

**ATTACHMENT 9**  
**PROGRAM PREFERENCES**

The proposed Ortega Reservoir Project within the South Orange County Watershed Management Area (“WMA”) meets the Program Preferences to the breadth and magnitude shown in Table 1 below. A full discussion follows the table.

**TABLE 1: BREADTH AND MAGNITUDE TO WHICH PROPOSAL MEETS THE PROGRAM PREFERENCES –**

Project Title	Regional Projects or Programs	Integrate Water Management Programs & Projects within San Juan Hydrologic Region (Region 9 Basin Plan)	Resolve Significant Water-Related Conflicts within or between regions	Contribute to Attainment of CALFED Bay-Delta Program	Addresses Water Supply or Water Quality Need of Disadvantaged Communities	Integrate Water Management with land use Planning	Flood Control/ Prevention	Statewide Priorities
Ortega Reservoir Project  (Santa Margarita Water District (“SMWD”), in partnership with Rancho Mission Viejo, LLC (“RMV”), and County of Orange (“OC”))	1a.Provides water for reuse for SMWD and the South OC WMA.  1b.Reduces the WMA imported water demand.  1c.Consistent with the Ranch Plan.	2a.Protects beneficial uses of San Juan Creek Watershed.  2b.Captures dry weather flows and increase water supply for reuse by 2,900-4,900 AFY.  2c.Reduces energy costs resulting from reduced imported water supply demand.	3a.Participation in the Tri-FACC.  3b.Project addresses the following South OC WMA issues/challenges: water supply, water system reliability, water conservation, water quality management, flood management, climate change.	Contributes to CALFED 4a. Water Supply Reliability (Increases recycled water supply), 4b. Water Quality (Reduce 2,900-4,900 AFY of pollutant-carrying dry weather discharge to San Juan Creek and out to the Pacific Ocean), 4c. Ecosystem Restoration, and 4d. Levee System Integrity Objectives.	5a.Water quality enhancement for visitors to the South OC WMA beaches, many of which are local schools, organizations, and members of disadvantaged communities.  5b.Reduces pollutant-carrying urban runoff and meets TMDLs in San Juan Creek Watershed and outlet to beaches used by DAC members.	6a. Project supports the DAMP, UWMP, Ranch Plan, and IRWMP.  6b. Reduces 2,900-4,900 AFY of discharge to San Juan Creek and out to the Pacific Ocean.	7a.Attenuation of storm flows/ storm peak runoff reduction.  7b. 25/50.100-year flood protection will result in more efficient local basin function.	Fully meets: 8a.Drought Preparedness, 8b.Use and Reuse Water More Efficiently, 8c. Climate Change Response Actions, 8d. Practice Integrated Flood Management, 8e. Protect Surface Water and Groundwater Quality  Minimally: 8f.Improve Tribal Water and Natural Resources, 8g.Ensure Equitable Distribution of Benefits

**I. Include Regional Projects or Programs**

The Proposal includes the Ortega Reservoir Project that serves as a regional element of the South Orange County IRWM Program. Implementation of the Project includes partnerships among Santa Margarita Water District ("SMWD"), the County of Orange ("OC"), and Rancho Mission Viejo, LLC ("RMV"). The Project will implement a flood control and water supply enhancement Project. The Project includes urban runoff capture and reuse, resulting in reduced imported water demand, (1a, and 1b). Although specific Project partners are identified for Project implementation, the Project requires the collaboration of all members of the South Orange County WMA and will provide equal benefits to all.

The Project is also included within the greater Rancho Mission Viejo Plan ("Ranch Plan") as a key component to water quality protection and habitat preservation (1c). The Ranch Plan supports the IRWM Plan and Region 9 Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan objectives of water quality enhancement and habitat protection. Since 1991, detailed scientific studies have been conducted in partnership with state and federal wildlife agencies for 23,000 acres of Rancho Mission Viejo. As part of the Ranch Plan's monitoring efforts, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board ("SDRWQCB"), United States Fish and Wildlife Service ("USFWS"), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("ACOE"), and RMV have established a partnership for protecting the land and ensuring proper management of its resources. The Project will be part of the overall monitoring program that has been established for the Ranch Plan.

**II. Integrate Water Management Programs and Projects within the San Juan Hydrologic Unit, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board region.**

The South Orange County Watershed Management Area ("WMA") includes the area that encompasses the San Juan Hydrologic Unit ("SJHU") in South Orange County, California, as defined in the Water Quality Control Plan of the San Diego Basin ("Basin Plan"). It is comprised of six major watersheds: 1) Laguna Coastal Streams, 2) Aliso Creek, 3) Dana Point Coastal Streams (Salt Creek), 4) San Juan Creek, 5) San Clemente Coastal Streams, and 6) San Mateo Creek, and two groundwater basins: 1) San Juan Valley Groundwater Basin and 2) San Mateo Groundwater Basin. The Project is included in the San Juan Creek Watershed.

The Project incorporates several complementary benefits. By increasing flood protection, urban runoff pollution will be reduced and water quality will be enhanced. This will result in protecting the beneficial uses of San Juan Creek Watershed (2a), enhancing water supply by offsetting imported water demand (2b); and reducing energy costs by increasing urban water capture and reuse (2c). Notably, the Project is integrated into several regional projects and programs, as described below:

*The Ranch Plan* - The Project is included in and supported by the Mission Viejo Ranch Plan ("Ranch Plan"), which is a comprehensive Plan for Rancho Mission Viejo. Beginning in 1991, detailed scientific studies have been conducted in partnership with state and federal wildlife agencies and shaped by public input for the Ranch. The Ranch Plan 1) Perpetuates ranching and farming, 2) Preserves open space, 3) Protects quality of life, and 4) Promotes phased planning over the next 20 to 25 years. The open space preservation and land use planning is founded on more than 13 years of scientific data collected via two fundamental processes and programs: NCCP/HCP and SAMP/MSA. Both study programs serve as logical, science-based environmental blueprints for establishing the Ranch Plan as the best framework for protecting sensitive habitat including beneficial uses of waterways (2a) by preserving and managing Rancho Mission Viejo's thousands of acres ranch and lease lands.

The SDRWQCB, USFWS, ACOE, and RMV have described the baseline biology, geomorphology and hydrology, and water quality in Ranch Plan FEIR 584 and 589, the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Habitat Conservation Plan ("HCP") and the Final Environmental Impact Report of the Special Area Management Plan ("SAMP"). Through implementation of adaptive management, the Ranch Plan seeks to maintain the net habitat values of Rancho Mission Viejo including the larger regional ecosystem. There are three inter-related plans/programs that form the core of the Adaptive Management Plan for the Ranch Plan. These are for open space/Habitat Reserve – the Habitat Reserve Monitoring and Management Program ("HRMP"), for the primary stream/creeks in the open space/Habitat Reserve – the Stream Monitoring Plan and for developed Planning Areas – the Water Quality Management Plan ("WQMP"). The proposed Ortega Reservoir Project links to this Adaptive Management System.

The Project will significantly contribute to protecting the beneficial uses of the San Juan Hydrologic Unit (2a). Additionally, the Project requires coordination among Santa Margarita Water District, the County of Orange, Rancho Mission Viejo, Inc., the San Juan Basin Authority, USFWS, ACOE, and CDFG. Tremendous added value is realized from this collaborative and coordinated effort in the implementation of the combined Project, where one implementing agency could not accomplish all the Project components.

### III. Effectively Resolve Significant Water-Related Conflict Within or Between Regions

The Project effectively helps resolve significant water-related conflicts within or between regions through addressing long-term planning of local water supplies and ongoing participation in the Tri-County Funding Area Coordinating Committee ("FACC").

*Tri-County FACC Issues/Conflicts (3a):* The Tri-County FACC is a formal partnership established in April 2009 through joint adoption of an MOU outlining measures for inter-regional coordination. The Tri-County FACC is a collaborative effort among the three neighboring IRWM regions in the San Diego Funding Area to discuss planning and projects of mutual interest. Through the Tri-County FACC, the Upper Santa Margarita Regional Watershed Management Group ("RWMG"), San Diego RWMG, and South Orange County IRWM Group collaborate in an inter-regional body established via a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"). The efforts of the Tri-County FACC are intended to enhance the quality of water resources planning and to improve the quality and reliability of water in the Funding Area. This partnership is a unique opportunity to collaborate with neighboring planning regions to address common objectives, issues, and conflicts. SMWD is a participant in the Tri-County FACC and the goal of their projects is to fully address the WMA's issues/conflicts.

*Regional Conflicts (3b):* The South Orange County WMA's major water-related issues and conflicts are related to water supply, water system reliability, water conservation, recycled water, groundwater management, water quality management, flood management, wastewater management, and climate change. The South Orange County IRWM Group considered these conflicts as well as the Water Quality Control Plan of the San Diego Basin (Basin Plan) Objectives, the 20% by 2020 Water efficiency goals, and IRWM Planning minimums in evaluating the Project. Competing interests arise with South Orange County's effort to use its local groundwater resources. Conflicting interests arise when flood management, urban runoff management, natural resource preservation and land use policies are competing, or in some way impeding the use of the same resources. Natural resource and habitat preservation conflict with the potable use of groundwater by encouraging the planting and reestablishing of habitat. Phreatophyte water use can account for as much as 25% of the yield of the groundwater basin during the summer months. Other projects are encouraging the

reestablishments of fish populations. It remains to be seen how much this will reduce the amount of groundwater extractions available for potable water use. In addition, land use practices have conflicted with water resource use. As an example, portions of the San Juan Groundwater Basin have been contaminated by gas stations and dry cleaners leakage or spills. There is still a great amount of agriculture in the watershed including citrus, field crops, and livestock (horse stables). Much has been done to eliminate contamination from runoff from these activities but they still contribute salts to the groundwater basins.

The Project's required coordination with local, regional, state, and federal water and land use agencies signifies a joint effort to continue resolving multi-level issues related to flood management, urban runoff management, natural resource preservation and land use planning. Through a collaborative process, the Project addresses these conflicts by providing flood control and habitat protection, enhancing local water supplies to offset imported water supplies, meeting water quality requirements, and increasing recycled water. In addition, conflict over flood control is addressed by the Project, as the Reservoir will provide flood control and temporary storage of wet weather flows from surrounding residential communities, thus mitigating the impact of storm events downstream to San Juan Creek and outfall to Pacific Ocean. There is a high degree of certainty that the Proposal meets this Program Preference.

#### **IV. Contribute to attainment of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program Objectives**

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program Objectives include programs that address water quality, water supply reliability, and ecosystem restoration. The CALFED Water Quality and Ecosystem Restoration programs aim to improve Delta water quality for all uses: in-Delta, Delta-related, drinking water, environmental and agricultural uses. The Water Quality Program focuses on the use of the Delta water for drinking and, to some degree, for agricultural use. The Ecosystem Restoration Program focuses on the water quality needs of Delta species. The Project's collection system will capture and harvest drainage flows for recycled water use in the Chiquita Water Reclamation Plant, therefore saving the need to import thousands of AFY of water to Southern California from the State Water Project. There is a high degree of certainty that the Project contributes to attaining all of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program Objectives, as described below.

*Water Supply Reliability (4a) - Program is achieved through five program elements: Conveyance, Storage, Environmental Water Account, Water Use Efficiency, and Water Transfers. Through partnerships with local and regional agencies, these programs seek to increase water supplies, ensure efficient use of water resources, and add flexibility to California's water system:* The Project meets water supply reliability by increasing local water supplies, implementing Water Use Efficiency efforts, and reducing the vulnerability of water supply systems to droughts. The Project directly assists in water supply reliability by reducing proposed urban runoff capture for reuse to meet landscape irrigation demands. SMWD has established an aggressive water use efficiency program that will use the additional water supply resulting from the Project for its pioneering initiatives to diversify SMWD's water portfolio and reduce the community's dependence on imported supplies. For example, SMWD has successfully implemented, in partnership with Trabuco Canyon Water District, the Dove Canyon Conservation and Water Recovery Project, which is an innovative diversion project that helps keep urban runoff from reaching the natural habitat in Starr Ranch Sanctuary and provides 200 AFY of treated runoff as new water supply. Similarly, the Project will achieve thousands of AFY in local water savings from capture and reuse. Decreasing the demand on imported water supply used for irrigation purposes significantly assists in providing water supply reliability. This savings will assist in meeting the SBx 7-7 20% by 2020 water savings goal. Ultimately, these water conservation savings will translate into improved water supply reliability for the region.

*Water Quality (4b) - Through regulatory programs and implementation grants, these programs seek to improve water quality in the Delta by reducing sources of contaminants, improving flows and conveyance, and demonstrating drinking water treatment technologies:* The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 9) has a Bacteria TMDL for all Beaches and Creeks in Region 9. The South Orange County WMA, which includes the coastal area, is a part of this Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL). This TMDL affects the entire Pacific Coast Shoreline in the Region, including Laguna Beach, Aliso Beach, Aliso Creek, Salt Creek Beach, San Juan Doheny Beach, Poche Beach, Prima Descheca Creek, and San Clemente Beach. Within the South Orange County WMA boundary, there are three (3) locations on the Critical Coastal Areas listing – San Juan Creek, Aliso Creek, and Heisler Park Ecological Reserve. The Pacific Ocean shoreline is currently listed in the Region 9 Basin Plan as having REC-1, BIOL, WILD, COMM, RARE, MAR, AQUA, MIGR, SPWN and SHELL beneficial uses. The Project will significantly protect water quality by capturing and treating urban runoff and increasing pollutant removal in the San Juan Creek. The Project directly addresses TMDL exceedances and beneficial uses by reducing sediment, total coliform, Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), total solids, ammonia, nitrogen and phosphates through utilizing natural vegetated treatment methods. The Project will prevent pollutant-carrying urban runoff from flowing into the San Juan Creek Watershed and improves water quality for downstream receiving waters in the South Orange County WMA, including the discharge point at Dana Point into the Pacific Ocean.

*Ecosystem Restoration (4c) - CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program works to improve the ecological health of the Bay-Delta watershed through restoring and protecting habitats, ecosystem functions and native species.* Although the South Orange County WMA is not geographically connected to the Bay-Delta watershed's ecosystem, the implementation of the Project will assist in offsetting the demand on imported water from the watershed which is critical for maintaining the ecological health of the Delta. For example, the imported water supply demand reduction benefits of the Project will assist in protecting the available water supplies in the Bay-Delta watershed for its habitats. Furthermore, the Project will directly benefit other ecosystems in the South Orange County WMA, which ultimately contribute to the health of the statewide ecosystems. Protecting the local resources of the South Orange County WMA is critical for protecting the California Ecosystems as a whole. The ecological health of the Bay-Delta Watershed may benefit from successful implementation of the Project due to its positive impact on the San Juan Creek Watershed and coastal waters. There is a moderate degree of certainty that the Proposal meets this Program Preference.

*Levee System Integrity Program (4d) - Provides long-term protection for vast resources in the Delta by maintaining and improving the integrity of the estuary's extensive levee system. These resources include the 500,000 people who call the Delta home, the many towns and villages in the Delta, infrastructure such as utilities and transportation corridors, and economic assets of thriving agriculture and recreational industries:* The Project assists in reducing imported water demand through water reuse, which is provided by MWDOC via contracts with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California for water supplied by the Delta region. Therefore, reductions in imported water demand throughout MWDOC's service area, which includes the South Orange County WMA, significantly reduces the imported water demand and purchase of supply for the region. Reduced demand on imported water also assists in maintaining the integrity of the levee system. As the South Orange County WMA continues to decrease reliance on imported water supplies from the Bay-Delta region, there will be more local supplies and less demand on the levee system. Providing water supplies through local resources and water quality protection measures allows the many people who call the Delta home to continue reaping the benefits of a well-functioning system.

#### V. Address Critical Water Supply or Water Quality Needs of Disadvantaged Communities Within the Region

Disadvantaged Community (“DAC”) involvement is an important part of the South Orange County IRWMP process that continues to develop. Although the South Orange County WMA does not include DACs, members of DACs in surrounding communities of South Orange County predominantly utilize the waters within the Region as recreational hubs. The surrounding coastal areas of Doheny State Beach Park, the Dana Point Harbor, area beaches, and parks located along regional stream courses serve as community gathering places for these communities and are used heavily year round on the weekends. Many of the recreational areas are accessible via public transit and do not charge an entrance fee for walk-in visitors. The Project assists in addressing critical water quality needs of South Orange County WMA DAC members.

Poor water quality can negatively impact the recreational opportunities for disadvantaged community members. The Project is one of several projects within the IRWMP that focuses on identifying the cause of water pollution for waterways and beaches within the WMA (5a). Water quality is a key consideration for the Region to ensure protection of the health and safety of the entire population in the area, especially for the disadvantaged community residents that do not have the means to travel to other areas of the state or country. By addressing water quality issues in areas of recreational use, the Project incorporates environmental justice in a way that provides every resident equal opportunity and fair treatment in the regional water planning process.

Protecting water quality is important for DAC members as they recreate in the South Orange County WMA’s waters. The Project shall provide **decreased urban runoff** in the San Juan Creek Watershed and ultimately at the Dana Point outlet to the Pacific Ocean (5b). Disadvantaged community members use natural areas that are open and available to the public at no cost. The Project meets multiple objectives and provides recreational and aesthetic benefits, including contact and non-contact water recreation, and other passive activities available at no cost to all community members. There is a high degree of certainty that the Proposal meets this Program Preference.

#### VI. Effectively Integrate Water Management with Land Use Planning

SMWD plans and executes both short-term capital improvement programs and long-term management programs for the service area. The plans, reports, studies, and programs provide the foundation for the Project and present a coordinated, integrated approach. The Project is congruent with local plans and was developed based on current, relevant elements of local water planning and water management issues common to multiple local entities in the Region. Many existing plans, including Water Supply Master Plans, Groundwater Management Plans, Watershed Management Plans, Water Reliability Assessments, Recycled Water Studies, Feasibility Studies, and Long-Range Plans contain proposed projects that were instrumental in developing the South Orange County IRWMP. The Project was included in the IRWMP and is supported by such studies (6a).

The Project reflects effective, integrated, and consistent water planning and management as the Region faces increasing challenges in managing its water supply due to climate change, increasing water demand as population increases, and uncertainty regarding the availability of water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and other sources. The Project integrates the San Juan Creek Watershed Management Plan. Each watershed in the Region includes unique surface water and groundwater sources and is managed by a Drainage Area Management Plan (“DAMP”) (6a.). A representation of coordination with an

existing plan is the Southern California Comprehensive Water Reclamation and Reuse Study ("SCCWRRS"). The Project supports implementation of DAMP and SCCWRRS, as well as local plans including SMWD's Urban Water Management Plan, Runoff Reduction Studies, and other long range plans (6a). The Project integrates water management with land use planning by implementing the Ranch Plan, a comprehensive Plan for Rancho Mission Viejo; detailed scientific studies have been conducted in partnership with state and federal wildlife agencies and shaped by public input for the Ranch (6a). The Project assists the region in meeting the water conservation goals, by reducing 2,900-4,900 AFY of discharge to San Juan Creek and out to the Pacific Ocean (6b). This diverted runoff will be treated by the Project, preventing downstream pollutants from entering the San Juan Creek Watershed (6c).

Local land use planning and water supply planning are coordinated through a patchwork of existing State laws and policies. Regional wholesalers such as Metropolitan Water District of Southern California base their water supply plans of regional growth projections developed by regional planning agencies. SMWD routinely submits its UWMP to the state every five (5) years and the Project is supported by this Plan. There is a high degree of certainty that the Proposal meets this Program Preference.

#### **VII. Stormwater Flood Management Funding (Multi-benefit Projects)**

The Proposal provides multiple stormwater flood management benefits for the South Orange County WMA, including water quality improvement, ecosystem benefits, reduction of instream erosion and sedimentation, and groundwater recharge. The Project will accomplish these benefits by constructing an urban runoff and storm detention basin that will be established as a wetland and riparian habitat, a collection system to capture and divert flows from the constructed wetlands, a pump station and pipeline to connect to the Chiquita Water Reclamation Plant system.

The Reservoir will be utilized to reduce storm peak flows by flood storage and divert urban runoff and storm flows to 1) reduce downstream erosion and sedimentation and 2) address excessive surface water and overdraft groundwater. Through its stormwater flood management and water quality protection components, the Project will protect the beneficial uses of the Pacific Ocean and assist in meeting receiving water objectives established in the Region 9 San Diego Basin plan.

To supplement local water supply, approximately 2,900-4,900 acre-feet per year in urban runoff and dry season flows will be diverted for reuse or groundwater recharge (7b), thereby reducing local imported water supply demands. There is a high degree of certainty that the Proposal meets this Program Preference.

#### **VIII. Address Statewide Priorities**

The Proposal addresses the following statewide priorities:

a. **Drought Preparedness (8a)** - The Project will address drought preparedness through conjunctive use (surface and groundwater), water reuse, and harvesting for regional water conservation (2,900-4,900 Acre-feet per year for SMWD water supplies and resale). As a local water supplier for South OC WMA, SMWD's Project will significantly contribute to drought preparedness by increasing local supplies for irrigation, which will reduce imported water demand. Capturing and treating dry weather runoff and storm flows for reuse in the recycled water system will help protect the South Orange County WMA against drought when imported supplies will be especially limited. Several studies and monitoring programs are in place to maintain the delicate balance that ensures water supply reliability, efficient groundwater basin management of the San

Juan Creek Basin, and protection of the local ecosystem. The Project completely meets this Program Preference with a high degree of certainty.

**b. Use and Reuse Water More Efficiently (8b)** - The Project will use and reuse water more efficiently through the following measures: water use efficiency, recycling and reuse to help meet future water demands, increase water supply reliability, and adapt to climate change. The Project meets these by capturing, treating, storing, and reusing urban stormwater runoff from the upstream residential development. The Project will divert pollutant-carrying dry season runoff for treatment and reuse. The Project would increase the recycled water supply for the SMWD by reusing the diverted surface water and pumping high levels of groundwater to the Chiquita Water Reclamation Plant that holds recycled water for the recycled water system. The Project assists in meeting the SBx 7-7 20% by 2020 water savings goals by through use and reuse of local water. The Project completely meets this program preference with a high degree of certainty.

**c. Climate Change Response Actions (8c)** - The Project contributes to the Climate Change Response Actions by improving water quality, reducing the need for imported water through collecting and storing non-potable water supplies for irrigation, and creating wetlands, all of which are consistent with global climate change mitigation measures recommended by the office of the California Attorney General 2008. The Project contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through reduced electrical costs for pumping imported water. Like most of South Orange County WMA, SMWD's water supply mostly consists of imported water from the State Water Project ("SWP"). SMWD purchases this water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which delivers water to the region through an infrastructure network. SMWD carefully monitors and diligently maintains more than 1,200 miles of water and sewer lines across the District's 62,674 acre service area. The Project is designed to decrease demand of purchased imported potable water for irrigation purposes and supplement recycled water demands with captured dry season urban runoff flows. SMWD customers who live in an elevated area within the District where water is pumped to their location may pay a power surcharge. The surcharge passes through the cost the District pays for electricity to pump the water. The surcharge is determined by the pumping zone. There are three pumping zones in the District that are assessed a surcharge. This rate applies to domestic and non-domestic water. This Project will assist SMWD in decreasing a portion of overall energy costs that are directly attributable to the conveyance and pumping of purchased potable water used for irrigation purposes by SMWD customers. The Project completely meets this program preference with a high degree of certainty.

**d. Practice Integrated Flood Management (8d)** - The Project supports implementation of the County of Orange Drainage Area Management Plan ("DAMP"), which focuses on effective flood and watershed management. Specifically, the Project includes constructing a Reservoir to improve flood management, reduce instream erosion and sedimentation, and capture 2,900-4,900 AF of dry season runoff for reuse. The captured water will be stored in SMWD's non-potable Chiquita Water Reclamation Plant for use. This additional local water supply will provide better emergency preparedness and response. Improved flood protection will result from the Project's Reservoir design to hold 25/50/100-year storm events, which will protect the water quality of downstream San Juan Creek Watershed out to the Pacific Ocean. The act of diverting surface water, while continuing to monitor and manage high levels of groundwater, provides a balanced approach to more sustainable flood and water management systems. The ecosystems will be enhanced as runoff is reused and downstream habitats are protected from nonpoint source pollution. As discussed, some surface water infiltrates into the groundwater basin and is stored there, sometimes resulting in high groundwater levels. Therefore, various monitoring measures have been implemented to manage the groundwater basin water levels, including monitoring wells and photo stations. There is a high degree of certainty that the Proposal meets this program preference.

e. **Protect Surface and Groundwater Quality (8e)** - The Project will significantly protect water quality by capturing and treating urban runoff, increasing pollutant removal, and assist in meeting the region's TMDL and Region 9 Basin Plan requirements. The Project will prevent pollutant-carrying urban runoff from flowing into the San Juan Creek Watershed by diverting runoff for treatment and storage in its recycled water system. The Project improves water quality for downstream receiving waters in the South Orange County WMA, including the discharge point at Dana Point into the Pacific Ocean. Reduced polluted runoff entering the watershed and beaches protects not only the ecosystem's plants and wildlife, but the public health of users at beaches.

Protecting surface water quality in turn protects the groundwater quality of the South Orange County WMA, as polluted runoff is prevented from infiltrating into the groundwater basins. The region's groundwater basins include the San Juan Valley and San Mateo Creek. In 2013, the South Orange County WMA will update the 2005 South Orange County IRWM Plan and a salt/nutrient management plan will be completed as part of this effort. There is a high degree of certainty that the Proposal meets this program preference.

f. **Improve Tribal Water and Natural Resources (8f)** - During the 2005 South Orange County IRWM Plan completion, the IRWM Group implemented a comprehensive stakeholder involvement process, which includes the *Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, based in South Orange County*. They have been engaged as a stakeholder and provided a letter of support for our efforts. The South Orange County IRWMG will continue to actively involve the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians to ensure their active involvement and representation in the IRWMP process.

In 2013, the South Orange County WMA will proceed with an update of the 2005 adopted IRWM Plan. As part of the process, the South Orange County IRWM Group will consider ways to improve tribal water and natural resources by their involvement in the stakeholder process. The IRWM Group understands the importance of Native American Tribe Notification and will incorporate this process throughout the IRWM Plan Update and required CEQA review for each Project. The IRWM Group members will conduct ongoing outreach to tribal representatives throughout the region. The IRWM Group will solicit to local tribes as part of the public outreach process throughout the IRWM Plan update. The public meetings will specifically aim to engage tribal representatives in identifying the major issues and priorities of their lands, and how the priority projects may impact them. Tribal issues are incorporated throughout the IRWM Plan Update work plan. There is a high degree of certainty that the Proposal meets this program preference.

g. **Ensure Equitable Distribution of Benefits (8g)** - As previously explained, the water quality protection benefits of the Project significantly protect the recreational beaches and waterways in the South Orange County WMA that many members of DACs from other regions frequently use. The Project included in this proposal is multi-benefit and includes water quality components to ultimately protect DACs from polluted waterways. The South Orange County WMA has an established public outreach process. All stakeholders, including DAC members such as the Hispanic population and California Native American Tribes, will be incorporated in Project planning and implementation, with the benefits effectively tracked and posted on the OC Watersheds website.

Participants in the South Orange County IRWM Group have worked individually and collaboratively over 30 years to develop and integrate regional strategies that address, raise awareness, and coordinate numerous and varied water management projects. In conjunction with these efforts, the South Orange County IRWM Group uses a variety of methods to engage the general public and stakeholders. They include participating in stakeholder meetings, inclusion in the IRWM process, communication via email and information sharing via

the County's website [www.ocwatersheds.com](http://www.ocwatersheds.com). The website also provides contact information and email links for all South Orange County IRWM Group members.

Equitable distribution of benefits will result from educational and public outreach activities, which increase residents' understanding and appreciation of watersheds and other areas of significance, including how human interaction impacts habitat areas and other natural resources. Projects like the Project will fill educational and recreational purposes, and provide demonstrated environmental benefits. The Project will inspire broad implementation of water quality and flood improvements across the community.

*Latino Health Access* - In order to develop a DAC Outreach Program that could be used countywide, OC Watersheds Staff partnered with Latino Health Access. Latino Health Access ("LHA") is a local nonprofit organization founded in 1993 to help improve the quality of health and life of uninsured, under-served people by providing them with quality preventive care services and educational programs. On February 7, 2009, OC Watersheds Staff provided an informational presentation at an all day workshop in Santa Ana. The presentation was provided in Spanish and included information on Prop 84 IRWM grants, examples of regional water projects that have been completed in other DAC areas, and how LHA can benefit from associated funding.

*Latino Water Coalition* - In an attempt to further connect with DACs and the organizations that serve them, OC Watersheds staff attended a Latino Water Coalition event at the Orange County Water District. The California Latino Water Coalition ("CLWC") advocates improving the State's water supply today to ensure economic prosperity for tomorrow. The CLWC is a statewide coalition of influential Latino leaders that supports development of San Joaquin-Sacramento Delta environmental, conveyance and sustainability solutions along with additional water resources in California.

In the future, OC Watersheds staff and the South OC IRWM Group plan to outreach to DACs about drinking water quality standards. The drinking water quality is good throughout the County. However, Orange County residents who are immigrants from areas with poor water quality where drinking bottled water is a necessity may have concerns about drinking water straight from the tap. They may feel the need to continue purchasing and drinking bottled water. Therefore, OC Watersheds staff in coordination with the IRWM Group will design a program to educate DACs about the safety of the drinking water in Orange County with the hope that bottled water consumption by DACs will decrease. OC Watersheds staff hopes that a decrease in the detrimental watershed effects that stem from bottled water production and consumption will then follow. The County's outreach to DACs has been well received and this evident in enthusiastic letters of support received from both the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians and National Hispanic Environmental Council.