

Upper Feather River IRWM Program

To: Upper Feather River Regional Water Management Group

From: Uma Hinman, Hinman & Associates Consulting, Inc.

cc: Tracey Ferguson, AICP, Plumas County Planning Director

Date: November 22, 2023

Re: Upper Feather River IRWM Quarterly Report (2023 Quarter 3)

This Quarterly Report covers the third quarter of 2023 and provides an update to the Upper Feather River (UFR) Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Group (RWMG) on activities associated with implementation of the UFR IRWM Plan and coordination with stakeholders and surrounding IRWM regions. The following is an update on coordination and implementation efforts during the last quarter.

Regional Water Management Group

The last meeting of the RWMG was in March 2022, as a quorum of the members has not been achieved to hold an in-person meeting since that time.

Prop 1 Round 1 (P1R1) & Prop 1 Round 2 (P1R2) Implementation Projects

On April 6, 2021, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) executed a Grant Agreement with Plumas County under the Proposition 1 IRWM Round 1 Implementation Grant. Subsequently, the County has executed three amendments with DWR, including Amendment 1 on October 13, 2022, Amendment 2 on November 10, 2022, and Amendment 3 on July 20, 2023. The amendments included changes in the schedule and budget.

Project	P1R1 (\$)	P1R2 (\$)	UMBDRP (\$)	Total Grant Funding (\$)	% Billed to Date
Grant Admin (Plumas)	70,876	7,185	20,000	98,061	41%
Project 1 (SPUD)	627,660	0	505,000	1,132,660	81%
Project 2 (IVCSD)	304,000	136,512	0	440,512	4%
Grant Award Totals	1,002,536	143,697	525,000	1,671,233	

Project 1 – Sierraville Public Utilities District (revised budget of \$1,132,660)

The Sierraville Public Utilities District Project 1 *Alternative Water Source Development Project* is a replacement of the booster station and related infrastructure for their water supply system. The project is nearing completion and approximately 81% has been invoiced to date. Construction activities were delayed somewhat due to the extended 2022-23 winter; however, Sierraville PUD expects to complete construction by the end of 2023, as planned.

Project 2 – Indian Valley Community Services District (revised budget of \$440,512)

The Indian Valley Community Services District Project 2 *North Main Water Use Efficiency, Reliability, and Extension Project* is an overall effort to upgrade aging and damaged infrastructure that will support the rebuilding of Greenville. Approximately 770 feet of water main pipeline will be replaced, 60 feet of laterals, and 4 new hydrants will be installed. A contractor has been selected, approximately 4% has been invoiced to date, and construction is expected to start in Q3 of 2023.

Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District

DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation Round 2 Grant

The UFR RWMG provided a support letter for the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District's application for Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program's SGMA Implementation Round 2 funding for \$5,445,000 for the Sierra Valley Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Implementation and Planning. DWR awarded the SVGMD's project with full funding to assist with all aspects of GSP implementation including data collection and data management, annual reports, five-year updates to the GSP, projects and management actions, and grant administration.

Plumas Watershed Forum Funding

The Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District's Synergistic Sierra Valley Groundwater Recharge and Irrigation Efficiency Project full proposal for Plumas Watershed Forum funding was submitted in late July 2023 with a total budget of \$1,300,000. The primary goal of the proposed project is to conduct a managed aquifer recharge (MAR) demonstration to evaluate the potential for groundwater recharge to improve groundwater levels in agriculturally dependent regions and evaluate and improve irrigation efficiency practices of ranches that are near the Little Last Chance Creek Recharge area. The proposal is under review with the award notification anticipated in November 2023.

IRWM Roundtable of Regions

UFR continues to participate in the [IRWM Roundtable of Regions](#) bi-monthly meetings as well as the Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) Working Group meetings, which are generally held quarterly.

A DACI Working Group meeting was held via Zoom on August 9, 2023, and the meeting summary is included as Attachment 1. The meeting focused on updates on the regional outcomes of the DACI programs. Additionally, the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) presented their new Regional Resilience and Planning and Implementation Grant Program.

The quarterly meeting was held via Zoom on September 20, 2023, and the meeting summary is included as Attachment 2. Topics included DWR's shift towards "Watershed Resiliency" and the need for the IRWM Program to evolve. The CA Water Plan includes funding for watershed resiliency pilot programs; implementation will be based on the State's next year's budget.

The Roundtable of Regions worked with the IRWM regions to prepare and submit a comment letter on the California Water Plan Update 2023 Public Review Draft, and the comment letter is included as Attachment 3.

More Roundtable of Regions activities and information can be found on their website at: <https://www.roundtableofregions.org/>.

FY 2023-24 Financial Summary

Hinman & Associates Consulting, Inc.'s contract with Plumas County to provide support services to the UFR IRWM Plan Program follows the fiscal year (FY). The FY2023-24 contract budget was \$20,000, which included support labor as well as website hosting costs. Following is a summary of expenses through 9/30/2023.

Tasks/Expenses	Amount (\$)
Strangecode Web Hosting Service	276.00
Domain Renewal (GoDaddy)	
<i>UFR IRWM Plan Program Support Services</i>	
Coordinator Activities	1,780.00
FY 2023-24 Total Expenses	2,056.00

UFR staff coordinated distribution of funding opportunities to the Region's stakeholders and maintained the UFR IRWM Plan implementation project list, identifying potential funding connections and connecting local project sponsors. Staff also continue to participate in local and regional watershed and IRWM coordination efforts, including the Plumas Watershed Forum meetings and the Roundtable of Regions general and technical advisory meetings. Additional routine tasks included stakeholder email list maintenance, website updates, and regular coordination meetings with Tracey Ferguson, Plumas County Planning Director.

Outstanding Action Items from March 11, 2022, UFR IRWM RWMG Meeting

The following summarizes the remaining action item from the last meeting of the RWMG and status as of September 30, 2023:

- **IN PROCESS:** Staff was directed to develop recommendations for the vacant public member seat for discussion at the next RWMG meeting.

The public member seat was established to include representation from the Almanor Basin of the UFR Region and has been vacant since 2020. Staff continues to coordinate with District 3 Plumas County Supervisor, Tom McGowan, to find a new public member to represent the Almanor Basin. Please contact Supervisor McGowan at tommcgowan@countyofplumas.com with questions and potential candidates for an Almanor Basin UFR IRWM RWMG public member seat representative.

Next RWMG Meeting

Staff will continue to communicate with the RWMG Chair (Paul Roen) and Vice Chair (Trina Cunningham) should any pressing UFR IRWM RWMG issues and/or opportunities arise. Additionally, staff will coordinate with the Chair and Vice Chair regarding scheduling an in-person meeting in 2024. Please contact Uma Hinman, UFR staff, at uhinman@comcast.net or (916) 813-0818 with any questions.

Attachments:

- 1. Roundtable of Regions August 9, 2023, DACI Working Group Meeting Summary*
- 2. Roundtable of Regions September 20, 2023, Meeting Summary*
- 3. Roundtable of Regions Comment Letter on the CA Water Plan 2023 Update Public Review Draft*



Roundtable of Regions

Disadvantaged Community & Tribal Involvement Work Group Meeting

Wednesday, August 9, 2023
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Soua Lee, DACTI Workgroup Chair, welcomed the workgroup and reviewed the agenda. Participants were asked to type their name and organization into the chat.

2. DACTI Subcommittee Update

Soua provided a summary of the May 10, 2023 DACTI Workgroup meeting discussions.

3. DWR Updates

Maria Lorenzo-Lee, DWR, provided the following updates:

- 20th Anniversary IRWM Video Update – Maria reported that the IRWM 20th Anniversary film screening was rescheduled to October 2023 in Sacramento. The place and time are to be determined.
- Status of Prop 1 DACTI Grant Program – Maria reported that there are now three closed grants and San Francisco is working on grant closeout.
- Website: Sustainable Groundwater Management Underrepresented Communities Technical Assistance –
 - Maria shared that there was a reorganization in the DWR Financial Assistance Branch and Maria is now working on sustainable groundwater management, underrepresented community, and technical assistance. Maria shared the website for the Underrepresented Communities Technical Assistance Program (URC TA Program) which can be used to determine the needs, risks, and vulnerabilities with implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act for underrepresented communities in medium and high priority basins, including critically over drafted basins.
 - Maria shared about the Floodplain Management Association Conference (www.floodplain.org) that was scheduled for September 9, 2023 in Los Angeles. Since 2019, the IRWM Roundtable of Regions has participated in the conference and this year Lynn Rodriguez, IRWM Roundtable of Regions Co-Chair, will sit on the underrepresented community/IRWM panel along with Carmel Brown, DWR.
 - Maria shared about the “Economically Disadvantaged Community” definition put out by the US Army Corps of Engineer’s Urban Water Coordination Group.
 - Maria encouraged Workgroup members to get on the distribution list for the Office of Planning and Research’s grants newsletter.

4. Office of Planning and Research – Overview of Regional Resilience Planning and Implementation Grant Program

Kristyn Payne with the Office of Planning and Research provided an overview of the Regional Resilience Grant Program. This grant program is a new program under the Integrated Climate Adaptation & Resiliency Program (ICARP). The goal of this grant program is to support regional partnerships of local, regional, and tribal entities' regional-scale climate resilience solutions. The program aims to fund regional projects that align with ICARP priorities including protecting critical infrastructure, building a community's capacity to respond to climate change and implementing solutions consistent with the California climate adaptation strategy priorities. The program will also address the greatest climate risks in each region with an emphasis on support for vulnerable communities. Planning and implementation grants are available.

- Round 1 has \$21.9M available.
- Applications are due August 29, 2023 at 5PM, PST. An Intent to Apply Survey is required to be submitted prior to application submittal in order to access the application materials.

5. DACTI Summit – Fall 2023

Soua and Lynn Rodriguez shared that there is interest to plan a third DACTI Summit for Fall 2023. The purpose of the Summit would be to highlight and celebrate the success of the Prop 1 DACTI Program. This would be a multi-partner effort and the LA-Ventura area may be hosting this in-person event. Soua noted that a planning committee has been formed to plan this Summit and their first meeting will take place immediately after this Workgroup meeting. Those interested in taking part in the planning committee were invited to attend the committee meeting.

6. DACTI Grant Program Outcomes

The DACTI Workgroup heard presentations from the following agencies regarding the projects or programs that were developed through the Prop 1 DAC Involvement (DACI) Program:

- Maggie Dutton, San Joaquin River Funding Area
Maggie Dutton shared about the outcomes of the Prop 1 DACI Program in the San Joaquin River Funding Area.
 - DACI Projects and Programs:
 - Completed 7 region-specific projects about \$148K each.
 - After completion of the Needs Assessment, was able to specify 2 projects the Funding Area wanted to complete based on the information presented in the Needs Assessment.
 - DACTI Program Challenges and Lessons Learned:
 - First time IRWM regions has to coordinate with each other on a non-competitive level. Came up with the 13 "Projects" structure where Phase 1 consisted of 4 communal projects that benefited the entire Funding Area including grant application development, Funding Area DAC Needs Assessment, grant administration, and regional collaboration. Funding was also allocated to each IRWM region for a total of 7 projects. Phase 2 consisted of developing 2 projects based on the information from the

- Tim Carson, Central Coast Funding Area

Tim Carson shared the outcomes of the Prop 1 DACI Program for the Central Coast Funding Area.

- DACI Projects and Programs:
 - Grant program allowed for more interaction between the 6 IRWM regions.
 - A little over 60% of the program funding went towards project development activities to advance projects that had already been identified in many of the regions as helping to address needs for DACs.
- DACI Program Challenges and Lessons Learned:
 - DACI Program was valuable in taking steps towards engaging communities and getting a better sense of their needs.
 - Work informed future rounds of funding via IRWM Program.
 - Regions continue to assess and pursue state and federal opportunities.

- James Muller, San Francisco Funding Area

James Muller shared the outcomes of the Prop 1 DACI Program for the San Francisco Funding Area.

- DACI Projects and Programs:
 - Structured the Needs Assessment through community engagement and learned that a prescriptive approach was not going to work. Each community needed the latitude and support to complete their needs assessment within their community the way they saw fit.
 - Needs Assessment's top priorities were drinking water, flooding, trash and litter, industrial contamination, and green space.
 - Drinking water came up as a top priority for each program partner. Found there was a universal distrust in tap water. Surveys in East Palo Alto found that over 70% of respondents use bottled water solely for drinking and cooking. Program partners decided to use some of the funding to do tap water testing which the framework to implement a water testing program had to be built from the ground up. Final report of findings will be released in September 2023.
- DACI Program Challenges and Lessons Learned:
 - Multiple projects coupled with multiple agencies implementing those projects initially made reporting and invoicing difficult, so DWR pulled the original grant agreement. The San Francisco Estuary Partnership was approached to apply for the remainder of the funding and administer the funding on behalf of the San Francisco Funding Area.
 - The program required a lot of administrative work. For future funding of similar magnitude, one lesson learned is to build more time for administration so that sufficient support can be provided to project partners.
 - Tap water testing program had a lot of lessons learned. It was a community led effort where the communities decided how they were going to get participants and follow up.

- Communities and tribes were interested in having a grant writing partner, not workshops or training, but someone that could sit down with them to strategize and put together grant proposals.
 - Used some findings from the Needs Assessment to develop the evaluation criteria and project selection criteria for Prop 1 Round 2 IRWM Implementation grant funding which advantaged DACs and Tribes during the project selection process.
 - San Francisco Estuary Partnership had not been doing work with communities and tribes at this level before. The DACI program resulted in a lot of great partnerships not only between local agencies and their communities but also between agencies and their engagement efforts.
- Luis Carmona, Lahontan Funding Area
Luis Carmona shared the outcomes of the Prop 1 DACI Program for the Lahontan Funding Area.
 - DACI Projects and Programs:
 - Complete a variety of projects including water main replacement, needs assessment and mapping, technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) needs assessments of water systems, educational efforts about water conservation, and stormwater and flood control planning.
 - DACI Program Challenges and Lessons Learned:
 - California City – The City is experiencing water loss of approximately 40% due to leaks and deficiencies. Construction of water storage and water tanks are paramount at this time.
 - Technical assistance is an effective means of keeping DACs engaged in the IRWM process.
 - Technical assistance, project development and training/workshops organically increased participation within the regions’ DAC water systems.
 - Additional funding and resources are needed to replace or upgrade water infrastructure projects, and for planning and technical assistance efforts.

7. Announcements/Comments

None.

8. Adjourn: Next meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2023 at 1:30PM.

Attachment 2

IRWM Steering Committee 9-20-23 Meeting Notes

- [Welcome](#)
- [Agenda Review](#)
- [Steering Committee Planning](#)
 - [New Members](#)
 - [Co-chair Vacancy Update](#)
 - Search continues
 - [Term Expirations](#)
 - New members term expires in 2025

- [Water Plan Plenary/Watershed Resilience Pilot Studies](#)
- Meeting takeaways from last week (9-15-23) with DWR that fits into the larger water plan:
- IRWM needs to evolve
- 'Watershed resiliency' is where DWR is headed – detailed during meeting last week
 - Needs to be a watershed region, with good governance, solid funding, diversified and sequenced funding, has implementation capacity, landscape style regional projects, regular monitoring to enhance decision making
 - Local approach vs state approach to achieving watershed resiliency:
 - Local should create opportunities to leverage the biophysical aspects of a watershed (using the land in the watershed as a resource e.g. using forest land as a carbon mitigation bank for funding); local effort needs to create financial
 - State needs to create opportunities for larger scale projects and provide longer and appropriate timelines for projects
- Climate change is going to be a large piece of all future funding

Language on the funding "The Budget Act of 2021 and 2022 provided funding for DWR to begin implementing elements of a new Watershed Resilience Program. The budget authorized \$161 million over four years for watershed climate resilience to be provided as grants for drought resilience and identification and assessment of climate risks on a watershed basis." The funds are to be prioritized and allocated "in areas with greatest risk or potential to reduce environmental conflicts." DWR will administer the Watershed Resilience Program to incentivize the implementation of watershed resilience plans and projects throughout the state."

- [October 3-4 in Roseville](#)
- [IRWM Video – 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 3rd](#)
- [California Water Plan 2023 – Draft to be released by end of September](#)
- [\(Roundtable Review and comment important\)](#)
- Public draft of California Water Plan released 9-20-23
- Final comment deadline on report is 10/19/23 – IRWM is meeting with DWR 10-9-12 so ideally provide comments by 10-6-23; if submitting on your own/after, cc IRWM so everyone is aware
- FYI there is a reviewers guide
- Not clear if tries will have a separate review process
- Irwin Transition Strategy of CWP – do either plans include info on SIGMA implementation?
Response from DWR – plans focuses on collaboration of local GSAs

Watershed Resilience Pilot Studies

- There is funding which will be used for pilot programs (see chapter 5 of water plan)
- (Guidelines are pending)
- Initial monies are to be spent on planning (not implementation) – outreach and collaboration to support regional collaboration

- Implementation will be based on next year's funding
- There will be no PSP at this time

- Legislative Update
 - Climate Bonds
 - All climate bond discussion have been put over to 2024
 - State budget concerns led the governor to limit bringing multiple bonds before the voters
 - State mental health bond was the only measure that advanced and will stand alone on march 2024 ballot
 - Goal to put a bond on the November ballot which would require a measure to pass through the leg and be signed by the governor by 6/27/24

- 2023 / 2024 Summit Planning
 - Partnership Opportunities
 - Timing
 - Draft agenda:
 - 5 different sessions; NCRP and their ability to utilize different pots of funding like FEMA of CalFIRE; IRWM regional and large scale projects; IRWM small scale projects;
 - DACTI Conference & Survey
 - Conversations have begun regarding a statewide summit of IRWMs Disadvantaged community and Tribal Involvement (DCATI) grant program administrated by the DWR
 - Responses to DACTI survey due end of next week - <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd9pCB1Iumbm1iymhvEP782noDoz8CE7kEUydnuf21DkzekHw/viewform>

DWR Updates:

- 9-22-23 CA Native American Day at the capitol
- 2023 fall CA financing coordinating committee funding fair on 11/1 and 11/9
- CalEPA environmental justice action grants – grant workshop on 9/27
 - (1) Supports tribes and community-based organizations and/or residents to engage in at least one of the following four project categories:
 1. supporting emergency preparedness,
 2. protecting public health,
 3. improving environmental and climate decision-making, and
 4. strengthening enforcement.
 - 2) Serves an environmental justice purpose. CalEPA will focus on those projects that meaningfully involve and engage disadvantaged communities to serve environmental justice purposes.

- Open Discussion
 - Next General Meeting: Wed., December 20 – Reschedule? – will be rescheduled stay tuned, perhaps 12/6 or 12/13

Attachment 3

Integrated Regional Water Management Roundtable of Regions

A consortium of IRWM Regions in California



October 19, 2023

Francisco Guzman
California Department of Water Resources
715 P Street, 6th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

E-Transmitted to: cwpcom@water.ca.gov

RE: Integrated Regional Water Management Roundtable of Regions Comments on the California Water Plan Update 2023 Public Review Draft

Dear Mr. Guzman:

The Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Roundtable of Regions appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the California Water Plan Update 2023 Public Review Draft (Water Plan Draft) to the Department of Water Resources (DWR). The Roundtable's last comment letter on California Water Plan was submitted in January 2019 in response to the California Water Plan Update 2018.

That 2019 letter was written in the context of implementing many elements of the Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement (DACTI) Program, developing Proposition 1-compliant IRWM Plans, and holding regional collaborative processes to develop projects for submittal to DWR. That previous version of the California Water Plan was also released less than two years from the release of the DWR "Stakeholder Perspectives – Recommendations for Sustaining and Strengthening IRWM" document. Now in 2023 the Roundtable is excited to have successfully implemented the DACTI Program, is nearing completion of all Proposition 84 funded projects across the State, and is engaged with various State agencies on climate resiliency efforts.

Our specific comments to the CA Water Plan Update 2023 Public Review Draft fall within the following major sections of the Plan and reflect some of our comments to the past California Water Plan Update 2018.

Chapter 1. Context and Vision for a Resilient and Equitable Water Future

The themes of the draft Plan – addressing climate urgency, strengthening watershed resilience, and achieving equity - is consistent with the State's priorities as documented in the Water Resilience Portfolio and Water Supply Strategy. The Roundtable appreciates the clear connections between the various State policy documents. We also recommend that this section

reflect the four strategies of the Stakeholder Perspectives – Recommendations for Sustaining and Strengthening IRWM document, which include 1) Improve alignment, 2) strengthen practices (i.e. support for regional capacity building, regional governance), 3) improve services, and 4) communicate values (i.e. official recognition, information sharing). Although this document was released in March 2017 under the previous administration, it should not fall “by the wayside” as the State develops new initiatives such as the Watershed Resilience Program.

Chapter 4. State’s Role in Creating a Resilient and Equitable Future

The Roundtable notes that Stormwater Resources Plans, a requirement of the State Water Resources Control Board’s Storm Water Grant Program, is not referenced in Chapter 4. This omission occurred despite the Governor’s August 2022 [California’s Water Supply Strategy](#) highlighting the need to maximize stormwater capture by investing and incentivizing these projects. The Roundtable recommends including a discussion of the benefits of stormwater capture such as improving water quality, increasing water reliability, improving flood management, protecting natural resources, and enhancing community benefits.

On page 4-37, the draft Plan states, “Implementation of the Strategy will require decisive State action with respect to improving regulatory processes”. It would be beneficial to explain how future State actions could improve the regulatory processes for local entities as some examples on streamlining the permitting processes within the state agencies would be helpful.

Chapter 5. Focus on Supporting Watershed Resilience

On page 5-1, the draft Plan emphasizes that planning at “the watershed scale” is needed for addressing climate change. It states that “the [watershed resilience] program will build on existing collaborative relationships, planning, and investments to improve regional climate resilience and invest in natural and built backbone infrastructure.” The Roundtable recommends including text that describes how watershed resilience will be accomplished without a convening group, such as IRWM administrators. It is important to define which entity(ies) will initiate collaboration and development of a “network of networks.”

Related to watershed resiliency as discussed in the draft Plan, the Roundtable has several related comments:

- There are regions and geographic areas where focusing on a “watershed scale” will not work. We recommend that if “watershed scale” is utilized, the definition allows for flexibility to implement resiliency at the appropriate scale for every part of the State.
- The Roundtable is also unclear what distinguishes “watershed networks” from existing IRWM groups – particularly those that are already inclusive of disadvantaged community groups and Tribal Communities. The Roundtable recommends additional language be

added that addresses what can be added to existing IRWM groups to meet the threshold of a “watershed network.”

- On page 5-1, there is not a clear definition of a “water quality collaborative” as listed in Figure 5-1. The Roundtable recommends that both stormwater agencies and wastewater/sanitation agencies should be included in that figure to provide clarification.
- On page 5-2, the draft Plan states “Update 2023 underscores the importance of supporting programs to incentivize robust watershed specific climate vulnerabilities analyses and adaptation plans followed by investments in multisector collaborations and solutions at the watershed and regional scale. Complementing ongoing regulatory frameworks and program approaches, this expanded watershed scale focus is intended to empower communities with the data, technical expertise, and financial resources to build water solutions resilient to climate change and other uncertainties that lie ahead.” The Roundtable is interested in how the regulatory frameworks and program approaches will implement this watershed focus. If there is any additional context that can be provided that would be much appreciated to allow Roundtable members to plan ahead.
- On page 8-3, it’s noted that DWR will pilot the Watershed Resilience Program in 2024 and then consider statewide implementation in the longer term. It is also noted on page 5-10 that DWR will select several pilot watersheds to receive guidance and funding from DWR to convene inclusive watershed networks. Since the Watershed Resilience Program is referenced as an “enhanced IRWM Program” multiple instances and recognizing that IRWM groups have invested substantial resources into establishing and maintaining governance structures and plans over the last two decades, the Roundtable recommends DWR pilot this program through existing IRWM groups. As well as use pilot program funding to facilitate the transition from IRWM to watershed network.
- As the Watershed Resilience Program is developed through grant guidelines and proposal solicitation package documents, the Roundtable wants to ensure DWR reflects the capabilities and benefits of IRWM regions to be sure that efforts aren’t duplicated as new “networks” are formed.
- On page 5-10 it’s noted that watershed networks could be new or built from existing planning efforts, such as IRWM, groundwater sustainability agencies, regional flood management planning groups, etc. Missing from that list are stormwater agencies who have developed and are implementing watershed management plans. The draft Plan should also address whether and how a climate resiliency district per Senate Bill 852 could constitute a watershed network.
- On page, 5-13, there is mention that “Effective watershed resilience planning requires local and State agencies to effectively work together with clear roles and a shared framework. Update 2023 puts forth a robust and flexible Watershed Resilience Planning Framework (Framework) for watershed networks to conduct watershed resilience planning, evaluate climate vulnerability and risk, evaluate and prioritize adaptation strategies, and track progress toward climate change adaptation for water-related

sectors”. The Roundtable is interested in how State is planning to establish this framework, and if it will be derived from past planning efforts. If any additional context can be provided that would be much appreciated.

- On page 5-15, the draft plan calls out a framework, “To accompany the Framework, DWR is developing an online, interactive toolkit that will support watershed networks in conducting resilience planning through guidance, tools, and best practices. The guidance and toolkit will serve as a template for watershed networks to conduct resilience planning and develop and customize their own adaptation strategies. The guidance and tools are aligned with best practices in State and national climate resiliency efforts”. When DWR is ready to share further details, the Roundtable is interested in if DWR will incorporate the watershed networks in the creation of this toolkit, and what are the specific components of this toolkit.
- On page 5-15, there is discussion of a tool called “Watershed Hub” which will “track indicators and metrics across water sectors by watershed. It will allow users to see the current risks and vulnerabilities within each watershed and track how adaptation strategies are improving resilience at the watershed scale across the state.” With the experience of the previous “Watershed Atlas” tool and the data management required by tool users to input their information, is there a way to utilize an existing tool that is already watershed/regional focused? There are many state-reporting tools local entities utilize, and to avoid duplication it is beneficial to use an existing tool. Another tool is the [California Environmental Data Exchange Network \(CEDEN\)](#) which is used by Regional Water Quality Control Boards that regulate water quality based on regions as well as watersheds.
- On page 5-17, under the Section the *Strategies and Recommendations for Moving Forward* it states that “This chapter describes the need for climate resilience planning at the watershed scale.” It features case studies of watershed-based multi-sector collaboration throughout the State. It also describes a Watershed Resilience Program as an evolution of DWR’s IRWM Program that would complement other climate resilience efforts from other State agencies. Since the Watershed Resilience Program has been described as an evolution to DWR’s IRWM Program, can DWR provided further context on what is the State’s plan/outlook for current initiatives that derived from the IRWM Program such as IRWM plans and the DACTI Program?

Chapter 6. Understand & Addressing Equity in the Management of California’s Water Resources

On page 6-27 In the section titled “Top Equity Actions Reported by Local Agencies”, we are interested if any additional discussion, or recommendations, could be added to the following metric concepts that are introduced, but not largely explained. The section states, “There is still important work that needs to be done to further determine what metrics are most effective for measuring meaningful outreach and engagement, representation, and technical and financial assistance.” For example, a discussion of CalEnviroScreen could be included as the tool can track changes over time since it has a number of years reflected in its database. We are also interested

on if there any improvements that could be made to CalEnviroScreen, or other income-based measurements like census data, that would help to address “meaningful outreach.” The Roundtable is very supportive of including these new sections focused on addressing equity and Tribal engagement.

On page 6-29, the draft Plan recommends the State “Reduce barriers to State financial assistance by exploring State authorities to use advance pay, waive local cost-shares, and provide application assistance.” The Roundtable is very supportive of this recommendation as many of the IRWM regions have local project sponsors that can utilize this assistance due to cash-flow limitations.

Chapter 8 Roadmap to Resilience

On page 8-2, the draft Plan recommends “State agencies should coordinate their efforts among the DWR-led Watershed Resilience Program, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), regional water quality control plans, the Office of Planning and Research-led (OPR-led) Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Landscape Conservation Planning Program, and the California Department of Conservation’s Division of Land and Resource Protection programs.” The Roundtable greatly appreciates this and understands the tremendous benefits (and time needed) for multi-sector collaboration. If DWR needs any assistance with this collaboration, we are very willing to support. The Roundtable is beginning to plan its 2024 Summit and the theme will reflect collaboration between local agencies as well as different State agencies.

On page 8-3, the draft Plan recommends “DWR will perform an initial assessment of current and future climate vulnerabilities for all watersheds of the state for a comprehensive set of water resource management sectors.” The Roundtable recommends that climate vulnerability assessments that IRWM regions developed, which were a required component of Proposition 84 and 1, are utilized in the development of these assessments. For context, regions were required per the Proposition 84 guidelines to include an “evaluation of vulnerabilities, at a minimum, be equivalent to the vulnerability assessment contained in the Climate Change Handbook for Regional Water Planning (December, 2011).”

On page 8-18, the draft Plan recommends “The State should explore how best to simplify grant applications and expand eligibility to support a broader range of multi-benefit projects, such as the expanded use of block grants.” The Roundtable appreciates this recommendation and can provide examples of the benefits of streamlining grant management if that is helpful.

In summary, we are very excited to work with DWR going forward in implementing many of the initiatives highlighted in the California Water Plan Update 2023 Public Review Draft. The Watershed Resilience Program and the new coordination that is highlighted in this draft document, between the various State agencies represents a great opportunity to build on the

Integrated Regional Water Management Roundtable of Regions

October 19, 2023

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past 20 years of hard work in implementing IRWM networks. We also appreciate the inclusion of the two co-chairs (myself, Lynn Rodriqz and past co-chair Jenna Voss) as part of the Policy Advisory Committee to represent the Roundtable.

If you would like to discuss any of our comments, please don't hesitate to reach out the Roundtable's Network Coordinator Amy Stevens at astevens@wsc-inc.com. Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Rodriguez, Co-Chair
IRWM Roundtable of Regions

Ian Achimore, Interim Co-Chair
IRWM Roundtable of Regions
and
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority

Cc:

Art Hinojosa
Ashley Gilreath
Carmel Brown
Kamyar Guivetchi
Kristopher Tjernell
Paul Massera