

Chapter 2 Summary of the Plan Update Process

2.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the process by which the 2015 Yuba County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (Plan) was updated, beginning in June 2017 and extending through June 2018. Not all chapters were affected by new requirements in the 2016 IRWM Guidelines and some required only minor changes. Therefore, this chapter displays the highlights of the 2018 Plan Update.

The IRWMP update process involved a wide variety of participants, outreach, meetings, and project development engagement, discussed below and illustrated on **Figure 2-1** at the end of this chapter. Important aspects of the update development included: development of a governance structure and process; extensive “circuit-riding” activities to increase stakeholder participation; Tribal outreach; public meetings; project development activities; and coordination with adjacent IRWM regions.

From June 2017 through June 2018, the 2015 Yuba County IRWMP was updated for compliance with DWR’s 2016 Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program Guidelines (2016 Guidelines). This process was directed by the RWMG to be consultant-driven: the Project Team drafted updated 2016 Guideline-compliant language, where appropriate, for review by the RWMG. The RWMG then reviewed, revised, and finally, approved the updated language. A public review and outreach process was conducted in spring 2018 to gain document review and comment from Tribal, DAC, and under-represented interests who were not a part of the RWMG, as well as general stakeholder/public involvement.

A public notice was published in local media and the Yuba IRWMP webpage was updated with the draft chapters and related information posted for a 30-day review. Subsequently, comments on the draft were considered by the RWMG and some were incorporated into the 2018 IRWMP Update that was adopted on June 27, 2018.

In 2019, the IRWMP goals and objectives were revised to ensure consistency with Yuba Water Agency’s *Strategic Plan 2017-2022* in support of the County-wide Project Development Process (see Chapter 12). The final goals and objectives were approved by the RWMG at the October 2019 RWMG meeting. Various sections of this IRWMP were revised to be consistent with the new goals and objectives.

2.1 Regional Water Management Group

The RWMG served as the lead entity during Plan Update and approved all Plan content. The RWMG is the entity that will adopt the Plan, and whose future membership will depend on each individual agency and organization adopting the Plan. Throughout Plan preparation, the RWMG played a critical role by providing direction on chapter content and review, public and stakeholder outreach and involvement, project development and integration, and ensuring consistency of the Plan with Department of Water Resources (DWR) guidelines. This Plan was subsequently reviewed by DWR for guideline compliance. The ongoing governance of the group, described below, will remain the responsibility of the RWMG.

The RWMG mailing list includes numerous stakeholder entities, the majority of whom are active on some level. Most either participate in at least one of the following activities: meetings, content review, coordination between stakeholders, and general and/or informal communications. Involved entities represent a full cross-section of water and land management agencies and groups (federal, state, local, and land trusts), non-governmental organizations (primarily environmentally oriented), Tribal organizations, and Disadvantaged Communities. The RWMG recruitment process and membership are more fully described in Chapter 3 *Stakeholder Involvement* and Chapter 16 *Governance*.

The RWMG and other interests included in the updated 2018 RWMG mailing list were solicited to review the draft 2018 IRWMP Update via email, newspaper ads, and personal contacts, during spring 2018. Once comments were received, they were considered by the Project Team and either incorporated into the draft or brought forward to the RWMG for further consideration. The RWMG met to consider the draft, provide input, and approve the draft on June 27, 2018.

2.2 Governance Structure

The RWMG updated its governance structure based on recommendations from the Project Team during the 2018 Plan Update. Please see Chapter 16 *Governance* for a full description of both the process and decisions made as a result of RWMG deliberations on the short- and long-term governance structure for the group. Also refer to **Appendix 16-1** Memorandum of Understanding, for the full text of the MOU document guiding RWMG governance.

2.3 Circuit-Riding Activities

In the months prior to and following the first (October 2017) RWMG meeting, the Project Team conducted extensive outreach across the region to determine how best to invigorate participation in the process. The outreach included email contacts, phone calls, and small (often one-on-one) meetings.

Key outcomes of the circuit-riding process were: use of ongoing circuit riding to invigorate and broaden stakeholder involvement; keep existing and potential new members informed of the process and funding opportunities and schedules, implementation of targeted technical assistance activities to support project development, and identification of the participation status of each entity.

The reasons most frequently given for non-participation were: lack of available staff, limited funding to support staff participation, and the belief that the other active participants would adequately represent the perspective of their entity.

Chapter 3 *Stakeholder Involvement* provides a more extensive dissertation of the entities contacted, the process used, and the outcomes of the circuit-riding strategy.

2.4 Tribal Outreach

Tribal outreach was coordinated using the contact list developed for the Yuba County Water Agency (YCWA), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process, and by development of a Tribal outreach list compiled by Sherri Norris, California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA). In keeping with

the government-to-government communications appropriate to Sovereign Nations, and for communication with Tribal organizations without sovereign nation status, a certified letter was sent from YCWA (representing DWR in the update process), requesting Tribal participation. The letter was sent March 26, 2018, once the outreach lists were approved by Sherri Norris. A second outreach letter from YCWA was sent April 24, 2018, announcing the publication of the final review draft of the IRWMP document and soliciting comments from Tribal entities during a 30-day public review period.

Chapter 5 *Disadvantaged Communities, Environmental Justice and Native American Tribal Considerations* contains greater detail on these outreach efforts. **Appendix 5-2** contains the text of the letters, as well as the distribution lists.

2.5 Project Development Activities

This aspect of the Plan update process was considered to be of particular importance because water-related projects are a key aspect of IRWMP implementation and because a majority of the region is disadvantaged (per the DWR DAC Mapping Tool). Project development for the 2018 Plan Update took three forms: 1) extensive circuit riding across the region to provide direct, onsite assistance in both identifying specific projects and developing the information to complete Project Solicitation Forms (used to propose projects for inclusion in the Plan); 2) RWMG meetings oriented specifically toward project review, comment, revision, and integration; and 3) technical assistance from the Project Team for any stakeholders in the region who needed additional support for project development.

Additionally, the Project Team gave individual guidance and technical assistance to project sponsors for project finance, greenhouse gas calculations, and climate change considerations to be included on the Solicitation Forms. Please see Chapter 14 *Project Application, Development and Review* for further information on project-related activities.

2.6 Climate Change Analyses

An advisory Core Group was formed by Stockholm Environmental Institute (SEI) in June 2013, made up of individuals from the main interest groups involved in the RWMG. The Core Group subsequently agreed to act as a technical advisory committee for the IRWMP climate analyses and included a cross-section of regional interests (see Chapter 11 *Climate Change*).

The initial stages of the climate analyses involved data gathering that led to: 1) a draft synthesis of potential climate trends and impacts, vulnerabilities, adaptation strategies; and 2) a refinement of the framework of inquiry for future Water Evaluation and Planning (WEAP) hydrologic modeling from the Core Group's informed participation.

Draft narratives and background materials of climate vulnerabilities were prepared for review, and a vulnerability checklist based on the DWR's Climate Handbook (see **Appendix 11-1**) was populated with information from the data collection effort and then presented to and refined by stakeholders. Meanwhile, the SEI team continued to engage the Core Group in meetings to consider and refine influences on its hydrologic modeling, including climate.

In March 2014, the Core Group met to consider and amend the posted climate materials and to prioritize regional climate vulnerabilities under a directed exercise by the project team that evaluated both the severity of the risk and likelihood of occurrence of vulnerabilities. The recommended prioritization was forwarded to the RWMG and was incorporated into the climate chapter.

Because the timeframe for SEI's modeling was to extend beyond the preparation period for this Plan, and because that modeling had the potential to define new, as well as refine draft adaptation strategies, the Core Group made the decision not to prioritize specific adaptation strategies. At the time of preparation of the 2018 Plan Update, no new relevant information had been produced by the RDS process, which is currently dormant.

In 2018, the Project Team conducted revisions to chapters of the Plan that addressed aspects of climate change, and in particular, Chapter 11 *Climate Change*. These revisions corresponded to new requirements in the 2016 Guidelines and help make the Plan guideline-compliant. Circuit riding and continued technical assistance for project development served to incorporate climate mitigations into project implementation.

2.7 Coordination with Adjacent IRWM Regions

For the 2018 Plan update, representatives from adjacent IRWM regions (Upper Feather River Watershed, Cosumnes American Bear Yuba (CABY), American River Basin, and North Sacramento Valley Group) were invited via phone and email to participate directly in the IRWM Plan Update and were also invited to provide input as part of the general public review process, which included a public review and comment period.

