

Santa Ana IRWMP “One Water One Watershed” Governance

Revised: April 2009

In developing the One Water One Watershed (OWOW) Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) plan for the Santa Ana River, unlike other IRWM planning approaches, every effort has been made to allow the key discussions of major water resource issues, concerns, problems, goals and objectives, and potential solutions to originate and be first fully vetted at the stakeholder level – the stakeholders being the local agencies, organizations and other interested parties within the Santa Ana River Region. By expanding the involvement and collaboration to the on-the-ground level, greater buy-in and support were expected and realized for this planning development process. Consequently, if one were to ask where the governance originates for the Santa Ana River Region OWOW process, we believe the identification of issues starts from the grass-roots level, the foundation of a decentralized and collaborative “big tent” approach.

SAWPA Commission

The Commission and SAWPA staff shall be responsible for all administrative oversight for the Plan, and for all on-going administrative responsibilities associated with its implementation including arranging for quarterly meetings of the OWOW Steering Committee, preparing agendas, taking and distributing minutes of the meetings and preparing staff reports, and other related duties. The Commission shall review the Plan for compliance with applicable laws and guidelines. In the event that no issues or inconsistencies with the Plan or project selection process are detected, the Commission shall approve the Plan and the Project Prioritization as submitted by the Steering Committee. Should the Commission determine that the Plan or a specific selected portfolio of projects fails to meet applicable laws and guidelines, it will refer the Plan back to the Steering Committee for further revision and subsequent re-submittal to the Commission for reconsideration and ratification.

OWOW Steering Committee

The OWOW Steering Committee shall comprise nine (9) members from the three counties (Orange County, Riverside and San Bernardino) that are within the OWOW planning area. The Steering Committee members shall serve terms of four (4) years with staggered end dates, or may be replaced subsequent to the initial submittal of the Plan, as described below. The following describes the composition of the Steering Committee:

- One (1) Supervisor from Orange County;
- One (1) Supervisor from Riverside County;
- One (1) Supervisor from San Bernardino County;
- One (1) City Council Member from a City within the Region within Orange County;
- One (1) City Council Member from a City within the Region within Riverside County;
- One (1) City Council Member from a City within the Region within San Bernardino County;
- One (1) designee by the SAWPA Commission;
- One (1) member of the development community; and
- One (1) member of the environmental community.

The SAWPA Commission has selected and convened the initial Steering Committee members in coordination with the governmental and non-governmental entities being represented on the Steering

Committee. Steering Committee members may be appointed for multiple terms. Steering Committee representatives shall be replaced as follows upon resignation of members, expiration of terms, or when governmental representatives no longer hold their elective office:

- SAWPA Commission representatives shall be selected by the SAWPA Commission
- County representatives shall be selected by their respective counties
- City representatives shall be selected by a majority vote of participating governmental entities in the respective county from a list of potential representatives solicited by their respective County.
- Development and environmental community representatives shall be selected by a majority vote of the seven (7) governmental entities represented on the Steering Committee based on an application process conducted during a public meeting

The Steering Committee shall be responsible for the development of the Plan. This includes receiving input from staff of their respective agencies as well as the SAWPA staff, providing direction for the development and long-term maintenance of the Plan, and development of a project prioritization process. The Steering Committee shall select the Pillar Chairs based on an application process and selected during a publicly noticed meeting. This governance document may be amended by the Steering Committee.

Meetings of the Steering Committee shall be scheduled at a regular time and place with an agenda posted prior to the meeting consistent with the Ralph M. Brown Act. The Steering Committee shall meet at least quarterly. Minutes of the meetings shall be kept by SAWPA staff and posted on the OWOW website. Special meetings may be called and are subject to the provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

SAWPA Administration

The other arm to the governance of the OWOW process included a management function conducted by the SAWPA staff. As a regional water agency for the Santa Ana River Region, SAWPA has had a long history of supporting regional collaborative efforts of this kind. As with previous IRWMP efforts for the Santa Ana River Region, SAWPA served as support in providing administrative and facilitative assistance to all the pillar groups and the Steering Committee for the overall OWOW plan development. In addition, SAWPA provided computer tools to assist the Steering Committee and pillars in decision-making processes, provided planning documents to allow pillars to build upon previous existing plans, and performed significant public outreach and education about the integrated planning approach for the Santa Ana River Region.

As the administrator of OWOW, SAWPA worked closely with several sub-regional IRWM planning efforts in the Santa Ana River Region that took place prior to or concurrent with the OWOW planning process. Of particular interest was the need to assure that proper coordination and incorporation of the excellent work conducted by the sub-regional IRWM planning groups was included in the OWOW plan. SAWPA staff conducted outreach to all stakeholders of the sub-regional IRWM planning efforts, and invited their stakeholders to participate in the pillar processes. In some cases, SAWPA staff even participated in the sub-regional IRWM planning process. Where sub-regional IRWM plans were previously completed, these plans were shared with the pillars to serve as background material to their

pillar planning efforts. In all cases, SAWPA took a lead role in coordinating the IRWM lead agencies to assure that their planning work would be folded under the OWOW region-wide process as seamlessly as possible. It is understood that the Steering Committee will be responsible for the development and implementation of the project selection criteria.

As funding opportunities arise to implement the OWOW plan, the Steering Committee will provide to the Commission an updated Santa Ana River Region IRWM plan and programmatic portfolio of projects specific to the funding opportunity. As noted above, Commission will review the Plan and programmatic project portfolio to ensure that these fulfill the intent and requirements of the specific funding mechanism, any legislative bill authorizing the funding, all legal requirements as defined by the funding administrative agency, and equitable application of the benefits of the project portfolio across the entire region. Review of these items will be conducted by the Commission in a public hearing open to all interested stakeholders.

Pillars

In order to manage the initial planning work, the stakeholders were organized into ten separate workgroups or pillars centered around specific water resource management areas. These pillars consisted of approximately 10 to 60 volunteers depending on the topic and interest level. The volunteers included participants from local agencies, special districts, non profit organizations, university officials, Native American Tribes and private citizens.

The pillars were led by a volunteer chair who had expertise in that specific water resource strategy. Initially, each Pillar Chair was selected by the SAWPA Commission and approved by the Steering Committee. The Pillar Chair was responsible for working with their pillar group in organizing, leading and facilitating the workgroup process. The Pillar Chairs are selected by the Steering Committee and shall serve two (2) year terms. Pillar Chairs may re-apply for the position and no limits are placed on the duration someone may hold the position. A Pillar Chair may only hold one chair position at a time.

Each pillar group prepared a write-up or chapter which documented an approach in addressing a particular water resource area by including a description of current conditions, current management strategies, problem identification, and strategies for the future. Thereafter, work was and will continue to be conducted among the pillar groups to explore new opportunities for collaboration. Under this phase of the work, each of the pillars was asked to step out of their role as lead of a specific water resource management strategy and view problems from the other pillars’ perspectives. It was through this process that new synergies were developed and multi-benefit programs were formed. An example of this approach was the understanding that many downstream water resource and water quality problems could more effectively and efficiently be addressed upstream at the source. Over time, this process of collaboration among the pillar groups provided a more unified vision with new integrated and multi-beneficial solutions to water resource challenges.

Another role of the pillars is to provide support and input to the Steering Committee about the Steering Committee OWOW goals and objectives. As technical experts in various water resource fields, the pillars provided important feedback to the Steering Committee on draft goals and objectives that the Steering Committee developed. Once the plan is submitted and the implementation process begins, the Pillar Chairs shall continue to periodically meet and act, in collaboration with SAWPA staff, as a

technical management committee for reviewing and making recommendations to the Steering Committee and the SAWPA Commission relative to implementation of the Plan.

The pillar groups met regularly for over a year and a half prior to completing the plan in January 2009. The pillars cover the following areas:

- 1) Climate Change
- 2) Land Use and Water
- 3) Water Supply Reliability
- 4) Water Recycling
- 5) Water Use Efficiency
- 6) Water Quality
- 7) Environmental and Habitat Restoration
- 8) Stormwater Risk Assessment
- 9) Environmental Justice
- 10) Parks and Open Space

The pillar categories were chosen based upon a review of water resource management strategies defined in the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) State Water Plan, previous DWR guidelines for IRWMP development and local water resource needs. The planning approach taken transcends previous integrated regional water resource planning efforts by deemphasizing planning based solely on preparing for an impending grant funding opportunity or planning based on a list of resource projects. Rather, the emphasis was placed on building a collaborative approach amongst stakeholders to help meet long-term (2025 year time horizon) goals and objectives in an integrated and multi-beneficial manner.

Pillars are comprised of stakeholders from the Plan area. When voting on matters being considered by the pillars, only one vote may be cast by any one person or entity. Care must be taken to insure voting is not skewed by disproportionate representation or influence.

Project Prioritization Development and Modification

Project prioritization shall be established and maintained by the Steering Committee in coordination and with support from SAWPA staff. Stakeholders shall be allowed to comment on the development and maintenance of the project prioritization process. In addition, the Steering Committee’s role in project prioritization development and modification is to integrate regional water management goals and objectives for the region and to act as the oversight body that performs strategic decision making, crafts and adopts programmatic suites of project recommendations, and provides program advocacy necessary to optimize water resource protection for all.

Meetings

All meetings of the Steering Committee, Pillar Chairs and Pillars shall be posted on the OWOW website and open to the public. The Steering Committee will hold public meetings in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act.

Planning Updates and Coordination

The OWOW Plan will continue to be coordinated with local, regional and statewide plans assuring a “living document” approach. For example, as changes are made to city General Plans, land use elements, Stormwater Management Plans, Water and Wastewater Master Plans, Urban Water Management Plans, County land use planning documents and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) land use data, these changes will need to be incorporated into future integrated regional water planning efforts in the Santa Ana River Region. As new studies and plans are completed, the OWOW Steering Committee may request that the plan be updated regularly to reflect changes that occur. Many of the plan pillars are anticipated to continue their activities regularly to assure ongoing coordination among stakeholders throughout the region.

The OWOW Plan will be provided to cities, counties, water suppliers, non-profit organizations, and other regional and State agencies for their water resource planning use. It is anticipated that the findings will support planning efforts and updates to General Plans, Strategic Plans, and other plans and programs. The document also will be helpful input to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Integrated Resources Plan, and the State of California DWR Water Plan.