

6 Program Preferences

6.1 Program Preference Information

The existing IRWM Plan incorporates many of the State Program Preferences. As discussed below, these Program Preferences will be re-evaluated in the updated IRWM Plan.

1. *Include regional projects or programs.*

The Poso RWMG has focused on *regional* water management improvements since developing an IRWM Plan and will continue to maintain this focus while updating and improving the IRWM Plan. The Poso IRWM Plan projects include several interties between neighboring district facilities that will enhance water banking, transfers, and exchanges within the Region and for inter-regional banking partners outside the Poso Creek and Tulare Lake Basin Regions. In addition, the Poso IRWM Plan includes non-structural projects to advance the environmental documents necessary to enhance the flexibility for banking, transfer, and exchange of local, state, and federal water supplies among the districts within the IRWM region. This will increase the flexibility of the individual districts to operate to the benefit of the Region and gain back lost water supply reliability.

2. *Effectively integrate water management programs and projects within a hydrologic region identified in the California Water Plan; the Regional Water Quality Control Board region or subdivision; or other region of sub-region specifically identified by DWR.*

The Poso IRWM Plan Region covers nearly all of the “Poso” Hydrologic Unit of the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region. The Poso IRWM Plan RWMG is effectively integrating groundwater banking programs in the Poso Hydrologic Unit. The RWMG has developed CEQA and NEPA documents which provide environmental compliance for the six districts within the Poso Creek IRWM Plan to bank, transfer, and exchange water supplies for the next 25-years. The RWMG is effectively integrating water supply reliability projects and programs within the Poso Hydrologic Unit. Completing the Plan update and improvements will document and enhance their efforts related to regional planning for flood control, habitat enhancement, and DAC water projects within the Poso Hydrologic Unit. (See attached Figure 7-1 from Poso IRWM Plan Region Acceptance submittal to DWR)

3. *Effectively resolve significant water-related conflicts within or between regions.*

Since the Poso IRWM Plan Region is adding water conveyance facilities, it provides an opportunity for water districts both within the Poso region and statewide to support the California Bay-Delta Targeted Benefit and Quantifiable Objective for Western Kern County to “Enhance the effectiveness of potential conjunctive use programs”. The Poso IRWM Plan

addresses the loss of water supply reliability to this region due to the environmental constraints; therefore, it is reducing the potential for conflict between regions. The Poso IRWM Plan has coordinated planning activities with neighboring IRWMs by actively participating in the Tulare Basin IWRM planning meetings and through coordination with the Partnership for San Joaquin Valley group that is led by staff of the Water Institute of University of California, Fresno. These planning activities will continue and be integrated in the updated Plan.

4. *Contribute to attainment of one or more objectives of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, i.e., (1) improve delta water quality, (2) maintain and improve integrity of delta levees, (3) reduce the mismatch between delta water supplies and beneficial uses demands, or (4) improve ecological health of the Bay-Delta watershed.*

The Poso IRWM Plan contributes to attainment of objective (3) reduce the mismatch between delta water supplies and beneficial uses demands. The Plan has already implemented non-structural projects to allow more flexible delivery of surface water supplies through banking, transfers, and exchanges in the Region. Several interties between districts in the RWMG have also been constructed. Additional infrastructure to assist in adding conveyance capacity in the Region is planned and development of projects will continue as part of the special studies section of Grant Work Plan. In addition, the Plan has directly led to development of riparian habitat within the Region (through vegetation of the margins of spreading basins).

5. *Address critical water supply or water quality needs of disadvantaged communities within the IRWM region.*

The Poso RWMG has added a voting DAC Representative to the Plan's governance. The larger communities within the Region have implemented water resources projects with local, state, and federal funding, and the smaller communities have also implemented projects with the coordinated assistance of Self-Help Enterprises. A DAC Working Group has advanced planning and design necessary to move DAC projects toward implementation and to obtain funding. Several of the DAC projects have been included in a successful Proposition 84 Implementation Grant Proposal. The Poso RWMG will continue to coordinate the Plan to identify DAC related issues and allow critical water supply and water quality needs of DAC communities to be addressed. These needs will be documented in the update and projects to address correcting the problems will be described.

6. *Effectively integrate water management with land use planning.*

Since the majority of the Poso IRWM Plan Region resides in Kern County, much of the effective integration of water management with land use planning occurs naturally through the various standing committees in Kern County, a well established network of water districts, and interaction with the Kern County Water Agency. District managers belong to a network of active water related committees as indicated in the Water Association of Kern County directory.

<http://www.wakc.com/>

The Poso RWMG will continue to communicate with the local agencies and county representative as they update and improve the Poso Plan. County Board of Supervisors appointed committees and work groups to provide guidance on land use planning. Predominate land use is expected to remain the practice of agriculture intertwined with mineral resources and rural communities. The Poso Creek RWMG focus will continue to be the protection of water supply, natural resources, and recharge areas. The update will document these efforts and describe how the efforts will continue into the future. The discussion of the interactions of the water districts and the land use agencies will be enhanced in the update.

7. *Include actions designed to integrate the Stormwater Resource Plan requirements specified in CWC Section 10562 into an IRWM Plan.*

The Poso IRWM Plan Region is mostly rural and has some need to describe and update how the communities integrate Stormwater Resource Plan requirements and flood management into their planning. Most communities collect their stormwater and recharge it to the common groundwater basin. Stormwater only leaves Kern County during very large events when flows from the Kern River, White River and Poso Creek reach the Tulare Lake Bed. The Poso RWMG will evaluate opportunities to better integrate these efforts in the IRWM Plan update.

8. *Drought preparedness.*

The top priority of the Poso IRWM Plan is to increase water reliability in the Region. The districts are constructing energy efficient interties that allow for storage of wet period water in the neighboring districts' banking facilities and for return of stored water during periods of less available surface supply, which is preparing for a drought. The Poso districts will continue to develop programs to increase conjunctive use in the region and develop conveyance that adds return capacity to districts in need of storage outside their own district. The revised Plan update will describe what has been done since implementation of the Plan as well as describe planned projects to reduce impacts of drought.

9. *Use and reuse water more efficiently.*

Each of the incorporated communities, Shafter, Wasco, Delano, and McFarland, within the Region contributes wastewater effluent for use on agriculture land. Two are considering increasing this reuse capacity as part of the special studies. Since 2009, the agricultural districts have competed for, won, and constructed conveyance improvements that allow for more effective and energy efficient use of surface supplies in the Region. Districts within the Region have converted agriculture land to spreading basins, further increasing the effectiveness of delivering water to the Region during the non-irrigation season. Reclamation grant funding has been received to convert growers' irrigation systems to drip, enhancing the on-farm efficiencies. As part of this Poso IRWM Plan Update and Improvement Project, the districts intend to evaluate the cost effectiveness and benefits of additional conveyance facilities to enhance regional water banking, transfers, and exchanges as a special study and to incorporate the on-

going efforts for water reuse and for district level and on-farm efficiency improvements for applying irrigation water. In this conjunctive use basin, the regions' efficiency can be improved by delivering surface water supplies in place of groundwater, which is a high priority of the Poso IRWM Plan.

10. Climate Change Response Actions.

Projects in the Poso IRWM Plan that enhance conjunctive use in the Region are anticipated to help the Region to adapt to Climate Change; since groundwater pumping lifts are significant in the Region, water management measures that increase surface water deliveries in lieu of pumping groundwater have the benefit of reduced energy use. In addition, modification of conveyance facilities will result in more energy efficient operation. Work tasks will add text in accordance with information presented in Tables 7 and 8 of the Proposition 84 and 1E IRWM Guidelines.

11. Expand environmental stewardship.

The region contains Semitropic Wildlife Improvement District, the Kern National Refuge, several private duck clubs, and has the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners as an active stakeholder. One of the funded Poso implementation projects will enhance habitat on the recently constructed Pond-Poso Spreading and Recovery Facility. The Poso RWMG stated in the adopted Plan and remains committed to expanding environmental habitat on high priority water supply reliability projects as a secondary priority. The region's banking facilities will allow for water management actions, such as, the recirculation of San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement flows. The updated Plan will continue to support environmental stewardship as a secondary level priority.

12. Practice integrated flood management.

Since adoption of the IRWM Plan, several integrated flood management projects along Poso Creek, White River, and Deer Creek have been discussed at the RWMG meetings and described in consideration for a Proposition 1E funding proposal in 2011. One of the projects along Poso Creek, the Pond-Poso Entrance Ponds, will be further evaluated as a special study, as described in the Section 3 Work Plan, Task 5.2 Flood Management Project Development. The updated Plan will contain a description of direct and indirect flood management projects that have been considered and describe any new flood management projects.

13. Protect surface and groundwater quality.

The Poso Creek IRWM Plan identified the objective to "Protect the quality of groundwater and enhance where practical". The Poso IRWM Plan described the beneficial uses within the region and recognized that 96 percent of the water use is applied water for agriculture. The water quality within the region is suitable for the agriculture uses. The Plan update will incorporate discussion of areas in need of protection for drinking water uses, of the Poso DAC Representative's involvement in the Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee for developing

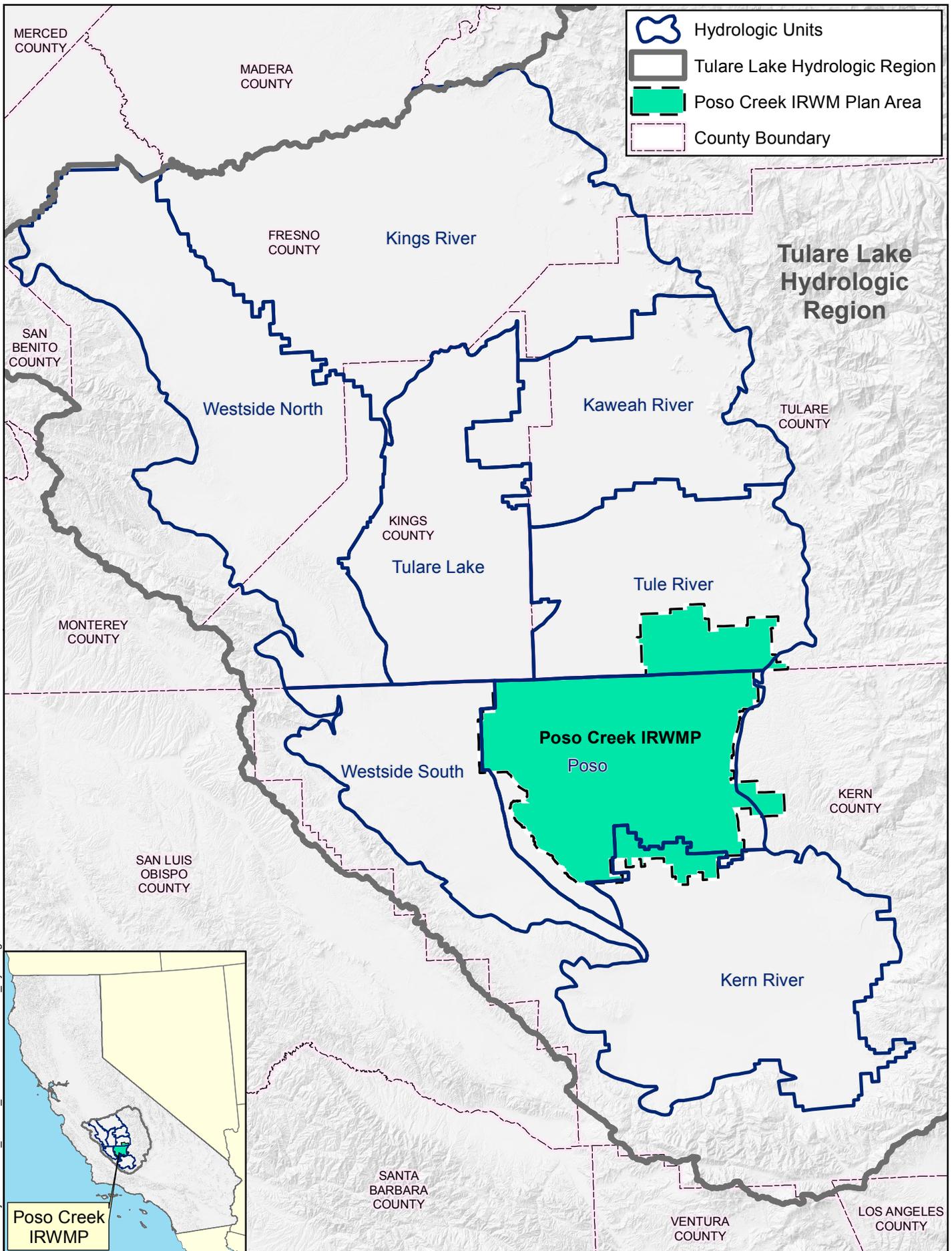
the Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study, and the coordination occurring between water districts and rural communities enhanced by the IRWMP process. As discussed above, DAC issues will be evaluated and their water quality needs described in the Plan Update.

14. Improve tribal water and natural resources.

Since the region does not contain any tribal water uses, no improvements are planned.

15. Ensure equitable distribution of benefits.

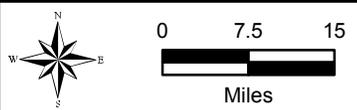
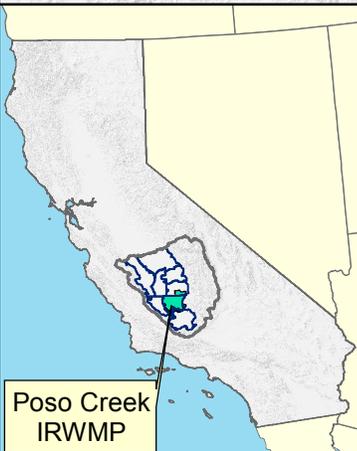
The Poso RWMG meets regularly and maintains a core budget for coordination activity that gets distributed equitably. The RWMG MOU allows districts to advance projects through cost sharing agreements between individual districts. Proposals with multiple projects have contained larger water supply projects that benefit the common groundwater basin mixed in with small community projects that meet the individual community needs. The costs to administer the grant are often being carried by the larger project district. DAC participation and development of DAC projects has been encouraged, and in some cases directly supported by the RWMG. For example, in 2010, the RWMG funded a Rural Water Supply proposal to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Although this proposal was not funded, it did help communicate the DAC needs within the Region. Districts, communities, and Stakeholders have developed fair and equitable distribution of costs and benefits that is allowing coordination for project to move to implementation in the region, and a continuation of the planning process. The Grant Work Plan will document and describe the established procedures for maintaining equitable distribution of benefits.



-  Hydrologic Units
-  Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region
-  Poso Creek IRWMP Plan Area
-  County Boundary

Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region

Poso Creek IRWMP
Poso



Poso Creek RAP
Kern and Tulare Counties, California

Poso Creek IRWMP

Poso Creek IRWMP Boundary and
Tulare Lake Hydrologic Units

APRIL 2009

FIGURE 7-1

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