDP	90.1	81.9
Chualar CDP	96.7	90.7
Gonzales city	88.9	77.9
Greenfield city	91.3	85.3
King City city	87.5	84.5
Las Lomas CDP	89.2	79.3
Salinas city	75	67.6
San Ardo CDP	70.2	71.4
San Lucas CDP	83.3	93.4
Soledad city	71.1	64.2

Source: 2006-2010 ACS data, US Census Bureau

In the Salinas Valley, many environmental justice communities are also farmworker communities. Approximately 24 percent of jobs in Monterey County are related to the agricultural industry, and agriculture-related jobs are some of the lowest paying jobs of all industry sectors in the county.

### P.2.3 Water-Related Challenges for Disadvantaged Communities and Environmental Justice Communities

Disadvantaged communities and environmental justice communities in Monterey County face a variety of water-related challenges, including water supply, wastewater treatment, and flooding problems. Many drinking water systems are experiencing rising rates of contamination. Common contaminants in Monterey County include nitrates, dissolved solids, and arsenic. A recent study completed by the University of California, Davis, “Addressing Nitrate in California’s Drinking Water,” reports that one

third of wells in the northern, eastern and central areas of the Salinas Valley tested for nitrates are in excess of the State standard of 45 milligrams per liter that is considered acceptable for safe drinking water (Harter et al. 2012). One in ten public supply wells are estimated by the UC study to exceed the nitrate levels before treatment. Further, the study concluded that nitrate problems are likely to worsen for several decades.

Disadvantaged communities are affected disproportionately throughout Monterey County due to high treatment costs for water in relation to household income. The lowest income households may be unable to afford bottled water or filtration systems if tap water or well water is undrinkable. Affordability of water and wastewater expenses is often expressed as a maximum of 2 percent of MHI or \$81 per month. Using current MHI data, lower income households are likely to experience financial hardship even at that rate per month. An example of the “affordability” problem for disadvantaged communities is what recently occurred at the San Jerardo Farm Cooperative, a low-income community in the Salinas Valley. The community members at San Jerardo had been getting sick from contaminants in their drinking water, and after several years and persistent effort, the community was successful in obtaining grant funds to install a new water filtration system. An unexpected result of the new water system, however, has been a sharp rise in cost to members—e.g., from \$25-30/month to \$100-150/month. Many members of the community are simply unable to afford these rates.

In addition to other water resource problems faced by disadvantaged communities and environmental justice communities, many of these communities in Monterey County lack water-based recreational and open space opportunities. While Monterey has a wealth of beautiful coastline, many disadvantaged communities and environmental justice communities are located in the Salinas Valley or North County areas, where rivers and streams have been diverted and/or covered up to accommodate agricultural and urban growth. One result is a lack of healthy, thriving watersheds in low-income areas such as Salinas and Castroville. There is a great need for watershed restoration projects in these areas.

#### **P.2.4 Disadvantaged Community Representatives on the RWMG**

The Greater Monterey County RWMG has made a concerted effort to ensure that the water resource management needs and interests of disadvantaged communities are fully addressed in the IRWM Plan. Two organizations, the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW) and the San Jerardo Cooperative, were asked to participate in the RWMG specifically to represent disadvantaged community interests. They were joined in this effort by the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) in late 2011.

EJCW is a statewide coalition comprised of over 70 community-based and non-profit member organizations working on water justice issues that impact low income communities and communities of color. EJCW has identified a chronic lack of access to safe and affordable water resources as a critical disparity facing many of California’s communities, and aims to build the capacity of organizations and groups to engage in local, regional and statewide water policy and planning (see [www.ejcw.org](http://www.ejcw.org)).

The San Jerardo Cooperative is a unique rural housing complex for low-income farmworker families in rural Monterey County. The Cooperative is the first such development in California, where there are 60 units that are owned by Cooperative members as a mutual benefit organization, four rental units, a community room, child care center, and soccer fields. The Cooperative has experienced severe drinking water contamination and wastewater issues, and was recently awarded an IRWM Implementation Grant in Round 1 to install wastewater system improvements. San Jerardo has also been involved in the statewide movement for water justice.

RCAC provides training and technical assistance to rural communities in the western states and has been a partner with EJCW and the San Jerardo Cooperative in developing solutions to San Jerardo's water quality problems. RCAC is currently in discussions with disadvantaged communities in the Greater Monterey County IRWM region and in the adjacent Monterey Peninsula IRWM region to provide technical assistance on water quality issues (see [www.RCAC.org](http://www.RCAC.org)).

The RWMG is committed to achieving a fair and equitable distribution of benefits to all communities in the Greater Monterey County IRWM region. Including three organizations on the RWMG that proactively represent the interests of disadvantaged communities and environmental justice communities helps ensure that the IRWM planning process remains sensitive to the unique needs of these communities.

In addition, the Castroville Community Services District (CCSD) is a member of the RWMG and represents the community of Castroville, which is a disadvantaged community in the Greater Monterey County IRWM region. The CCSD was successful in obtaining Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant funding. The grant will replace an arsenic-contaminated water supply with a new well to serve the community.

#### **P.2.5 Disadvantaged Community Outreach Plan (2012)**

In 2012, the RWMG received Round 1 IRWM Planning Grant funds to expand outreach to disadvantaged communities and to enable other assistance to be provided to disadvantaged communities in order to increase their participation in the IRWM planning effort. EJCW was contracted through the Planning Grant to implement the Disadvantaged Community Outreach Plan, with assistance from California Rural Legal Assistance and the San Jerardo and RCAC representatives. Outreach activities took place over a two-year period, beginning with areas that had been previously identified as disadvantaged in the Salinas Valley and in North Monterey County.

One goal of the planning effort was to investigate potential disadvantaged community issues in areas that were undergoing severe water shortage and in areas with high levels of arsenic or other contaminants. A special effort was made to mobilize communities in the Salinas Valley to participate strategically in RWMG meetings. EJCW advocated for the development of water projects that could be included in the IRWM Plan, particularly water and wastewater projects.

#### **P.2.6 Plan to Address Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs of Disadvantaged Communities in the Salinas Valley and Greater Monterey County IRWM Region (2017)**

In October 2014, the RWMG received \$500,000 in grant funds from the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to develop an integrated plan to address drinking water and wastewater needs of disadvantaged communities in the Salinas Valley. The funds were appropriated by the California Legislature through Assembly Bill (AB) 1630 (Alejo), from fines and penalties from the Waste Discharge Permit Fund. In 2017, the RWMG was provided an additional \$200,000 in grant funds from the State Water Board to enable the Project Team to expand community engagement and evaluation of long-term solutions. The resulting plan, entitled *Integrated Plan to Address Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs of Disadvantaged Communities in the Salinas Valley and Greater Monterey County IRWM Region*, is incorporated into this IRWM Plan as Appendix Q.

The following objectives, and associated tasks, were identified for the planning effort:

1. Identify disadvantaged communities within the planning region, with a focus on small disadvantaged communities in unincorporated areas.
2. Identify drinking water and wastewater problems.



3. Develop a comprehensive inventory and database and create maps.
4. Identify potential solutions for (at minimum) each “high priority” community.
5. Work with each community to determine preferred solution(s).
6. Develop conceptual project descriptions and cost estimates for the “high priority” communities.
7. Identify potential funding sources for the proposed projects and for broader regional solutions.

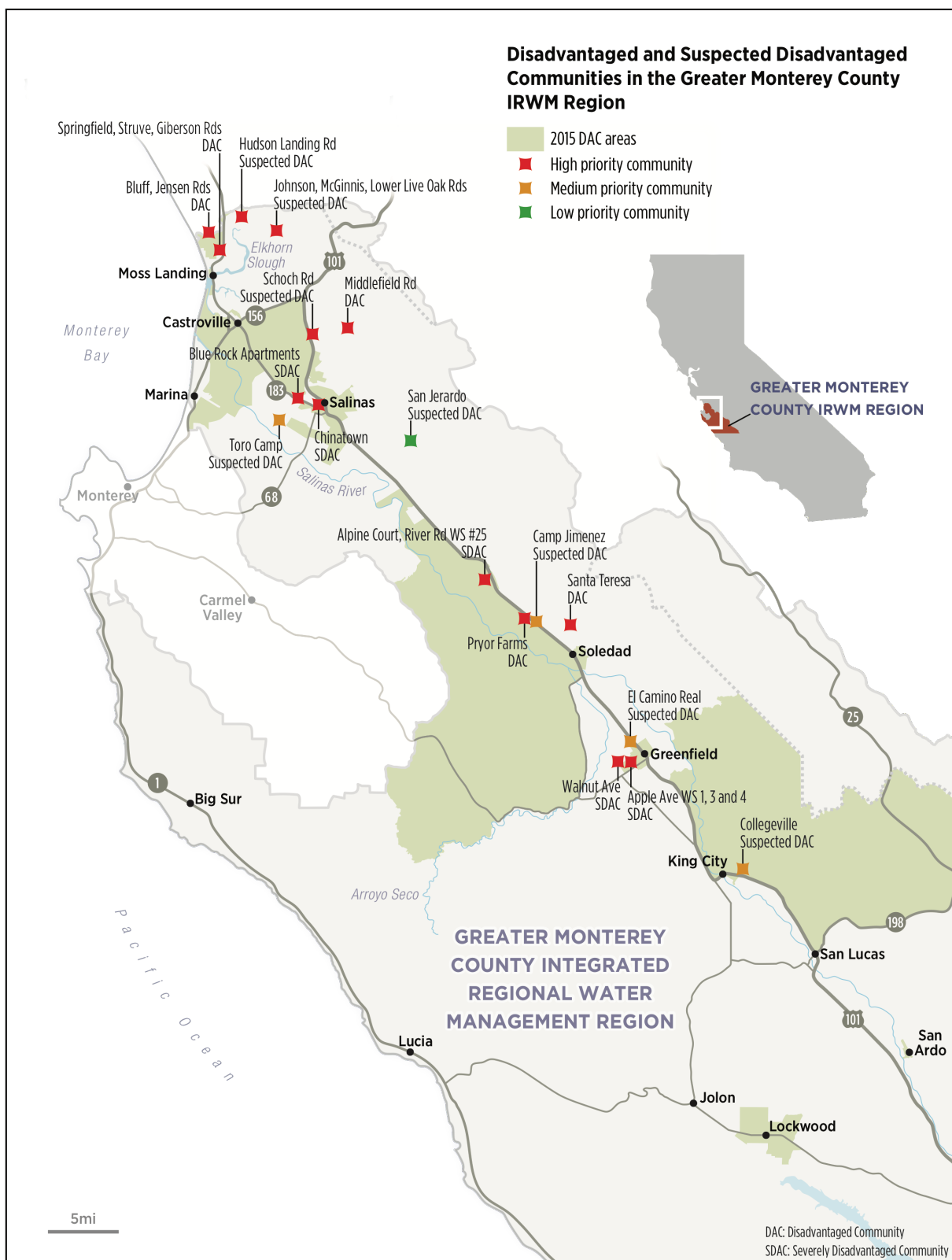
The core Project Team for this planning effort consisted of the Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Director and members of the Regional Water Management Group: EJCW, RCAC, and San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc. – plus the consulting group Nilsen and Associates. The Project Team was assisted by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of representatives from the State and Regional Water Boards, local agencies, environmental justice organizations, engineers, water utilities, and individual community representatives. This plan was formally approved by vote of the RWMG at a regularly scheduled RWMG meeting, open to the public, on November 8, 2017.

The plan focuses on small disadvantaged communities, and communities suspected to be disadvantaged, in unincorporated areas that are served by state small water systems (5-14 connections), local small water systems (2-4 connections), and private domestic wells. EJCW staff conducted extensive outreach to small communities in unincorporated areas of the region, using a questionnaire survey. EJCW surveyed a total of 153 households in 25 communities, covering 19 census block groups. Six of these communities were identified as disadvantaged and 15 were identified as suspected disadvantaged communities (“disadvantaged community” status was later proven for many of the suspected disadvantaged communities by means of MHI surveys conducted over the course of the project.)

The Project Team prioritized the communities according to need. Figure P-2 illustrates the high, medium, and low priority communities in the IRWM planning region. From the high priority community list (with 14 communities), seven small communities were selected. The Project Team worked in partnership with the Community Engineering Corps (CECorps), an alliance of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Water Works Association, and Engineers Without Borders-USA, to identify and evaluate solutions for each of the seven selected high priority disadvantaged communities. The plan describes the water problems and alternative long-term options for each community, recommended solution(s), potential barriers, community preference (if any), and next steps.

Outreach to the following larger disadvantaged communities was also conducted to assess needs and potential capacity to provide services to nearby small communities: Boronda CDP, Castroville CDP, Greenfield, Gonzales, King City, Moss Landing CDP, San Ardo CDP, and San Lucas CDP. The following water districts/utilities were contacted to assess available resources for potential consolidation or extension of service: City of Soledad, Pajaro Sunny Mesa Community Services District, Castroville Community Services District, City of Gonzales, California American Water (CalAm), Alco Water Service, and California Water Service (Cal Water).

**Figure P-2: Locations of High, Medium, and Low Priority Disadvantaged Communities**



The Project Team offered the following recommendations based on their work over the three-year project period:

### **Recommendation 1. Funding Needs**

Most of the Project Team's recommendations began with a need for increased funding support. While numerous federal and state funding opportunities exist for disadvantaged communities, the Project Team noted certain funding "gaps" and recommended that federal, state, and regional government entities consider increasing funding in the following areas:

- a) Guaranteed set-aside funds for small disadvantaged community water systems, particularly to see the "high priority" communities through to an implementable solution.
- b) Increased support for community engagement, particularly to support outreach to communities in the four geographic focus areas identified for future work, and for pre-project development and project development activities for all high priority projects.
- c) Ongoing assessment of needs: Since MHI data changes every year, resources are needed to enable re-assessment of disadvantaged community status and of their drinking water and wastewater needs on an annual basis; importantly, funds are needed to support ongoing updates and maintenance for the Greater Monterey County Community Water Tool database and map viewer (developed through this project), as well as continued hosting costs.
- d) Focused MHI surveys to prove "disadvantaged" status of "suspected disadvantaged" communities in order for those communities to qualify for special grants and loans.
- e) Guaranteed funding for bottled water programs and other interim solutions to ensure that immediate drinking water and wastewater needs are addressed for however long it takes a community to implement a permanent solution.
- f) More intensive outreach to private domestic well owners, along with systematic water quality testing.
- g) Wastewater education, including distributing written materials, hosting informative community workshops, and providing door-to-door outreach.

### **Recommendation 2. Grant Funding Process**

The following recommendations were targeted primarily toward state funding agencies (in particular, the State Water Board) and Monterey County to help make the grant funding process more effective and efficient:

- a) *Project sponsorship*: The difficulty in finding qualified sponsors for drinking water projects for small disadvantaged communities is, statewide, a frequent and significant barrier to implementing solutions. The Project Team recommended that State funding agencies make grant requirements for disadvantaged community drinking water projects easier and more affordable for qualified entities to sponsor projects. Other ideas were for State or local governments to take a leadership role in sponsoring projects, or for the development of a legal entity, such as a regional Joint Powers Agency (JPA), to act as project sponsor for rural communities, private domestic wells, and small systems where consolidation is not feasible.
- b) *Lateral costs*: While most funding sources cover infrastructure costs, lateral costs are typically not covered; as a result, a solution that may appear low cost may wind up being an unaffordable

option. The Project Team recommended that State funding agencies allow for grant coverage of lateral costs for disadvantaged communities.

- c) *More efficient reimbursement from State grants:* Short vs. long reimbursement periods can make the difference between small communities being able or not being able to implement long-term solutions. Beginning with Proposition 1 IRWM funds, the Department of Water Resources has instituted a policy to pay disadvantaged communities and nonprofit organizations 50 percent of their grant award upfront. The Project Team urged other State agencies to consider similar reimbursement policies for disadvantaged communities.
- d) *Need for increased certainty in identifying costs:* Community members repeatedly state that their interest to participate in a long-term water or wastewater project depends on cost. The Project Team recommended that the State Water Board and other funding agencies implement a “pre-approval” process to clarify the costs to property owners of future water or wastewater projects. A pre-approval process, and clear schedule of deadlines for application requirements, would provide community members the information they need to decide whether to join a water project.

### **Recommendation 3. Monterey County Health Department Coordination**

Given the depth of experience and knowledge that County staff have regarding small communities in unincorporated areas of the region, the Project Team encouraged increased input from County staff on project evaluations for disadvantaged communities as this work continues into the future.

#### **P.2.7 Needs Assessment Conducted as part of 2017-2018 IRWM Plan Update**

As part of the 2017-2018 IRWM Plan update process to ensure compliance with 2016 IRWM Program standards, and with funds from a Proposition 1 IRWM Planning Grant, additional outreach was conducted to disadvantaged communities to inform community members of possible contaminants in their drinking water (in particular, nitrate, hexavalent chromium, and arsenic, per requirements of AB 1249), to let them know about the IRWM Plan update, and to inform them about a free water quality testing program that had just been launched by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (including testing for hexavalent chromium, nitrate, arsenic, perchlorate, and 123-TCP). The outreach was conducted by the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW) on behalf of the RWMG.

At the conclusion of that outreach program, EJCW staff submitted a Needs Assessment report outlining recommendations for disadvantaged community engagement moving forward. The Needs Assessment is attached as Appendix P.

### **P.3 OUTREACH TO NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES**

Archeological evidence indicates that humans have been occupying coastal California for at least 10,000 years. When the first Spanish settlers arrived in the early 1600s, the Monterey area was inhabited by American Indians of the Ohlone (formerly Costanoan), Esselen, and Salinan groups. According to the 2010 US Census, Monterey County had a Native American population of 5,396 persons or 1.3 percent of the County population.

While there are no dedicated tribal lands within the Greater Monterey County region, there are a number of historic, cultural, and Native American sacred sites throughout the region that are of great importance to the descendants of these tribes. The RWMG has consulted with the California Native American Heritage Commission and is working to include representatives of the Ohlone/Costanoan, Esselen, and Salinan Nation tribe in the project review process to ensure that projects implemented as part of the

IRWM Plan do not impact Native American archeological or cultural resources. The RWMG will continue to encourage the participation of Native Americans in the IRWM planning process.

It should be noted that Tribes are sovereign nations, and as such any coordination with Tribes is on a government-to-government basis.

#### **P.4 STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION**

Participation in the IRWM planning process is entirely voluntary. Access to IRWM Plan participation and involvement is never based on an individual's or group's ability to contribute financially to IRWM Plan development or to the planning process.

Stakeholders can participate directly in the IRWM planning process through attendance at regularly scheduled RWMG meetings, which are open to the public and announced on the website. At RWMG meetings, stakeholders are welcome to voice their opinions and participate in the discussions along with RWMG members, though stakeholders are unable to vote. The meeting minutes from all RWMG meetings are posted on the website within a week following the RWMG meeting.

In addition, stakeholders can participate in the Greater Monterey County IRWM decision-making process by attending public workshops as described above, and by providing input through written comments both generally and during specific public comment periods. Minimum 30-day public comment periods are held for every IRWM Plan "milestone," including: goals and objectives; project ranking system; ranked project lists; and the Draft IRWM Plan. Stakeholders are occasionally asked directly to assist the RWMG in its decision-making process; for example, regional "experts" were asked to provide input during information gathering for "issues and conflicts," and several non-RWMG water resource managers and other experts were asked to help review project proposals during the first (2010) project solicitation.