

No. 15 - Kern County Integrated Regional Water Management Region

Region Acceptance Process Summary

General Description of Region

The Kern County Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Region covers the Kern County area west of the crest of the Sierras and north of the Tehachapis. This Region is surrounded by mountain ranges to the east, south, and west. The north boundary consists of the Kern/Kings and Kern/Tulare county lines.

The Kern County Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) consists of 53 participants; the majority of them are public agencies that have statutory authority over water supply or water management. In addition, there are 96 stakeholders representing town councils, regulatory agencies, environmental, agricultural, and land use planning entities throughout Kern County. This Region has made significant progress regarding governance, public outreach, and identification of Disadvantaged Communities. The Kern County RWMG is in the process of developing an IRWM Plan and collecting and prioritizing implementation projects from stakeholders which will be included in the Kern County IRWM Plan.

The Kern County IRWM Region overlaps with the Antelope Valley IRWM Region in the Tehachapi-Cummings County Water District service area. The two Regions have agreed to work cooperatively in the overlap area. The Kern County IRWM Region also overlaps with the Southern Sierra IRWM Region in the mountains/foothills area within Kern County. These two Regions are cooperatively working together and have agreed that the Kern County IRWM Region will manage the overlap area, and the Southern Sierra IRWM Region will re-draw its south boundary at the Kern/Tulare county line. These two IRWM Regions have also agreed to work cooperatively on future projects in the overlap area whenever necessary. Additionally, the Kern County IRWM Region overlaps with the Poso Creek IRWM Region. It appears that the Poso Creek and Kern County IRWM Regions are planning for the water resources.

Interview Conclusions- Conditional Approval for Planning Funds Only

DWR will allow the Kern County Region to apply for planning grant funds only. This region is not yet qualified to apply for implementation grant funds.

DWR encourages the Kern County IRWM Region and the surrounding IRWM efforts (including Poso Creek) to explore options on how best to structure the regional boundaries in the area. DWR's intent is to facilitate future communication and cooperation between surrounding IRWM Regions, to develop an optimal IRWM region(s) that fosters integration and cooperation and does not result in overlapping and competing planning efforts. Nearby "gap" areas, not covered by the Kern County, Poso Creek, Tule River, Kaweah River, or Southern Sierra IRWM Regions should also be considered for inclusion in the IRWM planning effort.

The Kern County IRWM Region must also cooperate and coordinate with the Southern Sierra IRWM Region, in the mountains and foothill areas and other adjacent IRWM Regions. The two regions have resolved their overlap issue.

The stated communication and cooperation, optimal region development, as well as inclusion of "gap" areas, will be considered when determining future region approval and eligibility for subsequent funding rounds.