



SECTION 2 GOVERNANCE

IRWM Planning Approach

In its 2005 California Water Plan Update, the California Department of Water Resources notes that, “water managers are learning that planning for sustainable water use must address multiple resource objectives – water use efficiency, water quality protection, and environmental stewardship – and consider broad needs – economic growth, environmental quality, and social equity.” Local issues can often be solved better at the regional level than at the state level. With that in mind, California has been promoting integrated regional water management as an effective means of achieving sustainable water use. Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) is not mandatory. However, the California Legislature has enacted certain regulations to help improve IRWM, along with water recycling, desalination, and groundwater management throughout the state. In addition, the State has provided funding for IRWM planning through bond measures and several state funding programs are now requiring a nexus to IRWM. To ensure that IRWM planning is effective, coordination of all stakeholders and project proponents in a cohesive area becomes essential. Communities are charged with determining a process to define watershed goals and to identify projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries and agency mandates to achieve those goals.

This innovative approach continues to be refined on the local, regional, and state level to further the ultimate goal of water resource sustainability throughout California.

2.1 North Orange County WMA Stakeholders and Roles

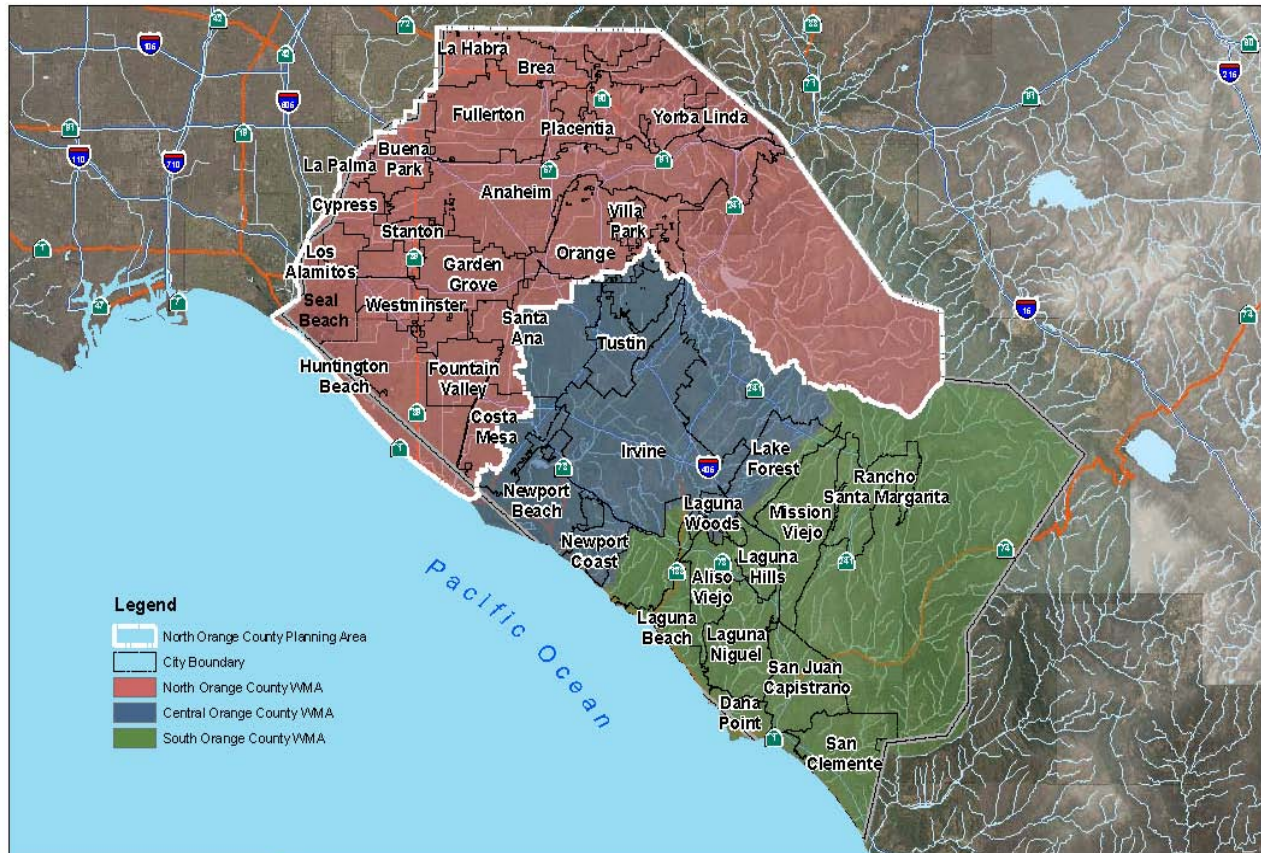
The active involvement of stakeholders is a critical component to the long term success of the NOC WMA Plan. Throughout the NOC WMA Plan process, stakeholders were involved in decision making. Stakeholder roles included developing IRWMP objectives, weighting objectives, and submitting projects and relevant information.

To date, the NOC WMA region stakeholders have made significant progress in the development of this WMA Plan. The stakeholders were introduced to the IRWM plan process in June of 2007. Since then the stakeholders have worked to define their roles and began developing objectives that were finalized in December 2007. In 2008 the progress continued with a “Project Brainstorming” forum to discuss ideas and opportunities for coordination of multi-beneficial projects. Stakeholders utilized and expanded on an initial project list.

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Figure 2-1 shows the North, Central and South Watershed Management Areas in Orange County.



OC Public Works
Watershed Management Areas
County of Orange
Orange County Planning Areas
Figure 2-1

Actively including stakeholders in the NOC WMA Plan process improves the quality of the NOC WMA Plan and provides multiple benefits to the North Orange County region. The NOC WMA Plan benefits from stakeholder involvement because it ensures that the plan accounts for regional priorities from a diverse set of interests. The North Orange County region objectives defined in Section 4, represent water quality, water supply, flood control, wetlands, climate change, runoff management, funding challenges, education, environmental justice, and recreational goals. As a result, the IRWMP is a more comprehensive plan with better opportunities to successfully support and meet a wider range of the region's needs.



Stakeholder involvement also allows the region to identify integrated projects that provide multiple benefits to the region and reduce implementation costs for the agencies involved. For example, efforts to improve the efficiency of outdoor irrigation usage not only saves precious resources and improves supply reliability, it reduces urban runoff and transport of pollutants into waterways and the ocean; improving the quality of the ocean waters and reducing the incidences of beach closures. Maximizing stakeholder involvement increases the opportunities to identify integrated projects. Stakeholder involvement also promotes regional collaboration and the chance to form long-standing and future partnerships. Stakeholders can interact during the NOC WMA Plan process when they may not typically have a purpose to work together. Stakeholders can also educate one another on water, land use, flood, ecosystem and other related issues.

2.2 Appropriateness of Region and Geographic Boundaries

The NOC WMA region is characterized as a coastal plain, with foothills to the north and east which determine the direction of surface flows. This region has a higher percentage of disadvantaged communities with goals and needs specific to their local areas, culture, and economic conditions.

The NOC WMA region is an appropriate area for integrated water resource and watershed planning due to the complex issues regarding water resources and water quality shared throughout the region. Water resources within the planning area include groundwater, surface water, recycled water, and imported water. Groundwater recharge basins are located in the cities of Anaheim/Orange area but the groundwater basin underlies most of the NOC WMA region. Groundwater supplies, inadequate to meet the total demands of the region, are supplemented by imported water. Factors such as sewer spills, groundwater recharge, aging infrastructure and flooding also impact the management of water resources in the region. The associated costs of water resource management in the North Orange County region will be shared by a group of stakeholders, which may include the County of Orange, water and wastewater special districts, cities, state and federal agencies, a flood control district, non-profit groups, and private parties. These entities will work together to effectively manage the water resources of this region.



2.3 Proposed Governance

Executive Committee

An Executive Committee is proposed that will consist of elected officials within the North Orange County WMA.

The North Orange County Watershed Executive Committee will serve in the leadership role to oversee policy issues and budget decisions related to the North Orange County IRWM Plan. The Committee will meet on a semiannual basis and will receive an update on Plan implementation, including identification of any issues of concern.

Management Committee

A Management Committee is proposed that will consist of management level staff from agencies represented in the Executive Committee and an environmental representative from within the North Orange County WMA.

Meetings will be held quarterly and will focus on the status of the Plan and project implementation; project funding; monitoring, data management, and reporting; and review and consideration of regional priorities and necessary refinement.

North Orange County (NOC) Watershed Management Area (WMA) Stakeholders Group

The NOC WMA Stakeholders Group is open to all interested stakeholders. This group has been working together to bring forward projects with synergies and opportunities for multiple benefits that reflect the goals of the integrated regional planning. The group shares information on issues, solutions, and priorities. Through an open, collaborative, consensus-based approach, the group seeks to provide leadership in the watershed by working to achieve common goals for the long-term management of the watershed.

2.3.1 Benefits of Governance Approach

This approach to governance of the NOC WMA Plan promotes partnership opportunities between cities, special districts, other stakeholders, and funding agencies. It facilitates ongoing and meaningful public and private stakeholder involvement and group participation and decision making, with one administering agency for coordination and management. The County as the administering agency will be accountable to the IRWM Group and the Executive Committee, along with funding agencies that require regional applications and agreements.

Plan Administration and Management

The County of Orange will serve as the NOC WMA Plan Administrator. Plan implementation will be in accordance with the proposed project priorities and schedule, as periodically amended, by each project proponent. The

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NOC WMA Watershed Committee will be formed through a Cooperative Agreement (CA) between agencies with authority to implement this Plan. Each signatory to the CA will have one voting representative. Up to three named non-governmental organizations will be included in the CA. The focus of this Committee will be on the NOC WMA Plan; as such, the Committee will be responsible for developing regional objectives, assessing strategies, and identifying projects, and implementation approaches to achieve the objectives.

2.4 Coordination with Other IRWM Plans

The NOC WMA planning area is adjacent to Central Orange County, Los Angeles County, and is a subset of the Santa Ana Watershed. North Orange County shares watersheds, groundwater basins, and cities with these adjacent regions. The South Orange County region is also adjacent sharing a boundary in the foothills and mountains of Eastern Orange County. Many issues are similar for these regions, including the primary stakeholders are the same, and the County of Orange is the lead agency for all three watershed management areas, North, Central and South Orange County. Coordinating the IRWMPs for these regions is essential in creating an integrated and consistent planning document.

Central Orange County Integrated Regional and Coastal Watershed Management Plan

The Central Orange County Integrated Regional and Coastal Watershed Management Plan encompasses the Newport Beach/San Diego Creek and Newport Coast Watersheds and focuses on improving and protecting coastal water quality, habitat and other coastal resources. The region lies in the southern portion of the Santa Ana Watershed and shares groundwater resources and the imported water system with the North Orange County region and other adjacent regions.

Santa Ana Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) developed the 2005 Santa Ana Integrated Regional Water Management Plan to improve the sustainability of water resources and ecologic health of the watershed. The Santa Ana Watershed includes parts of Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange counties, and a small portion of Los Angeles County. Many North Orange County stakeholders are participating in development of the SAWPA plan update. The Orange County Water District is one of SAWPA's five member agencies helping to develop the plan.

South Orange County IRWMP

The South Orange County IRWMP encompasses the Laguna Coastal Streams, Aliso Creek, Dana Point Coastal Streams, San Juan Creek, San



Clemente Coastal Streams, San Mateo Creek Watersheds and a portion of the Newport Coast Watershed. The County of Orange is also the South Orange County IRWMP administrator.

Greater Los Angeles County IRWMP

The Los Angeles County IRWMP is a regional planning effort that covers portions of Ventura, Orange, and Los Angeles Counties. It creates a blueprint for achieving quantifiable targets for improving water quality and water supply, enhancing habitat and open space/recreation, and sustaining infrastructure for local communities in the Greater Los Angeles County Region. The plan has resulted in communication and collaboration among over 80 regional and local entities, including non-profit organizations. The plan includes projects submitted by stakeholders; which address water supply, water quality, and open space/habitat/recreation benefits. Most of the projects supported by the IRWMP provide multiple benefits in line with the plan's goal to "implement multiple objective planning and projects."

2.5 Consistency with California Water Plan

The California Water Plan 2009 Update (Water Plan) identifies a framework for action, or roadmap, to ensure that California has sustainable water uses and reliable water supplies through 2030. Development of this IRWMP is consistent with this framework and IRWMP implementation will contribute to the State's efforts to implement the Water Plan.

The Water Plan identifies two initiatives to ensure reliable water suppliers for the State. Initiative 1 will promote and support the practice of integrated regional water management, which is directly consistent with this IRWMP, and Initiative 2 is a strategy to maintain and improve statewide water management systems and programs, which include reliable water supplies, flood management, environmental stewardship, water use efficiency, and water quality improvements. This IRWMP address all of these topics through identification of planning objectives and implementation of priority projects. IRWMP implementation also supports the CALFED Program by increasing local water supplies and supply reliability, decreasing demands for water exports from the Bay Delta.

This IRWMP is consistent with the resource management strategies outlined in the California Water Plan. It identifies integrated projects that address multiple strategies and promotes future collaboration to find integrated solutions to water resource challenges.

2.6 NOC WMA Process and Plan Updates

The NOC WMA region recognizes the benefits of integrated planning and the opportunities it presents for reliable water supplies, regional collaboration, cost-effective project implementation, and economic and environmental

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sustainability. To develop a successful IRWMP, the NOC WMA region used the process outlined below as the foundation for the IRWMP. The NOC WMA region understands that effective integrated planning requires adaptive management and intends to revisit these steps in the future.

Process steps include:

Involvement of Regional Stakeholders – The NOC WMA region has developed a stakeholder group to develop and implement the NOC WMA Plan. The stakeholders represent various local agencies, including those that provide water, flood hazard management, integrated water quality protection, and wastewater services, State and Federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations with various missions, including, but not limited to, ecosystem restoration, open space and coastal protection. Involvement of diverse stakeholders promotes integration and maximizes potential benefits through increased communication and collaboration.

Involvement of disadvantaged communities – The North Orange County region has involved disadvantaged communities in the NOC WMA Plan planning process.

Regional Objectives – Regional objectives that reflect the priorities of all stakeholders involved are identified.

Resource Management Strategies – A broad range of resource management strategies identified in the 2009 California Water Plan Update were evaluated for their potential use in the North Orange County region. Section 5 describes potential challenges and opportunities associated with each applicable strategy. The Water Plan is a California Department of Water Resources Plan, which provides the framework for making decisions on the future of California's water. This includes determining the gap between supply and demand. The Water Plan looks at statewide demand management and water supply augmentation programs and projects that will address water needs in California.

Integrated Strategies – Opportunities to integrate strategies to meet multiple regional objectives, achieve multiple benefits, and contribute to statewide water needs are identified.

Priority Projects Identification – Short- and long-term projects that match resource management strategies and meet North Orange County objectives are identified and prioritized. Project identification includes describing the project and its benefits to the region and identifying applicable resource management strategies, project schedule, related studies, technical and economic feasibility, and a monitoring and performance evaluation plan.



Implementation of Performance Plan and Data Management –

A performance plan for implementation is included. The plan identifies performance measures and monitoring methods to determine the overall performance of the IRWMP and proposes a data management database to share data among the local agencies and with the State. Performance evaluations and data management will identify data gaps, needs for plan adjustments, and support information sharing.

Integration with Local, Regional, and State planning efforts –

The NOC WMA region has, to the extent possible, integrated this IRWMP with existing local, regional, and State planning efforts. The IRWMP relates to and builds from local land use, water supply, and watershed plans. In developing this IRWMP, the North Orange County region also worked to be consistent with State plans, including the California Water Plan Update.

Plan Updates – This NOC WMA Plan is an adaptive document. The Plan will be updated regularly to note project completions, and new projects. A call for new projects may occur as often as annually with the plan update scheduled every 5 years. Plan updates will continue to incorporate stakeholder involvement and public participation. The region will implement the most beneficial option for this plan in order to continually serve the water resource needs of the region.