

No. 17 – Merced Integrated Regional Water Management Region

Region Acceptance Process Summary

General Description of Region

The proposed boundary of the Merced Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Region covers the eastern portion of the San Joaquin Valley within Merced County. The Merced IRWM Region boundary is slightly larger than the Merced Groundwater Sub-basin (DWR Bulletin 118). The Region boundary overlaps the Central California (CenCal) IRWM Region boundary and primarily contains agricultural and, to a lesser extent, urban lands.

The groundwater resources in the Merced Groundwater Sub-basin are extensively developed and managed conjunctively with the Region's surface water resources to satisfy regional agricultural, urban, and environmental water demands. The IRWM planning effort began in March of 2008. Participants in the effort include agencies with statutory authority over water supply, water quality, water management or flood control, Merced Area Groundwater Pool Interest (an association of water purveyors in the Merced Groundwater Basin), Merced County, and the East Merced Resources Conservation District.

Interview Conclusions- Conditional Approval for Planning Funds Only

There is significant overlap between the proposed Merced IRWM Region boundary and the area covered by the CenCal IRWM Region. Because both the CenCal and Merced IRWM proposal are in the initial formulation stages, DWR encourages both Regions, along with the Madera IRWM Region, to explore options on how best to structure the regional boundaries in the Tri-County area. DWR will allow the Merced Region to apply for planning grant funds only. This region is not yet qualified to apply for implementation grant funds. DWR's intent is to facilitate future communication and cooperation between the CenCal, Madera, and Merced IRWM Regions, to develop an optimal region(s) that fosters integration and cooperation, and does not result in overlapping and competing planning efforts. This stated communication and cooperation, as well as optimal region(s) development, will be considered when determining future region approval and eligibility for subsequent funding rounds.