

Tahoe-Sierra IRWM Proposition 84 Planning Grant Proposal **Attachment 6: Program Preferences**

Points are awarded for each Program Preference below that will be addressed in the updated IRWM Plan or is currently addressed in the IRWM Plan

Include regional projects or programs

The establishment of the Tahoe Sierra Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) partnership is a natural result of past cooperative efforts with the region. In the early partnership stages, they submitted a successful application to the State Water Resources Control Board that resulted in \$12.5 million dollars for implementing projects for water quality improvements, wetland restoration, water conservation, and environmental education and outreach. The implementation of these projects also included successful outreach and the region was expanded to include interested partners from Alpine, El Dorado, Placer and Sierra Counties.

The partnership continues to work closely with established community groups, non-profits and local agencies to develop priority water-related projects that will serve as a comprehensive management plan that interconnects the region's extensive water resource base. Integration of water resource management has been a priority of the region since the 1970's when state, local and regional jurisdictions began to coordinate to ensure high quality of water for human uses as well as for the environmental needs of the Tahoe Sierra region. Coordination amongst various agencies and jurisdictions includes development and overlap of various water management strategies that help to improve water quality within the region and also to determine best management practices for dealing with water supply, wastewater, flood control, erosion control, ecosystem restoration and land use planning efforts. Based on these cooperative efforts of concerned stakeholders, the region today depicts an area that serves to limit development in a majority of the region while at the same time, serving to achieve environmental, recreational, scenic and economic thresholds.

The individual projects that are being implemented or are proposed to be implemented in the Tahoe Sierra region fit into the larger programmatic context of regional plans and programs including the Lahontan Regional (Basin) Plan, the Water Quality Management Plan (208 Plan) for the Lake Tahoe Basin, and locally developed urban stormwater management plans, groundwater and regional plans. In addition, there are multiple TMDLs that have been approved and adopted by the State and Regional Water Boards within the Tahoe Sierra region and project components, in many instances, are developed to directly support the objectives and standards developed through localized TMDLs.

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 Tahoe Sierra IRWM region, including the California-Tahoe Basin, Truckee River watershed and Carson River watershed, is characterized primarily by its location within the central reaches of the 380-mile Sierra Nevada mountain range. The Tahoe Sierra IRWM is an approved regional area through the vetted process of the Regional Acceptance Program (RAP) as conducted by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) in April of 2009.

Hydrologically, Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River watershed are connected by the headwaters of the Upper Truckee, which eventually drains into the Lake before flowing out the northern end into the Lower Truckee River and watershed area. The Upper Truckee is the largest watershed in the Tahoe Sierra region accounting for approximately one-third of the entire Basin area. The Upper Truckee also shares a watershed boundary with the Carson River watershed in Alpine County, the southern boundary of the Tahoe Sierra IRWM.



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In addition to the regular meetings held amongst Tahoe Sierra IRWM members, representatives from the Tahoe Sierra IRWM are also in regular contact with members of the Inyo-Mono IRWM to the south and CABY IRWM to the west. This communication is meant to foster ongoing project collaboration and to establish a line of communication with neighboring IRWM groups within the north Lahontan region. Within the past several years, the Sierra Water Workgroup (SWWG) was also formed to represent all IRWM partnerships operating with the Sierra Nevada watersheds and the Tahoe Sierra IRWM belongs to this group as well.

Effectively resolve significant water-related conflicts within or between regions

Although the Tahoe Sierra region and associated projects are in waters tributary to important local and regional water supplies (Lake Tahoe, Truckee River, East and West Fork Carson River), water supply conflicts within the region are minimal. The largest concerns within the region are related to water quality, aging infrastructure and potential groundwater contamination. Projects that have been or are currently being implemented in the region are addressing these concerns through non-point source pollution prevention, ecosystem restoration, replacement of leaking pipes, meter installation and other water conservation measures.

Potential conflicts over available groundwater supply have been, and will continue to be addressed through referencing of regional and local groundwater management plans including South Tahoe Public Utility District Groundwater Management Plan (GWMP), the Placer County Martis Valley GWMP, the Squaw Valley Public Service District (PSD) and Alpine County GWMP. These plans contain conflict resolution procedures the partnership utilizes to address future groundwater concerns.

Potential conflicts related to water supply may occur between project proponents and local or adjacent

land owners during construction due to the impact of the project on landowners. To minimize and address these conflicts, each project approved for implementation will include the hosting of a public meeting prior to implementation as well as written notification of the project and the geographic area of impact. Water conservation practices, such as metering, may also cause conflict with water users. Extensive outreach and education will be conducted by the individual agency responsible for implementing water conservation projects in order to minimize conflict and promote understanding of project implementation components.

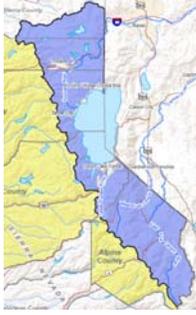
In a similar fashion to water supply, conflicts over water quality may result in conflicts between project proponent and adjacent land owners. As described in the current IRWMP, land owner outreach will be conducted through public meetings, stakeholder involvement, direct and targeted mailings and media coverage in order to increase understanding of project component implementation and to address any concerns brought forward by local community members or stakeholder groups.

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

Not applicable in the Tahoe Sierra IRWM region.

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

The current Tahoe Sierra IRWM plan has identified the disadvantaged communities (DAC) within the region and discusses the water supply/water quality needs of these communities. Identified in the plan as holding DAC status are: City of South Lake Tahoe,



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Kings Beach, and all of Sierra County. Representatives from these communities are contributing stakeholders in the Tahoe Sierra partnership and bring projects from these communities to the table to be discussed. In order to give DAC communities a priority status, the Tahoe Sierra IRWM project rating and ranking criteria awards priority points to projects that address critical water supply or water quality needs of these communities. The proposed IRWMP revision will continue to address the DAC status and needs by expanding outreach efforts in these communities. Three stakeholder meetings are planned within the DAC communities and a formal door-to-door survey to identify water related needs has been identified as a supplemental task to expand the outreach.

In addition, current partners will continue to reach out to the disadvantaged communities with information, education and resource/capacity building in order to encourage participation in identifying, evaluating and implementing projects within their communities.

Effectively integrate water management with land use planning

Although this project priority is addressed in the current Tahoe Sierra IRWMP, it is integrated throughout the document in the water management strategies sections and must be updated and expanded. The revised plan proposes to pull all this current information together in two sections: Relation to Local Water Use Planning and Relation to Local Land Use Planning. In addition to consolidating the information currently contained in the IRWMP, additional integration efforts include describing the updates to existing General Plans and Specific Plans, and whether they are consistent with or in conflict with IRWM planning efforts, as well as, any water elements within the General Plans and Specific Plans. As appropriate, the IRWM Plan update will identify opportunities on how water agencies can further collaborate with Land Use Plans and Planning

Agencies and strive to implement these opportunities. In addition, the General Plans and other specific land use planning documents offer a venue for related water management topics such as safety (including fire and flood hazards as described in Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans) and the need to maintain watersheds and implement forest management practices in the region (such as those identified by the Forest Service) to protect water systems from water quality related issues caused by fire.

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

Existing planning documents within the Tahoe Sierra IWRM region meet the requirements outlined in CWC Section 10562 and serve as functional equivalents. These plans include the Lahontan RWQCB Basin Plan, Water Quality Management Plan (208 Plan) for the Lake Tahoe Basin, TRPA Regional Plan, and local stormwater management plans from the City of South Lake Tahoe, Town of Truckee and other entities. Programs and activities meeting the full suite of requirements are described below.

Stormwater management is a large component of the overall management strategies in the Tahoe Sierra IRWM. Water quality problems related to stormwater discharges, erosion and sedimentation are among the most frequent and widespread water quality problems in the Region. Much of this is due to development and its creation of impervious surface (e.g., roads, parking lots, and buildings). In addition to limiting the total amount of new development and incentivizing redevelopment in the Lake Tahoe Basin, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has made it mandatory for all development (new and existing) in the Basin to implement permanent stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that control erosion and capture and infiltrate stormwater runoff (equivalent to the



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20 year-one hour storm) on-site. Stormwater from impervious surfaces are infiltrated using low impact development (LID) strategies when possible. Permanent stormwater BMPs are implemented on a voluntary basis for Truckee and Alpine County.

Design criteria and BMPs to prevent stormwater pollution and increase effective stormwater management for new and existing infrastructure and development are addressed in the BMP Handbook for the Lake Tahoe Basin. This technical manual for homeowners, planners, consultants, contractors, and other BMP professionals is specific to the Basin and it is currently being revised with funding from the states of California and Nevada.

In 2011, completion of the Lake Tahoe TMDL was a big accomplishment that set the framework for achieving Lake Clarity. The Lake Tahoe TMDL Implementation Plan summarizes representative actions that the various agencies must take to reduce fine sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen loads to Lake Tahoe and meet established load reduction milestones, including the Clarity Challenge and the deep water transparency standard. The middle Truckee River, West Fork of the Carson River, and other water bodies within the Tahoe Sierra IRWMP boundaries are also impaired water bodies listed under 303(d) and detailed in the IRWMP. Some of these, including the middle Truckee River, have a TMDL completed.

Stormwater requirements for all properties in the basin allow for soil infiltration and groundwater recharge, which contributes to beneficial re-use of this water downstream in supporting stream flow, riparian areas, aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, recharge of aquifers and other important functions. Stormwater management is integrated with wildlife habitat and open space to the extent feasible. We recognize that these values can be highly compatible with stormwater management and look for opportunities to enhance these functions.

Related to this is source control, a cornerstone of effective planning and stormwater management programs in the IRWM region. Naturally functioning and undisturbed areas are protected whenever possible through land use planning. Protection and restoration of natural vegetation, soils, steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas preserves natural infiltration and nutrient uptake capabilities and act as buffers between urban areas and surface waters. Examples of other source control BMPs for stormwater problems include control of air pollutants, enforcement of anti-litter ordinances, educational programs (e.g., to limit fertilizer and pesticide use by home gardeners, or dumping of waste motor oil in storm drains), street and storm drain maintenance practices, spill prevention and cleanup, and BMPs for erosion control.

The Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) in the Lake Tahoe basin promotes and enables water quality and other environmentally beneficial implementation projects, including SEZ restoration projects. The California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC) acquires parcels of sensitive SEZs to preserve or restore their functions. The Forest Service, California State Parks, CTC, City of South Lake Tahoe, and other entities have completed stream restoration projects on their respective properties to reestablish natural hydrologic and water quality functions, such as reconnecting the floodplain to the stream. TRPA also works with Caltrans, El Dorado County, Placer County, and City of South Lake Tahoe on the road network through the EIP to address source control and minimize and treat stormwater runoff from transportation infrastructure.

TRPA Code of Ordinances (Section 60.4 Best Management Practice Requirements and Chapter 60 Water Quality), Lahontan RWQCB Basin Plan, and City of South Lake Tahoe and Town of Truckee stormwater ordinances encompass regulations that set in place stormwater management requirements and ensure the effective implementation of the stormwater requirements pursuant to CWC 10562.



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As required in TRPA's regional plan, the agency periodically evaluates progress toward attainment of environmental thresholds, which includes restoration of stream environment zones (SEZs, i.e., streams, wetlands, riparian areas, and other ground and surface water influenced areas) and water quality. In the region's communities that do not fall within the TRPA's jurisdiction, land use planning is the responsibility of the local jurisdictions.

Projects and programs are already in place within the IWRM region to ensure the effective implementation of stormwater plans which serve the functional equivalents of the stormwater resource plan requirements. These programs and activities are integrated into overall water quality management goals and strategies and many are currently funded from grants. Tahoe Sierra partners will assess proposed stormwater related projects and give priority implementation status to those that have the greatest potential to reduce surface runoff, particularly from source control. Continuation of stormwater programs in the future may require funding assistance from DWR and other sources to continue achieving environmental management goals.

Drought preparedness

Due to the hydrologic reliability in our region, water supply is not severely impacted by single or multiple dry water years. Tahoe-Sierra IRWM utility partners address supply and reliability issues in their current 2010 Urban Water Management Plans under the section "Water Supply and Water Shortage Contingency Planning." Utilities have adopted Water Shortage and Drought Response Standards in accordance to California Water Code section 10632. In the event that drought conditions exist within the region, utilities have current ordinances in place which include, but are not limited to, prohibiting water waste, runoff from irrigation, and limiting the days that customers can irrigate. With these ordinances in place, the focus on efficient water use

and reuse, and the significant reliability in our region, drought preparedness is not a highly-ranked program preference within the Tahoe Sierra IRWMP. However, one proposed change in the revision process will be to incorporate the current information on water source and supply availability from all water utility partner's Urban Water Management Planning documents. This will allow for a better understanding of the relationship each proposed IRWMP project will have on local water planning efforts.

In addition, climate change evaluations/assessments proposed in the plan revision scope of work may identify future drought risk and allow for project development and implementation to address the adaptation responses necessary to any identified potential vulnerabilities.

Use and reuse water more efficiently

Promoting water conservation and water use efficiency measures and practices continue as a regional effort. Efficient water use and reuse is addressed in the current Tahoe Sierra IRWMP under 2 sections: Water Conservation and Water Recycling. These will be combined into one section in the proposed IRWMP revision.

Utilities in our region were required to submit an updated Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) by July of 2011. Sixteen Demand Management Measures are addressed in UWMP's which correspond with the Best Management Practices put forth by the California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC). The regional water conservation program includes implementation of turf buy-back programs, high efficiency appliance rebates, irrigation efficiency rebates, water-use audits and community outreach and education. Partner utilities, non-profit organizations and agencies collaborate to promote efficient water use and reuse through community watershed projects



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and cross promoting services that contribute to water conservation efforts through rebates, water audits and water efficient landscaping. Installation of water meters throughout the region is an ongoing effort. Public utilities in California with over 3,000 connections are required by AB2752 to install meters for all residential and commercial customers by the year 2025. The regulations are designed to allow consumers to monitor their own water use. According the CUWCC studies have shown that metering is an effective strategy for conserving water. Studies have shown a decrease in water use of up to 20% as a result of metering and volumetric pricing.

Water reuse or water recycling has a wide variety of applications that could be utilized in the Tahoe Sierra region, especially agricultural and landscape uses. Because of regulatory restraints, the use of recycled water is limited in the Tahoe Basin area of the Tahoe-Sierra IRWM. All wastewater within the basin is required to be exported as per the Porter Cologne Act so water reuse efforts have been minimal. Outside the basin, however, opportunities to reuse water continue to be explored with careful consideration given to potential public health and environmental hazards.

Changes proposed to the current plan include: addressing how members of the Tahoe- Sierra IRWM are complying with current water conservation regulations including AB2752, SBx 7-7 and AB1420, how these regulations fit into the scope of current projects, and project prioritization based on multiple benefits achieved by the efficient use and reuse of water such as:

- Fewer sewage system failures caused from water overwhelming the system.
- Healthier natural pollution filters such as downstream wetlands.

- Reduced water contamination caused by polluted runoff from over-irrigating yards and agricultural lands.
- Reduced need to construct additional dams and reservoirs or otherwise regulate the natural flow of streams, thus preserving their free flow and retaining the value of stream and river systems as wildlife habitats and recreational areas.
- Reduced need to construct additional water and wastewater treatment facilities.
- Reduced surface water withdrawals that degrade habitat both in streams and on land close to streams and lakes.

Climate change response actions

The current Tahoe Sierra IRWM does not have a specific section that addresses climate change response actions. As described in the scope of work of this application, proposed revisions to the plan will address and incorporate this program preference. Specifically, an assessment of the region and an evaluation of climate change vulnerabilities will be performed, utilizing, in part, the qualitative checklist as provided by the Department of Water Resources Climate Change Handbook. Additionally, project template forms utilized by the Tahoe Sierra IRWM partnership to evaluate, rate and rank priority projects will be updated to include data on climate change adaption contributions and/or GHG emissions reductions.

Expand environmental stewardship

Many of the partnering agencies within the Tahoe Sierra region include activities related to outreach and education in their individual project components in an effort to increase stakeholder knowledge of local environmental issues and expand environmental stewardship. The educational components that assist in promoting the conservation and improvement of the Lake Tahoe



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Basin's natural resource base are facilitated by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (RCD), Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), South Tahoe Public Utility District PUD, the Tahoe Conservancy and the Sierra Watershed Educational Partnership (SWEP).

In the northern section of the region, The Truckee River Watershed Council facilitates collaborative solutions to protect, enhance and restore the Truckee River watershed, while partner agencies such as the University of California, Davis (UCD) utilize research and science to help promote local stewardship and understanding of ecological processes within the Tahoe Sierra region and beyond.

In the southern end of the region, the Alpine Watershed Group works to preserve and enhance the natural system functions of Alpine County's watersheds, including the West and East Forks of the Carson River, for future generations. The group works by inspiring participation to collaborate, educate, and proactively implement projects that benefit and steward the County's watersheds.

Smaller, focused stewardship volunteer organizations also permeate the region, and tend to have representation in larger, well-known non-profits, such as the Sierra Nevada Alliance. They are an important part of the local communities and make up much of the human resources that perform regular workdays, form volunteer groups, and give vital time rather than financial resources toward fulfilling natural resource objectives in the region.

It is expected that the extensive outreach conducted and the representation of a diverse set of agencies and organizations that have a stake in water management within the Tahoe Sierra IRWM will result in the development of integrated regional solutions that encourage environmental stewardship and incorporate multiple benefits to both the environment and local communities.

Practice Integrated Flood Management

The Tahoe Sierra IRWM Plan integrates regional planning documents which address flood management as a water management strategy. Projects that maintain and protect riparian habitat, stream environment zones and wetlands will be given priority, especially in historical flooding zones within the region, because these areas provide natural storage for flood waters and have multiple environmental benefits including water quality and habitat protection. Flood management was selected as a water management strategy to help achieve the ecosystem restoration objective and the integrated watershed management objective.

The updated Tahoe Sierra IRWMP will prioritize projects based on the multiple benefits they achieve including flood management, enhanced floodplain ecosystems and BMPs that improve surface water quality while protecting groundwater such as stream restoration projects.

Protect surface and groundwater quality

The protection of surface and groundwater quality is identified as keystone objectives in the Tahoe Sierra IRWMP. This objective is being accomplished by multiple partners and the implementation of various project components that have been approved for funding through state, local and federal sources.

Water management strategies identified in the Tahoe Sierra IRWMP as related to groundwater management objectives include:

- Water supply reliability
- Groundwater management
- Stormwater capture and management
- Water conservation
- Water quality protection and improvement
- Conjunctive use
- NPS pollution control
- Surface storage
- Watershed planning



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Water management strategies identified in the Tahoe Sierra IRWMP as related to water quality objectives:

- Ecosystem restoration
- Environmental and habitat protection and improvement
- Groundwater management
- Recreation and Public Access
- Stormwater capture and management
- Water conservation
- Water quality protection and improvement
- Wetlands enhancement and creation
- NPS pollution control
- Watershed planning
- Water and Wastewater Treatment

As noted in the tables above, the ground water and water quality objectives are directly intertwined. To control NPS pollution into receiving water bodies (both surface waters and ground water aquifers), a large number of public and private best management practices (BMP) projects are being implemented each year in the region. This water management strategy is coupled with the Water and Wastewater Treatment strategy. For example, in the 1970s, all septic tank systems in the Lake Tahoe basin were retired, properties were connected to sewer systems, and wastewater was exported out of the basin. This action simultaneously provided reliable wastewater treatment and protected source water by preventing wastewater leaching and accidental spills.

The Groundwater Management and Water Supply Reliability strategies are directly linked and serve multiple goals as most of the Tahoe Sierra region residents get their municipal water from wells. Wellhead protection programs, cleanups of leaking underground storage tanks, and other groundwater protection efforts are in place to ensure clean drinking water for all residents in the region. The NPS Pollution Control strategy is integrated as well, as the region's management strategies consider the

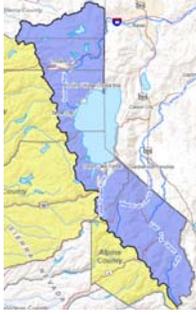
possibility of fertilizers and other nutrient sources leaching through landscapes to the water table. Storm water capture, management, and surface storage provides for detention, treatment, and recharge of surface water to groundwater. The need for high quality groundwater is mutually dependant throughout the region. Therefore managing groundwater through effective water management strategies provides multi-regional benefits.

Ultimately the integration of multiple water management strategies in the Tahoe Sierra IRWMP is imperative to meet the plan objectives.

Improve tribal water and natural resources

The Washoe Tribe Woodfords Community in Alpine County is a stakeholder in the Tahoe Sierra IRWM partnership and has been involved in the process for several years. In the current IWMP, the Washoe Tribe has an Improvement and Pipe Replacement Project that has been rated and ranked within the water supply category/subcomponent. This project benefits the Woodfords Community by providing increased fire protection capability, improved domestic water volume, flow and pressure and increased efficiency and reliability of the water system. The project also meets several Tahoe Sierra IRWMP objectives including water supply, groundwater management, integrated watershed management and ecosystem restoration.

Through the IRWMP update process we are going to increase outreach to the Washoe Tribe (the one Native American Tribe in the Tahoe Sierra Region). A variety of methods and media will be used to connect with the Washoe Tribe. This includes two Tribal outreach meetings to promote and enhance the Tribes involvement in the Tahoe Sierra IRWM. The goal of these meetings is to make sure that their opinion is incorporated into the plan and that projects are prioritized that are beneficial to tribal water and natural resources. An informational website will also be developed and made available to



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all stakeholders that describes the IRWM process and how groups can get more involved.

Ensure equitable distribution of benefits

Equitable distribution of benefits is addressed both on a geographic and demographic scale within the existing Tahoe Sierra IRWMP. On a demographic level, DACs within the Tahoe Sierra region include the established communities of Kings Beach and the City of South Lake Tahoe as well as Sierra County in its entirety. Community groups who represent the DACs within the Tahoe Sierra IRWM boundary have been contacted and encouraged to participate in both the decision making process and in project implementation. Agencies or organizations located within or representing disadvantaged communities can become involved in the Tahoe Sierra IRWM in two ways.

One way that members of the disadvantaged communities, as with any other agency or organization, may become involved is to officially adopt the Tahoe Sierra IRWM and develop project proposals that will be considered for inclusion in the overall plan and that may be submitted for funding considerations. These agencies and organizations will have full voting rights as members of the Tahoe Sierra IRWM and will be expected to serve on sub-committees and participate in the decision making process as necessary.

Another way that members of the disadvantaged communities may become involved is to lobby the appropriate voting representative of the Tahoe Sierra IRWM to advocate for project planning, development and implementation. In this way, members of disadvantaged communities who have not adopted the Tahoe Sierra IRWM may provide feedback and comments on the planning process and may serve as an advisory member of specific sub-committees. This will ensure that the voice of community organizations is heard and that any

concerns, interests or potential conflicts are related back to the group as a whole and are included in the decision making process. Where applicable, each voting member of the Tahoe Sierra IRWM will be responsible for outreaching to, contacting and soliciting feedback from representatives of community groups, agencies and organizations of the disadvantaged communities that are located within the Tahoe Sierra IRWM boundary. In addition to current efforts, the work plan describes the additional outreach needed to ensure that disadvantaged communities have the opportunity to fully engage in the IRWM process.

On a geographic scale the Tahoe Sierra IRWM partnership has established a ranking and prioritization process for inclusion of projects in funding applications and opportunities. Projects are reviewed according to the both the number of projects submitted by each individual agency and by the geographic location of project implementation. Those partners who have submitted multiple projects are ranked lower than partnering agencies who have only submitted one project for consideration of funding opportunities, thus allowing for partners submitting only one project to potentially score higher in the ranking procedure than partners submitting multiple projects, all other aspects being equal.

Similarly, projects are ranked according to the specific geographic location, with those areas containing multiple projects given a lower score than those areas that only have one or two projects submitted for consideration of funding opportunities. This process, if funding is approved, allows for a greater distribution of project implementation and the associated benefits throughout the Tahoe Sierra region as a whole, rather than projects and associated benefits to be focused in one specific geographic area.