

No. 23 – Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Region

Region Acceptance Process Summary

General Description of Region

The Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Region is located in the Central Coast Funding Area. Most of this IRWM Region is in San Benito County, but the northern portion also crosses into Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties. The IRWM Region is based on the Pajaro River watershed. The Pajaro Regional Water Management Group (RWMG), also called the “Collaborative”, is comprised of Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), San Benito County Water District, and Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency. All three agencies are Central Valley Project contractors and SCVWD is also a State Water Project contractor.

The Pajaro RWMG meets on a quarterly basis to coordinate and share information. The Pajaro RWMG has not conducted general public meetings recently but participates in the Central Coast regional group discussions that at times hold joint outreach efforts. The governance structure is a consensus-based approach and has the responsibility of prioritizing projects for funding. Within the Pajaro IRWM Region, the City of Watsonville and the Town of Pajaro are identified as Disadvantaged Communities.

Prior to the RAP interview, both the Pajaro and Santa Cruz County IRWM Regions acknowledged an overlap in the Watsonville Sloughs area. The RAP applications for both Regions indicated that the environmental conservation and restoration issues will be coordinated by the Santa Cruz County RWMG, and the water supply and flood protection issues will be managed by the Pajaro RWMG.

Interview Conclusions- Approved

The boundaries are watershed based and appear to be reasonable; therefore, no changes to the Pajaro IRWM Region boundaries are required by DWR.

The Pajaro River Watershed IRWM Region and the Santa Cruz IRWM Region will need to continue to coordinate and cooperate on the overlapping area of the Watsonville Slough. During the interview, DWR requested a letter of cooperation be signed between the Pajaro and Santa Cruz County IRWM Regions, with the intent to focus their Regions on the management of the overlapping areas. DWR received this

letter of cooperation, dated June 13, 2009, from the SCVWD, who represents the Pajaro River Watershed RWMG.

To be eligible for Proposition 84 funding, the Pajaro RWMG may need to expand their RWMG to include entities necessary to develop and implement the IRWM (California Water Code CWC §10539).