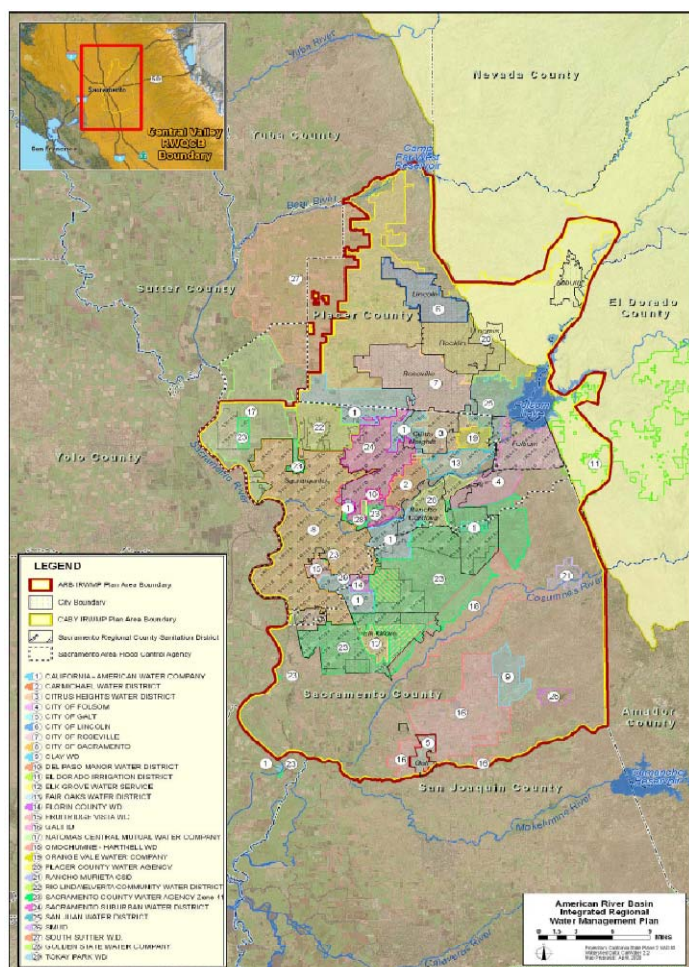


Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Background

An Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) is a comprehensive planning document to encourage regional strategies with multiple benefits for effective management of water resources for municipal, agricultural and environmental purposes. While the concept of the need for better integration of all types of planning is not new, the IRWMP, as promoted by the California Department of Water Resources came about following the passage of an extensive water bond (Proposition 50) in 2002 and subsequent guidance released by DWR in late 2004.



What is the American River Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Plan?

Starting in 2004, the Regional Water Authority (RWA) began the process of preparing an IRWMP for the American River Basin (ARB) to identify a broad spectrum of management strategies, the benefits of integrating those strategies, and projects and partnerships that will help ensure a sustainable water supply for planned growth in the region while providing for environmental water needs and recreational benefits. The initial ARB IRWMP was adopted in May 2006. The 2006 Plan and additional information can be found at www.rwah2o.org.

The American River Basin (ARB)

region as approved by the California Department of Water Resources in 2009 encompasses most of Sacramento County and parts of Placer and El Dorado counties (see map). The boundary is quite different from the original boundary in the IRWMP adopted in 2006. The Cosumnes, American, Bear, and Yuba rivers (CABY) organization subsequently developed and adopted an IRWMP more focused on issues related to the upper watershed areas. RWA coordinates with CABY through a Memorandum of Understanding.

What Are the Goals for the IRWMP Update Process?

The updated Plan is targeted for completion by June 30, 2011 to satisfy the State's evolving IRWMP Program requirements. While RWA is managing this effort, and its core mission is to assist its members in protecting and enhancing water supplies, the goals for the updated IRWMP are to broaden and encompass protection of environmental and recreational resources in the American River Basin. RWA members recognize that successful implementation of the Plan requires regional partnerships and continued collaboration on multi-objective, win-win solutions. Additional stakeholders, particularly those with projects that should be considered for inclusion in the IRWMP database, will be consulted and engaged during the update process in order to appropriately characterize the new objectives in the IRWMP and ensure that projects in the database (new and existing) are designed to address as many objectives as possible. The ultimate goal of the IRWMP is to ensure adequate high quality water for all uses to support a vibrant economy and healthy environment for the region.

Examples of key changes to the 2006 IRWMP that will be informed by the planning process, include:

- Add information to describe stakeholder organizations and regional planning efforts that have emerged or been identified since the 2006 Plan was published.
- Expand on the Plan's objectives to better define resources such as water quality, recycled water and flood/floodplain management, and address additional objectives such as habitat protection and resource stewardship.
- Ensure that the specific needs of disadvantaged communities in the region are addressed.
- Identify additional projects and programs, and refine those that currently exist in the Plan.

How Will Stakeholders Be Involved?

Interested parties will have a few options for participating in the process to update the Plan. They may join the Stakeholder Forum (the broadest level at which parties can be informed and provide input into the IRWMP). The Stakeholder Forum is planned to meet twice per year, but the frequency will depend on the level of stakeholder interest. Those with more specific interests or potential projects for consideration are encouraged to participate in the Planning Forum (the level at which direct work on the IRWMP and associated projects occurs). This group will meet more frequently and allow stakeholders to:

- Provide input on Plan objectives
- Share information on available data and resources
- Collaborate with other project proponents to develop more integrated, multi-benefit projects
- Learn about necessary project information for inclusion in the Plan

Throughout the summer and fall of 2010, it is expected that two or more work groups will be formed (subsets of the Planning Forum) and will meet to focus on specified water-related issues and opportunities. It is expected that these forums will help develop objectives in these areas, which will serve as a basis for identifying and prioritizing potential projects for inclusion in the IRWMP. The work groups will report back to the Planning Forum, and the larger group will send recommendations to RWA's IRWMP project team for further development during the preparation of the draft Plan in 2011.